

A  
NEW HISTORY  
OF THE  
HOLY BIBLE,  
FROM THE  
BEGINNING OF THE WORLD,  
TO THE  
ESTABLISHMENT OF CHRISTIANITY,

WITH  
ANSWERS to most of the Controverted Questions,  
Dissertations upon the most remarkable Passages,  
and a Connection of Profane History all along.

To which are added,  
NOTES, explaining difficult Texts, rectifying Mistranslations,  
and reconciling seeming Contradictions.

The whole illustrated with proper Maps and Sculptures,

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V O L. II.

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T H E  
H I S T O R Y  
O F T H E  
B I B L E.

B O O K III.

Containing an account of things from the Calling  
of Abraham to the Israelites Departure out of  
Egypt ; in all, 430 years.

C H A P. I.

*Of the Life of Abraham, from his Call to his Death.*

The H I S T O R Y.

**A**FTER the death of his father Terah, Abram, A. M. 2083, &c. Ant. Christ. 1921, &c. from Gen. xii.—xxv. 11. who, by God's appointment, had not long before left Ur in Chaldea, was now ordered to leave Haran, and to go into a country † whereunto God would conduct him, and who, at the same time, gave him assurance, that he would bless, protect, and mul-

Abraham leaves his country.

† It is very probable, that this was done by some appearance or other of the Shekinah going before him, even as afterwards his posterity was conducted in the way thither ; since, passing over rivers, climbing mountains, and travelling through a dangerous and vast desert, he had certainly need of an extraordinary divine direction, and of some sensible exhibition or token of it, while he had nothing but the promise of God to support him in so long and so hazardous a journey ; *Bibliotheca Biblica, vol. 1.*

A. M.  
2033; &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1921, &c.  
from Gen.  
xii.—xv.  
11.

tiply his posterity in an extraordinary manner, and that †  
*in his seed all the families of the earth should be blessed.*

Abram was fully persuaded of the truth of all God's promises: and therefore, without any hesitation, taking his wife and family, and all his effects, together with his nephew Lot, and his substance with him, he pursued his journey, (not knowing whether he should go), until, by the divine guidance, † he came into the land of Canaan; and being minded

† Some interpreters have imagin'd, that these words require no higher sense than this, — That all nations should see the prosperity of Abraham and his seed so evidently, that they should bless themselves, and others, in some such form as this: — *God make thee as great as Abraham and his seed.* But besides the incongruity of supposing, that God's everlasting covenant (as he calls it, Gen. xvii. 19.) was given only to produce a proverbial form of speech, it is plain matter of fact, that the posterity of Abraham, in the line of Isaac, was far from being the most prosperous (as to temporal affairs) of all the other branches of his family; and therefore this promise must of necessity be supposed to relate to some more spiritual and distant blessing, just as St. Paul, in his epistle to the Galatians, has explained it: *Now to Abraham, and his seed were the promises made, he saith not, and to seeds, as of many, but as of one, and to thy seed, which is Christ,* Gal. iii. 16.; *Vid.* Bishop Sherlock's Use and intent of prophecy.

† The land of Canaan lies between the Mediterranean sea and the mountains of Arabia, and extends from Egypt to Phœnicia. It is bounded to the east by the mountains of Arabia; to the south, by the wilderness of Param, Idumœa, and Egypt; to the west, by the Mediterranean, called in Hebrew, *the Great Sea*; and to the north, by the mountains of Libanus. Its length from the city of Dan (since called *Cæsarea Phillippi*, or *Paneadis*, which stands at the foot of these mountains) to Beer-sheba, is about seventy leagues, and its breadth, from the Mediterranean sea to the eastern borders, is, in some places, thirty. It was first called *the land of Canaan*, from Cainan the son of Ham, whose posterity possessed it. It was afterwards called *Palestine*, from the people which the Hebrews call *Philistines*, and the Greeks and Romans corruptly *Palestines*, who inhabited the sea-coasts, and were first known to them. It likewise had the name of *the land of promise*, from the promise God made Abraham of giving it to him; that of *the land of Israel*, from the Israelites having made themselves masters of it; that of *Judah*, from the tribe of Judah, which was the most considerable of the twelve; and lastly, the happiness it had of being sanctified by the presence,



## Chap. I. from Abraham's Call to the Israelites, &c.

minded to make some survey of the country, proceeded † to the famous Oak of Moreh, not far from the city of Sichem, then ‖ inhabited by the Canaanites. Here he took up his abode for some time, and here built an altar, in order to pay

A. M.  
2033, &c.  
Ant. Chris.  
1921, &c.  
from Gen.  
xii.—xxv.  
11.

sence, actions, miracles, and death of Jesus Christ, has given it the name of *the holy land*, which it retains to this day; *Lamy's Introduction*.

† The city of Sichem, or Sechem, or Sychar, (for it had all these names), was at this time so called by way of anticipation, for as yet it was not founded), and is a town of Samaria, in the borders of Ephraim, which stands in a narrow valley, between Gerazim on the south, and Ebal on the north, being built at the foot of the former. At present it is called *Naplofa*, and consists only of two streets, lying parallel under mount Gerazim, and is far from being in the flourishing condition it was once, though it is still full of people, and the seat of a Bassa. The true name which was given it by Abram was *Moreh*, or *Allon Moreh*, which our translation renders *the plain of Moreh*; by St. Jerom, *the illustrious vale*; by the Jerusalem Targum, *the valley of vision*, because of God's appearing to Abram here; and by others, *the oak of Moreh*, or *the illustrious oak*, &c. though it seems very probable, that there was in this place, not only one single tree, but a whole grove of them, and therefore it is called *Allon*, or *Aulon*, being a corruption from *Elon*, in Latin *Esculetum*, i. e. *an oaken grove*, or forest of evergreen oaks: And since this was the place where Abraham, at his first coming into the country, built an altar, we have great reason to be of the same opinion with the learned and sagacious Mr. Mede, viz. that this Allon-Moreh was a place of divine worship, a *proseucha*, or open oratory, in imitation of which the Jewish *proseuchæ* (which were certain spaces of ground, with an altar in the midst, encompassed with a wall, or some other inclosure, and open above, but shaded with trees) in after-ages were set up. *Vid.* Well's Geography of the New Testament, vol. 1.; and Biblioth. Bib. vol. 1. occas. annot. 18.; where the reader may meet with a particular enumeration, upon how many accounts more this place was in former times very famous.

‖ The words in the text are, *Abram passed through the land unto the place of Sichem, unto the plain of Moreh, and the Canaanite was then in the land*: From whence some have raised an objection, that Moses could not be the author of this book of Genesis, because the words seem to import, that the writer of them lived after that the Canaanites were drove out of the land, which was after Moses's death. But, in answer to this, it may be observed, that as by *the land* here we are not obliged to understand the whole country, but only that part of it which lay about

A. M. 2083, &c. Ant. Christ. 1921, &c. from Gen. xii.—xxv. 11. } pay his devotions to God; who, pleased with his behaviour, appeared to him again, (as he had done at Haran before), and gave him fresh assurances of his favour, and a promise inviolable, that, in process of time the whole land where he then dwelt should be the portion of his posterity.

Goes into Egypt.

From Sichem he removed † into the mountainous country, which lies Between Beth-el and Hai, where he likewise built an altar for a place of divine worship, (as he did in all other countries where he came), and from Beth-el he was travelling farther to the south, when he was stopped by a famine, which grew grievous in the land, and obliged him to go down to \* Egypt, the only place for provision in

about Sichem; so by the Canaanite we need not mean the whole posterity of Canaan, or all the Canaanitish tribes, but only one particular tribe of them, as in the very next chapter, ver. 7. is more distinctly expressed. And the reason why this is taken notice of by the sacred historian, is best accounted for in that ancient tradition in Epiphanius, [Hæres. 66. N. 84.] if we will allow it to be true, viz. that according to the original settlement and distribution among the sons of Noah, Palestine was not allotted to any of the sons of Ham, but was usurped by Canaan from the children of Shem, to whom it did of right belong; so that these words, *the Canaanite was then in the land*, signify, that they had already invaded the land, before Abram came thither; and therefore God's promising to give it him was only in order to restore that to the posterity of Shem which the children of Ham had wrongfully seized; *Patrick's Commentary; and Bibliotheca Biblica, vol. 1.*

† What our author here means, is mount Ephraim, which lay between Beth-el, a town not far from Jerusalem, northwards, and Hai, which is situate towards the west of Beth-el; *Wells's Geography, vol. 1.*

\* Josephus tells us, that “ Abraham understanding that there was a great plenty in Egypt, resolved upon a journey thither; not only to partake of their plenty, but also to consult the priests in their profession in divine matters, with an impartial desire and disposition to find out the truth, and either to give or receive satisfaction, according as the subject in question did require; that here he gained himself infinite credit, not only for the solidity of his judgment, and an admirable felicity of elocution, but for his instructive talent of informing, and convincing his hearers at once; and that here he read lectures of astronomy and arithmetic, which the Egyptians understood nothing of, until Abraham brought them with him

in such like exigences. But as he came to the confines of Egypt, he began to be not a little uneasy upon the account of his wife, who (though she had passed the sixty-fifth year of her age) retained still beauty enough to endanger the man's life, who should pass for her husband in that country. And therefore, after some deliberation, concluding that the safest way would be for her to conceal her marriage, he took an opportunity to acquaint her with his fears, and, with a small entreaty, prevailed with her in all places where they were to sojourn, to go under the notion of his sister.

A. M.  
2083. &c.  
Ant. Chris.  
1921, &c.  
from Gen.  
xii.—xxv.  
11

They had not been long in Egypt, before Abram's fears were found to be true. His wife's charms had captivated several, and her beauty was become the common topic of conversation; insomuch, that in a short time it reached the court, and the high commendations which every one gave the king of it, raised his curiosity to see this amiable stranger. Immediately therefore she was brought to court, and taken in to the King's apartment, as designed for one of his royal concubines: while her pretended brother was treated with great civility for her sake, and loaded with many valuable presents from the King.

It is hardly to be imagined, what a sad distress both the patriarch and his consort must have been in, upon this occasion. She was a beautiful woman, in the power of a loose and vicious prince, and destitute of all protection but God's; and her lord not so much as daring to own her his wife, knowing how certain and sudden must be the destruction of an helpless man, that provokes passion and power, rage of lust, and security of gratifying it.

While matters were in this dangerous position, the providence of God interposed in her behalf, and to deter † Pharaoh and his nobles from any dishonourable attempts upon

“him out of Chaldee into Egypt, from whence they passed into Greece;” *Antiq. l. 1. c. 9.*

† Pharaoh was the common name for all the Egyptian kings for above 3300 years, (as Josephus tells us, *Antiq. l. 8. c. 2.*) but what its proper etymology is, the learned are not so well agreed. Bochart thinks, that the word *Pharaoh* signifies a *crocodile*, and that Ezekiel alludes to it in these words: *Behold I am against thee, Pharaoh, King of Egypt, the great dragon, that lieth in the midst of the river*, Ezek. xxix. 3. M. Le Clerc fancies, that the Arabic word *Pharaoh*, *to be raised on high*, or *to be superior to*, is the true root of the name. Kircher does indeed derive the

the

A. M. 2083, &c. upon her virtue, † infested them with such plagues, as  
 Ant. Chris. 1921, &c. made them not insensible upon whose account it was that  
 from Gen. xi.—xxv. they suffered; even upon hers, who, tho' she passed for  
 a single, was in reality a married woman: so that the king  
 immediately called for Abram, expostulated with him the  
 ill consequences that might have ensued from the method  
 he had taken, and after some few exprobrations, returned  
 him his wife, and gave orders, that they might safely de-  
 part his kingdom, without any the least molestation, either  
 to their persons or possessions.

Upon his re- turn he and Lot part. Abram, after this, tarried not long in Egypt: for un-  
 derstanding that the famine was ceased in Canaan, he re-  
 turned thither by the same way, and on the altar, which  
 he had built before, offered a sacrifice of thanks for his  
 happy escape, and safe return. Lot and Abram had hi-  
 therto lived together; but by this time their substance  
 was so much increased, that they found it inconvenient to  
 be any longer near one another. Their cattle mingled; †

the word from the same root, but will have it to signify *to de-  
 liver*, or *to free*; and that *Pharaoh* therefore signifies *to be ex-  
 empt* from the jurisdiction of the laws. And (to name no more)  
 the learned Renandot thinks, that *Pharaoh* is the same with the  
 Egyptian *Pouro*, or *Pooro*, which signifies *a king*; Calmet on  
 the word.

† Some of the Hebrew interpreters think, that they had  
 grievous ulcers in their secret parts, which made both him and  
 them incapable of enjoying either her, or any other woman:  
 and in the punishment inflicted upon Abimelech, and his people  
 upon the same account, Gen. xx. 18. they suppose that there  
 were such swellings in their privy parts, as that the men could  
 neither enjoy their wives, nor the women, who were with child,  
 be delivered; *Patrick's Commentary*.

† The Jews here tell us, that the herdsmen of Abraham  
 were commanded by their master not to go near the Canaanites,  
 or the Perizzites, nor to come into the grounds which they  
 had taken, either for culture or pasturage, that so they might  
 not appear to do the least injury to any of them; and that, in  
 obedience to his command, they took especial care to confine  
 all their cattle, and to watch their flocks with a strict eye, that  
 none might go astray, and so trespass upon the natives, but that  
 Lot's herdsmen were herein very negligent, and suffered their  
 cattle to go beyond the bounds, and to feed in their fields which  
 belonged to the Canaanites and Perizzites, who dwelt then in the  
 land, and claimed the sovereignty of it; *Bibliotheca Bibl. vol. 1.*

their

their herdsmen quarrelled; and their flocks, when together, required a larger tract of ground to feed and support them, than they could take up, without interfering with the property of the inhabitants of the land wherein they sojourned. Upon these considerations, Abram resolved, in a friendly manner, to separate from Lot; and having given him his choice of the whole country that lay before him, Lot chose the fertile and pleasant plains of Sodom and Gomorrah †, which he saw were well watered by the streams

A. M.  
2683, &c.  
Ant. Chr. 9.  
1921, &c.  
from Gen.  
xii.—xxv.  
11.

† The words in the text are these,—*The plain of Jordan was well watered every where, before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah (even like the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt) as thou goest to Zoar.* The last clause, *as thou goest to Zoar*, has much perplexed commentators, whilst they refer it to the land of Egypt, in the clause immediately preceding; whereas, if what is said by way of comparison of the plain of Jordan to the garden of the Lord, *i. e.* the garden of Eden, and to the land of Egypt, be understood as inserted by way of parenthesis, the difficulty will be taken away, and the import of the last clause will be plain and easy; for then the meaning of the verse will amount to this,—“That before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, the plain of Jordan was well watered every where, as thou comest unto Zoar,” *i. e.* in the parts where Sodom and Gomorrah stood, or in short in the vale of Sidim. But there is another interpretation which supposes the word *Zoar* to be a false reading for *Zoan*, a city that was once the capital of Egypt, situate at the lower part of the river Nile, where it divides itself into several branches, and so waters the country more plentifully thereabouts, than in any other part. According to which reading, the import of the verse will be this,—*That the plain of Jordan was well watered every where about Sodom and Gomorrah, before the Lord destroyed them; yea, the plain was so well watered, that it was, in this respect, as the garden of Eden, or as the land of Egypt, and particularly as thou goest to Zoan, i. e. in the parts about Zoan, where the Nile is divided into several branches;* Well's Geography of the Old Testament, vol. 1. The river Jordan, which runs thro' this plain, is of so great note in the sacred writings, that we must not pass it by without this observation,—That it derives its name (as some assert,) from the Hebrew word *Jor*, which signifies a *spring*, and *Dan*, which is a small town, near the source of this river. But the misfortune is, that the name of Dan is much more modern than that of Jordan. From its source, which we suppose to be at Cæsarea Philippi, it runs thro' a space of about 50 leagues, till it discharges itself into the

A. M.  
1083, &c.  
Ant. Christ  
1921, &c.  
from Gen.  
xi.—xxv.  
11.

streams of Jordan, and so parted from his uncle. Abram continuing, for some time, in the place where Lot had left him, had a vision imparted to him, wherein God was pleased to renew the promise of enlarging his posterity; and bidding him cast his eyes round the horizon, confirmed the gift of all the land which he beheld, to him and his posterity. Not long after this, he left Beth-el, and went to dwell at † the Oak of Mamre, which is not far from Hebron, where he built an altar unto the Lord, and in a short time contracted an acquaintance with three of the greatest men there, Mamre, Aner, and Escol; the first of whom communicated his name to all the country.

Vanquishes  
Chedorlaomer's  
army.

This alliance proved very serviceable to him, but more especially upon the following occasion. † Chedorlaomer, king

Dead-sea, otherwise called the *Asphaltite lake*, where Sodom and Gomorrah, and the other cities of the plain, that were destroyed with fire from heaven, once stood. About five or six leagues distance from its spring, it forms the lake Semechon, and from thence it enters the lake of Tiberias, passes quite through it, and so is lost in the Dead-sea. Its water, in summer time, is very shallow; but about the time of the barley-harvest, or the feast of the passover, it constantly overflows its banks, and greatly fructifies the plain, *Calmet's Dictionary*.

† What we translate the *plain* should be rendered, the *Oak of Mamre*; because the word *elon* signifies an oak; or tree of long duration: Sazomen tells us, that this tree was still extant and famous for pilgrimages, and annual feasts, even in Constantine's time; that it was about six miles distant from Hebron; that some of the cottages, which Abram built were still standing near it; and that there was a well likewise of his digging; whereunto both Jews, Christians, and Heathens, did, at certain seasons, resort, either out of devotion, or for trade; because there was held a great mart. As for Hebron, or Chebron, it was accounted one of the most ancient cities in the world; having been built seven years before Tanis, the capital of lower Egypt. It was situated upon an eminence, twenty miles southward from Jerusalem, and twenty miles north from Beerheba; and had its name, very probably, from the word *Chapar*, to couple or join; because these married couples, Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebecca, Jacob and Leah, were buried there; *Calmet's Dictionary*; and *Universal history*, in the notes, l. 1. c. 7.

† We meet no where in profane history with the name of Chedorlaomer, nor with any of those names of the kings that were confederate with him: and the reason hereof is, that Chedor, (from whom the profane historians took the names of these

king of Elam, had held five petty princes in a tributary subjection to him for some years, of which number the King of Sodom was one. At length they shook off their yoke, and confederated against him; which provoked him (in conjunction with three other kings, his allies) to march directly with a powerful army against them. The revolted kings, seeing the enemy drawing towards them, took the field with a resolution to try the fate of a pitched battle. The valley of Siddim was the place where the armies were to meet; and as it was full of pits of bitumen, it might have made the engagement more difficult and dangerous to the enemy's horse: But so it was, † that the five kings were put to the rout; one part of their army was cut in pieces, and the other fled to the neighbouring mountains, leaving their cities a prey to the conquerors. Lot, who at this time resided at Sodom, was involved in the calamity of the city; was plundered of all he had, and himself carried away among the rest of the captives. As soon as Abram had intelligence of this by an express messenger, he immediately sends to his three friends, desiring their assistance at this critical juncture; and putting himself at the head of three hundred and eighteen of his own domestics, all well prepared, and men of resolution, he began his pur-

A. M.  
2083, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1921, &c.  
from Gen.  
xii.—xxv.  
11.

these kings, did not use their original Assyrian names in his history, but rather such as he found in the Persian records. However, since the date of this transaction falls four years before the death of Ninyas, there are good grounds to infer, that Ninyas, who then lived in Persia, was the Chedorlaomer of Moses, at that time the head of the Assyrian monarchy; that Amraphel was his deputy at Babylon in Shinar; and Arioch and Tidal his deputies over some other adjacent countries: For it is remarkable, that Ninyas, was the first who appointed under him such deputies: nor is there any absurdity in Moses to call them Kings, since it is observable, from what Isaiah hinted afterwards, (ch. x. 8,) that the Assyrian boasted his deputy princes to be equal to royal governours, *Are not my princes altogether kings?* Shuckford's Connection, vol. 2. l. 6.

† As the text tells us, that the King of Sodom and Gomorrah *fell into some of the slime pits*, with which the valley of Siddim abounds, and takes no notice of their coming out of them, it is more rational to suppose, that they perished there, than that Abraham stayed to take them up, as the Jews vainly imagine; and that therefore the King of Sodom, who afterwards came out to congratulate Abram, must have been the son of the deceased.

A. M. 2083, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1911, &c.  
Gen.  
xiii. xxv.  
11.

suit, and, after a march of almost seventy leagues, coming up with the enemy, and dividing his forces into small parties, he fell upon them by night, and charging them on all sides at once, put them in such a terror and consternation, that they took to their heels, and fled, leaving all the booty and captives behind them, among whom he happily recovered Lot, and brought him back with all his substance to his former habitation.

Is conge-  
nial here-  
upon.

The first person who came to congratulate Abram upon this victory, was the King of Sodom, (very probably the son of him (a) who perished in the slime-pits), who, in thankful acknowledgment of the benefits he had received from his valour and assistance, offered him all the booty which he had retaken, and desired only his subjects, the prisoners, to be restored. But Abram was too generous to take the advantage of the misery of war; and therefore, saving to his confederates such a proportion of the plunder as by the law of arms belonged to them, he returned all the rest, both prisoners and goods, to the King of Sodom, having before resolved to keep no part of them, that it might be said, he undertook that enterprize, not for any private advantage, but purely for the publick good, which every man of honour should have always primarily in his view.

The next who congratulated him upon this occasion, was Melchisedeck king of Salem, who, upon his return from the battle, had provided plenty of all things necessary for his refreshment and his mens in their march; and as he was a priest, as well as king, he both blessed Abram for being the instrument of so public a deliverance in the hands of God, and God himself who had given such uncommon success to his arms; whereupon Abram, in return, presented him with the tenth part of the spoils which he had taken from the enemy in this expedition.

Abram's deportment, upon this occasion, was so very acceptable to God, that he was pleased to appear to him again in a vision, and to give him fresh assurances of his special favour, and of his intention to be his shield of defence, in all dangers, and for all the good acts which he performed, his exceeding great reward.

Is promised  
a son.

Hitherto indeed the patriarch had listened to God's promises without any expression of distrust; but upon this fresh

(a) Gen. xiv. 10.

assurance,



assurance, he ventured, for the first time, to expostulate with him, not knowing how these things possibly could be accomplished whilst himself continued childless; and, to all appearance, must be obliged to leave the bulk of his substance to Eliezar, his household-steward. This indeed was a modest way to try whether God designed to bless him with a child; and God did not leave him long in suspense. He told him, that not his servant, but a son of his own, begotten of his body, should be his heir, and should have a race descending from him as *innumerable as the stars*.

A. M.  
2083, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1921, &c.  
from Gen.  
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This was such joyful news, as gave Abram fresh courage, even to request of God some sensible and visible token, whereby he might be assured of this blessing; and accordingly God was pleased to comply with his request. That therefore they might enter into a formal covenant upon this occasion, he ordered him to take an heifer, a goat, and a ram, of three years old each, with a pigeon and a turtle-dove, and to offer them up. Abram did as he was ordered; and, having killed the four-footed beasts, he † cut them in two, and laid the

Enters into  
covenant  
with God.

† The only place, besides this, where we have any intimation given us of this custom of making covenants, by dividing the beasts then to be sacrificed, and by the parties who covenanted passing between the parts of the beast so divided, is in Jer. xxxiv. 18, 19. *I will give the men that have transgressed my covenant, which have not performed the words of my covenant, which they had made before me, when they cut the calf in twain, and passed between the parts thereof; the princes of Judah, and the princes of Jerusalem, the eunuchs, and the priests, and all the people of the land, which passed between the parts of the calf; I will even give them into the hands of their enemies, and into the hand of them that seek their life; and their dead bodies shall be for meat unto the fowls of heaven, and unto the beasts of the earth.* This certainly was a very antient custom; and accordingly we find in Homer, that ὅρκους πρὸς ταυρόντες is a very common phrase, upon which his commentator Eustathius has this observation: *Διὰ τομῆς ζώων θυομένων οἱ ἐπὶ μεγάλους ὅρκοι ἤγινοντο*, that in matters of great moment, oaths or covenants were generally made by dividing the animals, which, upon such occasions, were sacrificed; and the design of this rite (as the learned Mede, in a discourse upon the subject, has expressed it) was as much as to say, “ Thus let me be divided, and “ cut in pieces, if I violate the oath which I have now made “ in the presence of God; *Patrick and Le Clerc's Comment.*

halves,

A. M.  
2083, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1921, &c.  
from Gen.  
xii.—xxv.  
11.

halves, at proper distances, directly opposite to each other, but the fowls he left whole; and so, passing between the dissected bodies, (as the manner of covenanting then was), he made his solemn vows of perpetual obedience to God; and then sitting down, in expectation of what God would do on his part, he took care to drive away all birds of prey from settling upon the sacrifice.

As soon as the sun began to set, a deep sleep, \* attended with an horrible darkness and dread of spirits, fell upon him; during which, it was revealed to him, that he was not to expect an immediate accomplishment of the divine promises; for though † himself was to die in peace, and in a good

\* That horror and dread of spirits do frequently seize on those who see visions, is evident from what Daniel tells us of himself, *I was left alone, and saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me; for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength* [ch. x. 8.]: But the description which we have in Job of this matter, is, in itself, very awful and affecting. *In thoughts from the visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth on men, fear came upon me, and trembling, which made all my bones to shake. Then a spirit passed before my face, the hair of my flesh stood up. It stood still, but I could not discern the form thereof; an image was before mine eyes, there was silence, and I heard a voice: Ch. iv. 13; &c.*

† The expression in the text is, *Thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace*, which some will have to be no more than an oriental phrase for going to the grave; but since it cannot be said of Abraham, that he did, in this sense, *go to his fathers*, (for as much as his body was so far from being laid with them in the sepulchre, that it was deposited in a country that had no manner of communication with that of his fathers), it must be allowed, that from this text an argument may justly be drawn for the separate existence of human souls. The expression, however, of *going to our fathers*, seems to have been formed from some such notion as this,—That the souls of the deceased do go to a certain place, where those of the same family, or some nation at least, are supposed to live together, and in communion; which notion certainly arises from that natural desire which all men who think their better part immortal have to see and converse with such of their relations or countrymen as have left behind them a great and lasting fame. For if the soul of Socrates, says one, were permitted to go where it desired, it would certainly associate with the worthies of Greece, with Orpheus, Musæus

Homer, &c.

good old age, yet his posterity were after that to sojourn, <sup>A. M. 2083, &c.</sup> and be afflicted in a strange country, † for the space of <sup>Ant. Christ. 1921, &c.</sup> four hundred years; at the expiration of which, God <sup>from Gen. xii.—xxv. 11.</sup> would punish their oppressors, and conduct them safe to the land which he had promised them. And for his confirmation in this, he caused the symbol of his divine presence, *viz. † a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp*, to pass between the divided pieces of the victims, and consume them, in ratification of his part of the covenant.

Ten years had Sarai expected the performance of God's <sup>Has. 11. 13.</sup> promise, and judging now, by the course of nature, that

Homer, and those ancient demi-gods, who, in their several generations, were so renowned. *Vid. Le Clerc's Commentary; and Biblioth. Bib. vol. 1. in locum.*

† Expositors have been very much divided in their opinions, how to make it out, that Abraham's posterity was in a state of servitude and affliction for the space of four hundred years. It may be observed however, that all this difficulty is removed, if we suppose that their state of affliction is to be reckoned from the time of Isaac's birth, which, to the deliverance out of the Egyptian bondage, was just four hundred and five years; but the five years are therefore not mentioned, because it is a common custom among all writers to take no notice of broken numbers (as they call them) when they name a round sum. And if there be supposed a farther difficulty, in that their sojourning is (in *Exod. xii. 40*) said to have continued *four hundred and thirty years*; in these years, the time of Abraham's sojourning (which was exactly twenty-five years from his coming into the land of Canaan to the birth of Isaac) may be comprehended, and then all the difficulty vanishes; because these twenty-five years, added to the four hundred and five years before mentioned, exactly make up the four hundred and thirty; *Patrick's Commentary.*

† By this symbol God designed to represent to Abraham, either the future state of his posterity, *the smoking furnace*, signifying Israel's misery in the land of Egypt, and *the burning lamp*, their happy escape and deliverance; or (what seems more probable) to notify his own immediate presence, since both smoke and fire are, in several parts of Scripture, mentioned as emblems and representations of the divine appearance. And therefore, as it was a thing customary, and especially in Chaldea, (from whence Abraham came), for persons covenanting together to pass between the pieces of the sacrifice; so God, who had no body to do it visibly for him, did it in this type and emblem; *Pool's Annot.; and Biblioth. Bib. in locum.*

A. M.  
2083, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1921, &c.  
from Gen.  
xii.—xxv.  
31.

her husband's issue must proceed from some other woman, and not from her own body, she prevailed with him to take her handmaid † Hagar to be his secondary wife, pleasing herself with the thoughts, that if her maid should conceive by her husband, the child would be reputed hers, and her house be established in the completion of the divine promise.

It was not long before Hagar accordingly did conceive; and forgetting now the former condition of her life, she began to value herself upon it, and to treat her mistress with insolence and ill manners. Sarai, impatient to see herself insulted by a slave, could not forbear breaking out into bitter complaints against her to her husband; but he, willing to make her easy, and withal, to discountenance any disrespectful carriage towards her, left her to treat her maid just as she pleased. This license gave Sarai an opportunity of expressing her resentment with too much severity, which the other, not able to bear, she stole from her master's house, and was making the best of her way to her own country, which was Egypt; when, in her travels through the wilderness, meeting with a fountain, she tarried to rest and refresh herself there. As she was revolving her sorrows in her mind, an angel came to her, and, after some previous questions, advised her to return home, and be subject to her mistress, because it would not be long before she should be delivered of a son, (whom he ordered her to name † *Ishmael*), whose posterity would be very numerous, a stout and warlike people living upon plunder in the deserts, and apt to annoy others, though not easily vanquished themselves.

† In concubinage, these secondary, or wives of a lower order, were accounted lawful and true wives; had an equal right to the marriage-bed with the chief wife, and their issue was reputed as legitimate; but in all other respects they were inferior. And as they had no authority in the family, nor any share in household-government; so, if they had been servants in the family before they came to be concubines, they continued in that state afterwards, and in the same subjection to their mistresses as before; *Howel's History of the Bible*.

† *Ishmael* is compounded of the words *Jishmag* and *El*, the Lord hath, or the Lord will hear: And the reason of the name is immediately subjoined by the angel, namely, *because the Lord hath heard her complaint*.

Hagar,

Hagar, hearing this comfortable news, was soon persuaded to take the angel's advice, and in memory of this surprising vision, having called first the fountain where she sat *Bier-lahai-roi*, which signifies *the well of him that lives and sees me*, she made what haste she could home, and in a short time after her return was delivered of a son, according to the angel's promise.

A. M.  
2083, &c.  
Ant. Chris.  
1921, &c.  
from Gen.  
—xxv.  
11

At the birth of Ishmael, Abram was 86 years old; and left, in the excess of his joy, he should mistake this child for the heir of the promises, which had been made to him about thirteen years after, God renewed his covenant with him; instituted the rite of circumcision upon a severe penalty; changed † his name from Abram to Abraham, and his wife's from Sarai to † Sarah, (where the difference in sense is much more than in sound), and (to complete his happiness) gave him a promise, that his wife Sarah should bear him a son. This seemed a thing so strange and almost impossible, that Abraham, falling on his face, began to intercede for the life and preservation of Ishmael, as thinking it unreasonable to ask, or wish for any thing more; but the Almighty soon assured him, that these great blessings were not designed for Ishmael, but for a son to be born of the once barren Sarah, (and therefore to be named † Isaac), which would certainly come to pass within the

Is promised  
one by Sa-  
rah.

† *Abram* is compounded of two Hebrew words, *Ab*, and *Ram*, which signify *high father*; and *Abraham* is commonly derived from three, namely, *Ab-Ram-Hamon*, *the father of a great multitude*. But this is forced and ungrammatical, having nothing to support it, but only the reason which God gives in the text, for changing Abram into Abraham, *viz.* because he was to make of him *a father of many nations*, as indeed he was; for not only the twelve tribes, but the Ishmaelites, the Edomites, and all the posterity of Keturah, descended from his loins.

† *Sarai* signifies *my princess*, or princess of my family only; but *Sarah*, the name now given her, denotes *a princess indefinitely*, and at large, according to the prediction concerning her, *a mother (or princess) of many nations shall she be, and kings of people shall come of her*, Gen. xvii. 16.

† *Isaac*, or, according to the Hebrew, *Ischack*, signifies *he or she has, or shall laugh*; and this name Sarah gave him, because when the angel promised that she should become a mother, because she was not of an age to have children, she privately laughed at the prediction; and when the child was born, she said, *God hath made me to laugh, so that all that hear will laugh with me*, Gen. xxi. 6.; Calmet's Dictionary.

A. M. compass of a year. That he might not however seem  
 2107, &c. wholly to neglect his request for Ishmael, he promised to  
 Ant. Chris. make him a great nation, and the father of twelve princes,  
 1897, &c. tho' the son begotten of Sarah should only be intitled to  
 from Gen. the covenant and promise of *making all the nations of the*  
 xii.—xxv. *earth blessed.* This was the purport of the vision; and as  
 11. soon as it was ended, Abraham delayed not (according to  
 the divine command) to circumcise himself, his son, and  
 all the males in his family; an ordinance which the He-  
 brews have ever since observed very religiously.

Is visited by  
 the angels.

Abraham continued still to dwell at Mamre; and as he  
 was sitting one day at the door of his tent, he espied three  
 persons, whom he took to be travellers, coming towards  
 him. He therefore went out to meet them; and ha-  
 ving, in a very civil and respectful manner, invited them  
 to take a small refreshment with him, (which they con-  
 sented to), he immediately gave orders for an entertain-  
 ment to be made ready †; which accordingly was served in,  
 and himself waited at the table, under the covert of a sha-  
 dy oak.

While they sat at table, † one of the guests, in-  
 quiring after Sarah, and being told that she was in the  
 tent,

† The Scripture informs us, Gen. xviii. 8. *that Abraham took butter and milk, and the calf, (i. e. the choicest parts of the calf) and set it before them, and they did eat;* where the eating of these angels must be understood according to the nature of the bodies we may suppose them to have assumed. If their bodies were aerial, their eating must have been in appearance only; if substantial, their eating might have been real, *i. e.* they might have received the meat into their bodies, which afterwards, by a divine power, was consumed there; *Pool's Annot. and Le Clerc's Commentary.*

† It is very observable, that one of these angels (as the apostle to the Hebrews calls them, ch. xiii. 3.) appeared more honourable and superior to the other two; and therefore Abraham makes his address to him as the chief, and the historian styles him *Jehovah*, which the generality both of Jews and Christians do look upon as the incommunicable name of God; and therefore it is believed by the far greatest part of the latter, that it was the Son of God who appeared in that form. There are others however (particularly some modern ones) who maintain, that it was no more than an angel who spoke to him in the person of God; though it hardly seems probable, either that Moses should call an angel by that name, or that Abraham should

tent, he then addressed himself to Abraham, and assured him, that he had still in remembrance the case of his wife Sarah, who at the end of the year should certainly have a son. Sarah, who was listening at the tent-door, and thought herself far enough past child-bearing, † could not refrain from laughing within herself; and when the stranger asked the reason of it, with such a serious air as struck her with terror, and she endeavoured to deny it, he dismissed her with this gentle reproof,—That it was highly wrong in her to mistrust what he had said unto her, since *nothing was impossible with God.*

A. M.  
2107. &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1897, &c.  
from Gen.  
xii.—xxy.  
11.

Upon this the conversation ceased, and the three heavenly guests rising up to proceed on their journey, Abraham very courteously attended them some part of the way. Their way lay towards Sodom, whither two of the guests advanced with more haste, but the third, continuing with Abraham, began to reveal a most dreadful secret, viz. That the iniquity of Sodom, and the other neighbouring cities, was come to such a prodigious height, that he was now going down with an intent to destroy them, \* if, upon inquiry;

The wickedness of Sodom and Gomorrah.

should intercede with him, as he does, when he saith, *That be far from thee, to destroy the good with the wicked: Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?* Or that an angel should peremptorily say, *If I find forty righteous men in the place, for their sakes I will not destroy it.* So that the most probable opinion is, that it was Christ himself, who is emphatically called *the Judge of all the earth*; Universal history. The Jews however have a maxim, that no angel performs two ministeries, or is sent upon two messages at once; and therefore they think, that these three angels (as they suppose them) were dispatched for different purposes; one of them, who was the chief, to bring a confirmation of the birth of Isaac; another, to conduct Lot safe out of Sodom; and the third, to overthrow the cities of the plain: And therefore, when one of them had delivered his message to Abraham, there were but two that held on their course to Sodom; *Patrick's Commentary.*

† In the preceding chapter (ver. 17.) we read, that Abraham laughed upon the same occasion, and yet was not reproved; but the difference of their conduct might be this,—That Abraham laughed for joy upon hearing the glad tidings of a son, but Sarah's laughter proceeded from a spirit of distrust and infidelity; *Pool's Annotations.*

\* Here is a wonderful instance of God's patience and goodness, who, though he knew all without inquiry, yet would not

A. M. inquiry, he found their abominations equal to the report of  
 2107, &c. them. This condescension of God, in communicating his  
 Ant. Chris. design to Abraham, gave him encouragement to make in-  
 1897, &c. tercession for the wicked inhabitants of these cities, which,  
 from Gen. in six petitionary propositions, he managed so well, as by a  
 xii.—xxv. gradual decrease of the number every time, to bring him  
 11. at last to a concession, that if even ten just persons were  
 found in Sodom, he would not destroy it: And with this  
 conditional promise he left Abraham.

In the mean time, the two other guests, (who (as we  
 said) went before, and were indeed the ministering angels  
 whom God had appointed to execute his judgments upon  
 the Sodomites), held on their course towards the city,  
 where they arrived in the evening, when Lot was sitting  
 in the gate. As soon as he saw them, he rose up to meet  
 them, and after proper salutations, † invited them to his  
 house,

condemn even the most flagitious, without good examination  
 and trial. Before the flood, God proceeded against the old  
 world upon ocular evidence; *God saw that the wickedness of  
 man was great*, Gen. vi. 5, 12. At the building of Babel, it is  
 said, that *the Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which  
 the children of men had built*, Gen. xi. 5. And now again,  
 before the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, though the  
 cry against them was great, because of the grievousness of their  
 sin, yet the Lord would not proceed against them upon com-  
 mon fame; *But I will go down, saith he, and see, whether they  
 have done according to the cry of it; and if not, I will know*,  
 ch. xviii. 21. And hereupon we may observe, that the appear-  
 ing of gods, in the manner of strangers, to punish or reward  
 men, was a common tradition among the Heathens.

Καί τε Θεοὶ ξένοισιν ὅικοιτες ἀλλοδαποῖσι

Παντοῖσιν τελέθοντες, ἐπιστροφῶσι πολλὰς,

Ἀνθρώπων ὄρεν τε καὶ εὐνομένην ἐφορῶντες.

HOM. Odyss. B.

† In the eastern countries of late indeed, some caravanfa-  
 ries have been set up; but in the time we are now speaking  
 of, there was no such thing as inns for the accommodation  
 of strangers; and therefore all travellers, when they came to  
 a town, if they were not entertained in a private house, were  
 forced to abide all night in the streets. It was therefore a  
 customary thing for those of the better sort to receive such way-  
 faring men (whether they knew them, or knew them not), into  
 their houses, and there entertain them with great civility. And  
 this is the reason why, both in sacred and profane authors, we  
 meet with such large commendations of this act of hospitality,  
 and



house to refresh and repose themselves that night; which at first they declined, but afterwards, with some importunity, complied with. But before it was time to go to rest, the inhabitants of the city, both young and old, being informed that Lot had strangers with him, and in all probability tempted with the beautiful forms which the angels had assumed, encompassed the house, and demanded of him to deliver them up, † that they might abuse them.

Lot thinking, by mild and soft words, to appease his outrageous neighbours, steps out of the door, and shutting it after him, intreats them to offer no affront to his guests; nay, rather than have the laws of hospitality violated, he offers to give up his two virgin-daughters to their discretion. But all would not do; they threaten to use him worse than his guests. A pragmatical stranger that pretended to control them in any thing! and were pressing forward to break open the door, when the two angels, with more than human strength, forced their way out, took in their host again, and then shutting the

and particularly in the epistle to the Hebrews (ch. xiii. 2.) have a precept to this effect, alluding to the very historical passage now before us, *Be not forgetful to entertain strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares*: Le Clerc's Commentary. Thus we read in Homer, that Minerva, coming in the shape of Mentor, to make Telemachus a visit,

Ἔτῃ δ' Ἰθάκης ἐνὶ δῆμῳ, ἐπὶ προθύροις Ὀδυσῆος

until he saw her, and thereupon went to her, and very kindly invited her in

ἔισι δ' Ἀθήνην  
 Βῆ δ' ἰθὺς προθύροιο, νημεσθήθη δ' ἐνὶ θυμῷ  
 Ξεῖνην δὴ τὰ θυρήσιν ἔρξαμεν ἐγγυῖν δὲ πᾶς  
 Χεῖρ' ἔλεξε τεύχεον, — &c. Odyss. A.

† That is in an unnatural and preposterous manner, which was afterwards expressly forbidden in the law; Levit. xviii. 22. and thereby made capital, ch. xx. 13. which vile sin continued among the Gentiles even in the apostles time, (as may be gathered from Rom. i. 27. and 1 Cor. vi. 9.), and was so generally practised among the people of Sodom, that from thence it took the name of *Sodomy*, and the practisers of it are called *Sodomites*, both in the Holy Scriptures, and our English laws, which (as did the law of God of old) do still make the punishment of it to be death; *Howell's History*.

door,

A. M. 2107, <sup>67c.</sup>  
Ant. Christ.  
1897, &c.  
from Gen.  
xii.—xxv.  
11.

door, † struck all that were round it with blindness, so that they were not able to find any more where it was.

Whilst they were thus groping about in vain, the two angels acquainted Lot with their commission; that their errand was to execute the divine vengeance upon that execrable place; and therefore they advised him, if he had any friends for whose safety he was concerned, that he would immediately let them know their danger, and warn them to depart in time. Lot had no relations, but only † two sons-in-law, to whom his daughters were contracted; but these, when he went to them early in the morning, desiring them to go along with him, and leave that accursed place, took the old man to be crazy, or beside himself, and made a banter and ridicule of all that he said.

In the morning, as soon as it was day, one of the angels, observing Lot to linger, (possibly to pack up some of his most valuable goods), took him, his wife, and his two daughters by the hand, and carried them, in a manner forcibly, out of the city, bidding them to fly for their lives; and lest they should be involved in the common ruin, to make the best of their way to the mountains. Lot, looking before him, and perceiving the mountains to be at a good distance, began to fear that he should not be able to reach them in time; and therefore entreated the angel,

† It is a probable opinion, that these men were struck, not with actual blindness, but with a dizziness, which disturbed their sight, and represented objects falsely and in confusion, in the same manner as the Syrians were, when sent to take Elisha, 2 Kings vi. 18. And this was no hard matter for the angels to do, by making a small alteration either in their sight, or in the air, whereby either the door might appear to them like the solid wall, or the several parts of the wall like so many doors; *Peel's Annotations*, and *Le Clerc's Commentary*.

† Several translators, as well as some Rabbins, suppose, that these were the husbands of some other of Lot's daughters, who were actually married, and had left their father's house; which seems to be confirmed by the angels ordering him to take his wife, and his two daughters that were there present: But the original words, which in our version are rendered, *his sons-in-law, which married his daughters*, may be translated, according to the interpretation of Onkelos, *his sons-in-law, which were to marry*, &c. the contract having been passed, but the marriage not consummated by cohabitation; *Universal history*, l. 1. c. 4.

that

that he might be permitted to escape to a small city, not far from Sodom, then called *Bela*, but afterwards *Zoar*, which he accordingly granted, and for his sake spared the city; but then he urged them to be expeditious, and to make all possible haste thither, because they could not begin to execute their commission until he was safely arrived.

A. M.  
2107, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1897, &c.  
from Gen.  
xii.—xxv.  
11.  
The fate of  
Lot's wife.

What the angels enjoined them at their departure, was neither to tarry in the plain, nor to look behind them. But before they got to Zoar, so it was, that Lot's wife, either out of forgetfulness of the prohibition, or out of love to the place of her habitation, looking back, was turned into a pillar of \* metallic salt, a lasting monument of God's vengeance on obstinate and unbelieving offenders: and no sooner were the rest arrived at Zoar, but the angry heavens began to pour down showers of liquid fire upon Sodom and Gomorrah, and the other wicked cities of the plain, which, within a short time, so totally consumed them, that when Abraham, the next morning, looked towards the country, he saw it all in a smোক, like the smোক of a large furnace.

The judgment indeed was so very terrible, that Lot, not thinking himself safe at Zoar, withdrew to the mountains, to which he was first directed, and for want of houses lived there, with his two daughters, in a cave. His daughters,

\* It is not agreed by commentators what was the crime for which Lot's wife was so severely punished. Some are of opinion, that she deserved it, merely for disobeying the commandment of the angel, and expressing too much concern for a people that deserved no compassion. Others say, that being anxiously solicitous for her daughters that were married there, and turning about to see whether they followed her, she saw the divine Shechinah, or majestic appearance of God, descending to destroy the place, which was the occasion of her metamorphosis. Others suppose, that being in confederacy with the Sodomites, she told them that her husband was distracted, and gave them notice, when any strangers came to lodge with him, by a sign of smোক by day, and of fire by night; whilst others again imagine, that the Scripture does not represent the fate which she met with as a punishment for any crime, but as a thing merely accidental; *Universal history*, l. 1. c. 4. There is one circumstance however in the text, viz. that *she looked from behind her husband*, whom she followed, which seems to be mentioned as the reason of this her presumption, because she could do it without her husband's observation or reproof; to which she seems to have had a greater regard than to the all-seeing eye of God; *Pool's Annotations*.

A. M.  
2107, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1897, &c.  
from Gen.  
xii.—xxv.  
11.

ters had lost their espoused husbands in Sodom, and now despairing of having any other, they plotted together, to deceive their father, and have issue by him. The elder was the forwarder of this wicked contrivance; and therefore representing to her sister the condition they were in, she proposed the expedient of making her father drunk with wine; and accordingly, one evening they put their project in execution. For having intoxicated the old man, they put him to bed, and the elder lying with him without his privacy, obtained her end. The next night they employed the same artifice, and the younger had her turn: So that in the event they had each of them a son from this incestuous commerce, \* whereof the elder's was called *Moab*, and the younger's *Ammon*, from whom the Moabites and Ammonites (both bitter enemies in after times to Israel) were descended. But to return to Abraham.

A. M.  
2108, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1896, &c.  
Abraham's  
intercourse  
with Abimelech.

After the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, he removed from Mamre, (probably to avoid the stench of the vale of Siddim), and came and dwelt not far from † Gerar,

a

\* Moab settled himself in the parts adjoining eastward to the Salt-sea, or Lacus Asphaltites, and in the neighbouring tract on the river Jordan eastward: for we plainly learn, that great part of the kingdom of Sihon King of the Amorites, did formerly belong to the Moabites, Numb. xxi. 21. Ammon seated himself in the parts adjoining to Moab: For it is evident from Scripture, that the Ammonites were formerly possessed of the parts on the east of Jordan about the river Jabbok, or of the northern part of that which was afterwards the kingdom of Sihon. *Vid.* Numb. xxi. 13.; Josh. xiii. 25.; and Judg. xi. 13, 23. But these things we shall have occasion to illustrate more fully, when we come to describe the course of the travels of the Israelites out of Egypt into the land of Canaan; *Well's Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. 1.

† Gerar was a regal city, situate not far from the angle where the south and west sides of Palestine meet; and the country, to which it gave the name, extended itself pretty far into Arabia Petræa. *Beerseba* signifies *the well of the oath*, because here Abraham made a covenant with Abimelech King of Gerar, concerning a well which he had digged hard by. Here he likewise planted a grove, and instituted an oratory, or place of divine worship; and in process of time, here was a city, or considerable town built, which is taken notice of by Heathen authors under the name of *Berzimme*, or *Bersabe*. Kadesh was a city lying on the edge of the land of Canaan, to the south of Hebron;

Shur

a city of the Philistines, at a Place named afterwards *Beer-sheba*, between Cadish and Shur, where the same adventure happened to him which he had met with in Egypt. The king of Gerar, supposing Sarah to be no more than Abraham's sister, (for here likewise she passed under that character), † notwithstanding her advanced age, saw charms enough in her to invite her unto his bed; but God appeared to him in a dream, and threatened him with immediate death, if he did not return her untouched to her husband. Whereupon Abimelech (for that was the common name in those days of all the kings of Palestine) calls for Abraham, and expostulates the matter with him; who, in excuse for the fiction, alledged his fears, lest the beauty of his wife should have endangered his life: Though it was not altogether a fiction, (as he said), because she was so near a relation to him (especially by his father's side) as might properly enough be called a sister. This apology pacified the king: so that he not only restored him his wife, but giving her † a thousand pieces of silver, desired her || to buy a veil with the

A. M.  
2108, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1896, &c.  
from Gen.  
xx.—xxv.  
11.

Shur was the name of that part of Arabia *Petræa* which joins Egypt and the Red-sea; and somewhere between those two was that well, near to which Abraham, when he left Mamre, fixed his habitation; *Well's Geog. of the Old Test. vol. 1.*

† Sarah was now ninety years old when Abimelech took her into his family, whence it may seem very strange, that a woman of her age should look so very well, as to be desired by a king, who, in those days, might have commanded the most youthful beauties in his whole dominions. But, according to some interpreters, people of ninety then were as fresh and vigorous as those of forty now; and Sarah might, even in that respect, excel her coevals, by reason of her sterility, which is a great preserver of beauty: though others were of opinion, that God, having taken away her sterility, her beauty returned with her fruitfulness; for by this time it is computed that she had conceived her son; *Howel's Hist. l. 1.*

† The original word does not so properly mean *pieces* as *weight*, because money was then paid by weight; and may therefore be interpreted a thousand shekels of silver *i. e.* about 57 pounds in the value of our present money; *Bedford's Scripture-chronology, l. 3. c. 4.*

|| The words in the text according to our translation, are these, *And unto Sarah he said, Behold, I have given to thy brother a thousand pieces of Silver; behold, he is to thee a covering of the eyes, unto all that are with thee, and to all others; thus she was reproved.* Where we must observe in the first place, that the

A. M.  
2103, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1896, &c.  
from Gen.  
xx—xxv.  
11.

the money, which might not only be a covering to her face, but in every country an indication likewise of her being a married woman, because he held it inconvenient for her any more to pass for her husband's sister. On her husband he bestowed in like manner plenty of other kinds of wealth, and made him a free offer to live where he pleased in his dominions; which generous treatment engaged Abraham to intercede with God † to remove the disabili-

word which we render *reprove*, does more properly signify *to instruct*, which must certainly be the right sense of the word here, considering that Abimelech had already accepted of Abraham's apology, and was so far from irritating either him or Sarah by reproaches, that, on the contrary, he was endeavouring to win their friendship with very considerable presents. But then, as to the covering of Sarah's eyes, this may be variously expounded, according as the words refer either to Abraham, or to the pieces of silver. If they refer to Abraham, then the meaning of the king's words will be, "Thou needest no other defence of thy chastity than he; nor hast thou any reason hereafter to say, he is thy brother; for so dear is he to God, that God will defend him, and he will defend thee; and not only him, but all that were with thee, and that even among strangers, without any such shifts and equivocations, as you have hitherto thought fit to make use of." But if the words refer to the present of a thousand pieces, then the sense must be, "I have given him that sum of money to buy thee a veil, that all who converse with thee here, or in any other country where thou shalt come, may know thee to be a married woman." This sense indeed is countenanced by the LXX: but others have thought that it might better be rendered thus,— "This money, which I have paid thy husband as a mulct for my having endeavoured to take thee from him, will be a means to deter all others from having any concern with thee, when once they shall hear how much I have suffered upon that account." The reader is left to his own option; but we should rather think, that the last of these interpretations is preferable; *Patrick and Le Clerc's Commentaries*.

† The text tells us, that *God had fast closed up all the wombs of the house of Abimelech*; which phrase in Scripture does frequently denote *barrenness*; but that it cannot do so here, is pretty plain from hence—That the history of this transaction is of too short a continuance to give space for a discovery of this kind, *viz.* whether the women, by God's infliction, were become actually barren or no? And therefore the other opinion is more probable, *viz.* that it was such an indisposition, or sore or swelling in the secret parts, that the men could neither enjoy their wives, nor the women who were with child could be delivered; *Pool's Annotations*; and *Patrick's Commentaries*.

ty which he had inflicted on the king, in order to restrain him from Sarah ; and to restore the queen and the other women of the nation to their wonted fertility, which for some time seems to have been obstructed.

An year was now passed, and the time appointed come when Sarah brought forth a son, whom Abraham, according to the divine direction, called *Isaac*, and circumcised him the eighth day. They were now in the zenith of their happiness. Sarah suckled the child herself; and weaned him at the usual time ; and Abraham, upon this joyful occasion, made a great feast : But, in the midst of their festivity, Sarah perceiving that Ishmael treated her son with contempt and derision, was so enraged against him, that she never ceased importuning her husband to turn both mother and son out of doors. Abraham had the tenderness of a father to his child. He loved Ishmael, and was loth to part with him ; and therefore applied himself to God, in this arduous juncture, for direction. But God confirming what Sarah had requested, and promising moreover to make of Ishmael (because he was his son) a populous nation, though his portion and inheritance was not to be in that land, which was all long designed for the descendents of Isaac, he was at last prevailed on to send him and his mother away.

Calling Hagar, therefore, one morning, to him, he ordered her to take her son, some water, and other provision with her, to go into the neighbouring wilderness, and to tarry by the side of a certain fountain she would meet with there, until she should hear farther from him. She did as she was ordered ; but mistaking their way, and missing of the fountain, they had quite exhausted the little water they had, and her son being in an high fever, and ready to die with thirst, to shade him a little from the scorching heat, she placed him under a tree, whilst herself, despairing to find any succour in the place, and not bearing to

\* It is not easy to guess how long it was that women gave suck in those days, because the ancient Hebrews are divided about it: some affirming that Isaac was weaned when he was two, some five, and others not till he was twelve years old. If however we will judge by what the young Maccabee's mother said to him, *My son, remember I have suckled thee three years*, 2 Maccab. vii. 27. that time will appear the most probable. For there is no reason to believe that Isaac was weaned before the usual term, for want of care and affection in his mother ; *Patrick's Commentaries ; and Univers. hist. l. i. c. 7.*

A. M.  
2108, &c.  
Ant. Christ  
1896, &c.  
from Gen.  
xx.—xxv.  
11.

The birth  
of Isaac,  
and expul-  
sion of Ish-  
mael.

A. M.  
2108, &c.  
Ant Christ.  
1896, &c.  
from Gen.  
xx.—xxv.  
11.

see him expire before her eyes, withdrew a little, and began to bemoan her hard fate, while, with earnest cries and tears, the child was imploring the divine help and commiseration. The divine help was not long a coming; for suddenly an angel from heaven bids the weeping mother dry up her tears, and fear not; tells her, that God had heard the child's prayer, and would make of him a great nation; and, for their present relief, points to her a well of water, which she had not perceived before; and directs her how to cure her son. Refreshed with this water, and supported with other things which Abraham (very probably) from time to time might send them; instead of going into Egypt, as they first intended, they here took up their abode in the wilderness of Paran, where Ishmael in a short time growing a very expert archer, was able to get provisions both for himself and his mother; and when he grew up unto man's estate, his mother, who was herself an Egyptian, married him to a woman of her own country, \* by whom he had twelve sons, who dwelt from Havilah unto Shur, *i. e.* in several parts of Arabia Petræa, whereof the western part, towards Egypt, is in Scripture called *Shur*, and the eastern part, towards the Persian gulf, *Havilah*.

Abraham's  
covenant  
with Abi-  
melech.

Abraham, in the mean time, having accepted of Abimelech's offer, continued to live in the land of Palestine, and, as his riches and power every day increased, Abimelech, fearing lest, at some time or other, he might attempt something in prejudice of him, or his successors in the government, came, with the general of his forces, whose name was *Phicol*, and made a solemn league of friendship with him. Some † little difference had arisen between

\* The names of these sons are, *Nebajoth, Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam, Mifsham, Dumah, Massa, Hadar, Tema, Jethur, Naphtish, and Kedemah*, twelve princes according to their nations, Gen. xxv. 13. &c.; and as their descendents were, from their father, denominated by the common name of *Ishmaelites*, so, from Hagar, the mother of Ishmael, they are also called *Hagarens*, or *Hagarites*, under which name we find some footsteps of them in Heathen authors; but certain it is, that the Arabians do, to this very day, value themselves upon their being descended from Ishmael; *Wells's Geography of the Old Test.* vol. 1.

† It will not seem strange that Abraham should look upon the digging of a well as a matter of such consequence, considering how ill furnished these eastern countries were with water; and it was highly prudent of him to complain of grievances now, before



between Abimelech's servants and Abraham's, about a well which Abraham's servants had digged. But after a little expostulation, they quickly came to a good understanding. The well was restored to Abraham, and the place where they entered into this solemn covenant was thenceforth called *Beer-sheba*. Here Abraham intending to end his days, unless God should otherwise dispose of him, planted a grove for a place of religious worship, and built an altar, and called on *the name of the Lord, the everlasting God*, who was minded || to make one trial more of his faith and fidelity, and a severe trial it was.

God had ordered him to send away Ishmael, and given him assurance, that the blessings promised to his posterity were not to take place in any part of the branch of his family, but that Isaac should be the son of the promise, and his descendents heirs of that happiness and prosperity which he had made over to him; and now he was pleased to require him, with his own hands, to destroy this his son, his only son Isaac. A cruel injunction! But Abraham, we see, never stayed to expostulate about the severity or unlawfulness of it; but, on the very next morning, without saying a word to any of his family, gets all things ready, and leaving it to God to make good his own promises, resolves to obey. To that purpose, taking his son Isaac with him, and some servants, with provisions and

fore he entered into covenant with Abimelech, that they being once redressed, there might remain no occasion of quarrel afterwards, *Bibliotheca Biblica, vol. 1.*

¶ The words in the text are, *that God did tempt Abraham*; but God is said to tempt no man; and therefore all that he could be supposed to do in this case, was only to make trial of him; and that too, not to inform himself of the sincerity and steadiness of his faith, but in order to the holy patriarch's own justification, and to make him an illustrious pattern of an entire dependence on the Almighty, to future saints and confessors. The Jews reckon up ten trials of Abraham, of which the last was the greatest. 1. God's command to him to leave his country. 2. The famine which forced him to go into Egypt. 3. Pharaoh's taking his wife from him. 4. His war with the four kings. His despair of having Isaac by Sarah, and marrying Hagar on that account. 6. His circumcision in his old age. 7. His wife's being again taken from him by Abimelech. 8. The expulsion of Hagar when she was with child by him. 9. His expulsion of her and Ishmael. And, 10. His oblation of his only son Isaac; *Bibliotheca Biblica, vol. 1.*

instruments

A. M. instruments proper for the sacrifice, he sets out; and \*  
 2083, &c. in three days time came within sight of † mount Moriah,  
 Ant. Christ. the place which God had appointed for that dreadful scene.  
 1921, &c. Here, leaving his servants behind, that they might not dis-  
 from Gen. turb him with their intercessions or lamentations, he goes  
 xx.—xxv. up to the mount, without betraying any sign of grief or  
 11. concern that might raise a suspicion in his son. His son,  
 on the other hand, laden with the wood, and the other  
 materials for a burnt-offering, but perceiving nothing proper  
 for a victim, could not forbear asking his father, Where  
 it was? Such a question, at such a time, was enough to  
 have staggered any heart less firm than Abraham's, who  
 only answered calmly, *That God would provide himself with*  
*one*, little thinking how prophetically he spake; for he had  
 no sooner bound his son upon the wood, and stretched  
 out his hand to give the fatal blow, || but God was pleased  
 to

\* The better to explain how Abraham came to know the  
 place which God had appointed, the Jews have a tradition,  
 that when God bad him go thither, and offer his son, he asked  
 how he should know it? To which the answer was, That  
 wheresoever he should see the glory of the Lord, that should be  
 the place; and that accordingly, when he came within sight  
 of mount Moriah, he beheld a pillar of fire, reaching from the  
 earth to the heavens, whereby he knew that that was the place;  
*Hottingeri Historia Orient. p. 36.*

† This mountain, whereon Abraham was ordered to offer  
 his son Isaac, was certainly the same on which the temple was  
 afterwards built by Solomon, and on part of which, viz.  
 Mount Calvary, Christ did afterwards actually offer himself un-  
 to God for the redemption of mankind, which offering of his,  
 as it seems to have been designedly prefigured by the inten-  
 tional offering of Isaac, so it might seem good to divine reason  
 to assign the same for the typical offering of Isaac, where, in  
 due time, the Antitype, our Redeemer, was to be offered. But  
 instead of *Moriah*, the Samaritans read *Moreh*, and pretend  
 that God sent Abraham towards Sichem, where certainly was  
 Moreh [Gen. xii. 6.; and Deut xi 30.]; and that it was upon  
 mount Gerizim that Isaac was brought, in order to be sacrificed.  
 But this, in all probability, is no more than a contrivance to en-  
 hance the glory of their temple; *Well's Geog. and Calmet's History.*

|| The words of God are, *Lay not thy hand on the child, neither*  
*do thou any thing unto him*, Gen. xxii. 12.; and yet in Heb. xi. 17.  
 we are told, *that Abraham offered up Isaac, when he was tried.*  
 But this is easily reconciled, if we do but remember that God  
 always takes that for done (whether in the commission of sin,  
 or

to stop him short || by a voice from heaven, forbidding him to do it, and declaring a satisfaction in this last test of his obedience. Surprised at the voice, Abraham turns about to see whence it came, and spies a ram caught by the horns in a thick bush, which he immediately took, and offered up for a burnt-offering instead of his son; and, in memory of the whole transaction, called the place where it was done *Jehovah-jireb*, in allusion to the answer which he gave to his son's question, *God will provide himself a lamb.*

A. M.  
2108, &c.  
A. D. Christ.  
1896, &c.  
from Gen.  
xx. — xxv.  
II.

Thus having performed an act of such perfect and heroic obedience as engaged God to renew his promise with great amplifications, and to confirm it to him with an oath, he went and rejoined his servants; and returning to Beer-sheba, was no sooner arrived, but he was welcomed with the joyful news of the increase of his family, viz. that Milcah, his brother Nahor's wife, \* had born him a  
numerous

or performance of duty) where there is a will and intention to do it, supposing the person to have an opportunity; *Street's dividing the hoof.*

|| The words in the beginning of the chapter are, *that God tempted Abraham*, bidding him to go and sacrifice his son: But in ver. 11. it is said, that the angel of the Lord forbade him to do it: from whence some may infer, that Abraham obeyed the angel, who bad him spare his son, against the command of God, who bad him slay him. But to solve this difficulty, (if it be thought any), we must observe, that whenever the Holy Scriptures tell us, that God said any thing, or that an angel spake, we are always to understand both of them to have been present; for the angels ever attend upon the divine Majesty, and, being his ministers, do nothing but by his order: So that when he is said to speak, it is by them; and when they are said to speak, it is from him. It is the Lord therefore that speaks, whosoever be the minister; *Patrick's Comment.* And the speech which God makes to Abraham upon this weighty occasion, the Jewish historian comments upon in this manner, "Hold thy hand, and spare thy son, " for I did not require it of thee out of any delight I take in human blood, or that I would make a father the assassin of the very child which I myself have given him; but to see how far " thou wouldest submit to thy God in a self-denial to thine own inclination and nature. But now, since I find thy piety to be " proof against all temptations, I do here confirm over again to " thee all my former promises," &c.; *Joseph. Antiq. l. 1. c. 14.*

\* The children of Nahor by Milcah were Huz, Buz, Kemuel,

A. M.  
2108, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1896, &c.  
from Gen.  
xx.—xxv.  
xi.

Sarah's  
death and  
burial.

numerous issue, which † determined him, at a proper time, to send thither for a wife for his son Isaac: But \* before he did that, it happened that his own wife Sarah died. in the 127th year of her age, at Kirjatharba, afterwards called *Hebron* in the country of *Canaan*.

† Abraham was then probably at Beer-sheba; but being informed of her death, he came to Hebron, there to mourn, and perform his last offices for her; but what he wanted was a convenient burying-place. He therefore ad-

mucl, Chezed, Hazo, Pildash, Jidlaph, and Bethuel, who begat Rebecca the wife of Isaac; and by his concubine, whose name was *Reumah*, he had Tebah, Gaham, Thahash, and Maachah, from whom the city of Maachah, or Abel-Beth-Maachah, whose territories are supposed to have been situate between the two Lebanons, might probably receive its name; Gen. xxii. 20. &c.

† Nahor very probably either removed with his father Terah (as Abraham did) from Ur in Chaldea, and settled at Haran in Mesopotamia, or not long after, followed them thither; because, after that the family left Ur, the first news we hear of him is, that he was settled at Haran, and there had got a numerous family; and it is upon the account of his brother's residing there, as well as that himself had once lived there, that Abraham calls it his *own country*, and the place *where his kindred dwelt*; Gen. xxiv. 4.

\* Some of the Arabian writers tell us, that when Sarah heard that Abraham had taken her only son unto the mountains, to sacrifice to God, she fell into a very great agony, which brought on a fit of sickness whereof she died; *Eutychii Annales*, p. 74. Josephus indeed informs us, that she died soon after this event; but if (as he says) Isaac was five and twenty years old when his father would have sacrificed him, Sarah was ninety years old when she bore him, and 125 when she died, she must (according to his own calculation) have lived eleven or twelve years after it, and this our learned Usher makes the difference between his sacrifice and her death; *Calmet's Dictionary*.

† There is something of obscurity in this passage of the history. Sarah is said to have died at Hebron; and yet we have no notice of Abraham removing from Beer-sheba to that place; so that, upon some occasion or other, we must suppose them to have been parted, and that Sarah went to Hebron, while Abraham kept still in his own habitation: for to say that Abraham came from his own tent to that of his wife's, to make lamentation for her, is not consistent with the sequel of the text.

dressed himself to the people, assembled in a body † at the gate of the city, intreating them to allow him the liberty of burying his wife among them; for as he was a stranger in the country, and had no land then of his own, he could pretend to no right of giving honourable interment to his dead in the sepulchres of the country, without the consent of the proprietors. He therefore desired Ephron, one of the principal inhabitants, † to sell him the field called *Machpelah* †, with the cave and sepulchre belonging to it. The purchase was made before all the people of Hebron, at the price of 400 shekels of silver, *i. e.* about

A. M.  
 2108, &c.  
 Ant. Chris.  
 1896, &c.  
 from Gen.  
 xx.—xxv.  
 11.

† The gates of cities in these days, and for many ages after, were the places of judicature, and common resort. Here the governors and elders of the city met to hear complaints, administer justice, make conveyances of titles and estates, and, in short, to transact all the public affairs of the place. And from hence is that passage in the Psalmist, *They shall not be ashamed when they speak to their enemies in the gate*, Psalm cxxvii. ver. ult. *i. e.* when they are accused by them before the court of magistrates. It is probable that the room or hall where these magistrates sat was over the gate, because Boaz is said to go up to the gate; and the reason of having it built there, seems to have been for the convenience of the inhabitants, who being all husbandmen, and forced to pass and repass every morning and evening, as they went and came from their labour, might be more easily called as they went by, whenever they were wanted to appear in any business. So that, from the whole, it appears that Abraham could not have made his purchase from Ephron, without his having recourse to the city gates; *Universal History*, l. 1. c. 7.

† It is an observation of all those who have written about the sepulture of the ancients, that their dormitories or burying-places were never in cities, much less in temples or churches, but always in the fields or gardens. The use of grottos or vaults is certainly very ancient; *Bibliotheca Biblica*, vol. 1.

† The word in Hebrew signifies *double*, whence it is supposed by some, that there was one cave within another, or two or more contiguous to each other, in one of which Sarah was buried, and afterwards Abraham in another. But those who derive it from the Arabic tell us, that in that language it signifies *shut up*, or *walled up*, which, in eastern countries, was a common way of making their tombs, to prevent thieves from harbouring in them, or to hinder them from being in any manner violated or profaned. And if this be the right derivation, then may *the cave of Machpelah* be translated *the cave that was shut up*; Calmet's Dict.

A. M. 2108, &c.  
Ant. Chris.  
1896, &c.  
from Gen.  
xx.—xlv.  
II.

Isaac's marriage with Rebecca.

sixty pounds Sterling; and there he buried Sarah, after that he had mourned for her, † according to the custom of the country.

By this time Abraham was well advanced in years; and being desirous to see his son Isaac married, and settled in the world before he died, he called Eliezer, the steward of his houthold, and † having taken an oath of him (in case he died first) to procure his son a

† What the rites of mourning for the dead in those days were, it is hard to determine, because we have as yet no particulars of it recorded in Scripture. From the subsequent practice however we may infer, that they shut themselves up from company, neglected the care of their bodies, and abstained from their ordinary food. They fasted, and lay upon the ground; they wept, tore their cloaths, smote their breasts, went bare-foot, and pulled off their hair and beards. The time of mourning was usually for seven days; but it was commonly lengthened or shortened, according to the state or circumstances wherein they found themselves; and, during this period, they did not dress themselves, nor make their beds, nor cover their heads, nor shave themselves, nor cut their nails, nor go into the bath, nor salute anybody, nay, nor so much as read the book of the law, or say their usual prayers; *Patrick's Commentary; and Calmet's Dictionary, under the word Mourning.*

† The form in which Eliezer took his oath, was, we are told, by putting his hand under his master's thigh. This is the first time we read of that ceremony, which was afterwards used by Jacob and Joseph when they were a-dying; and the oddness of it has inclined some judicious authors to think, that it implies a more solemn mystery than men are aware of. Some suppose that it was swearing by the Messiah, (who was to come out of Abraham's loins or thigh), (Gen. xlv. 26.), others, by the covenant of circumcision, the part circumcised being near the thigh. But the most probable conjecture is, that as it could not well be done but in a kneeling posture, so it was a token of subjection and homage from a servant to his lord, he sitting, and his servant putting his hand under him; and thereby implicitly declaring, I am under your power, and ready to do whatever you shall think fit to command me. The custom, however, afterwards, in swearing, was *to lift up the hand to heaven*, (Gen. xiv. 22.) and upon account of both these ceremonies, the Greek word *ἐκλως*, which signifies *an oath*, is supposed to be derived from the Hebrew *jereck*, *a thigh*; as the word *שמרה*, *to swear*, is supposed to come from the Hebrew *jamin*, which is *the right hand*; Ainsworth's Annot.

wife

wife \* of his own kindred, and not of the Canaanites, he sent him into Mesopotamia, with full instructions and authority to conclude the marriage, and with a train suitable to such an embassy.

A. M.  
2108, &c.  
Ant. Chris.  
1896, &c.  
from Gen.  
xx.—xxv.  
11.

Eliezer, in coming to Haran, the place where his master's relations dwelt, stopped at the public well (whither it was customary for the young women of the place to come every morning and evening for water) to rest and refresh his camels; and being pensive and solicitous how to perform his message to his master's satisfaction, he made a mental prayer to God, that he would be pleased to give this token of the successfulness of his journey, viz. That the person designed for his young master's wife might discover it by some token of courtesy to him. In the mean time \* Rebecca came to the well; and when Eliezer desired her to give him a draught of her water, she offered her service, not only to draw for him, but for his camels likewise, which (being the very sign he requested of God) he permitted her to do for his fuller conviction.

While he saw her thus employed, he took notice that the damsel was exceeding beautiful; and having inquired into her relations and family, he found that she was his master's brother's grand-daughter; Whereupon he immediately took out a pair of gold ear-rings, to the weight of two shekels, and a pair of bracelets, which weighed about ten, with which he presented her, desiring,

\* Not but that Laban and his family were idolaters, as well as the Canaanites; but then he was much better than they, because he still retained the worship of the true God, as appears from the sequel of the history, [ch. xxiv. 37.] though blended and corrupted with very gross mixtures and additions of his own; whereas the Canaanites had utterly revolted from it; *Grot. Par.*

\* Great was the simplicity and humility of those early days, when persons of the best rank, and of the female sex too, did not disdain to be employed in such servile offices. Thus, in the following age, Jacob found his cousin Rachel watering her father's sheep; and, several ages after that, the seven daughters of Jethrô, who was a prince as well as a priest of Midian, kept their father's flocks, and used to draw water for the cattle. So well has our author expressed that simplicity of manners, which we may observe in Homer, or Hesiod, or any of the most ancient writers; *Howell's History*, l. 1.

A. M. at the same time, that if they had any room at her  
 2108, &c. house, he might be permitted to lodge there that night.  
 Ant. Chris. Her answer was, that that he might do very conveniently;  
 1896, &c. and so, accepting of the presents, she made haste home  
 from Gen. to acquaint the family with this adventure, leaving Elie-  
 xx.—xxv. zer full of contemplations and acknowledgments to  
 11. the divine favour, for this happy, surprisngly happy in-  
 cident.

As soon as Laban had heard what his sister had to tell him, he went immediately, and inviting the stranger into his house, ordered all proper provision to be made for the civil reception both of himself and his retinue. At his first introduction, Eliezer opened to the family the occasion of his coming; acquainted them with the success that had attended him in his journey; and gave them a full account of the circumstances of his master's family; of the wealth and prosperity wherewith God had blessed him; of the son and heir which he had given him in his old age; and of the large expectances which this his heir had, not only from the prerogative of his birth, but from the donation and entail of all his father's possessions. And having in this manner delivered his credentials, he demanded immediately, even before he did either eat or drink with them, their positive answer.

† Laban and Bethuel were both of opinion, that the divine providence was very visible in this whole affair; and therefore concluding, that it would be mighty wrong to refuse Rebecca upon this occasion, they consented that he should carry her to her intended husband as soon as he pleased: So that matters being thus far agreed on, he thought it now proper to present her with the jewels of silver and gold, and fine raiment, which he had brought for her; and he having, at the same time,

† This Bethuel could not be her father, because, had he been so, it would have been improper to have had Laban either named before him, or giving answer to Abraham's messenger when his father was by; and therefore, since Josephus makes the damsel tell Eliezer, that her father had been dead long ago, and that she was left to the care of her brother Laban, this Bethuel, who is here named after Laban, and is never more taken notice of during the whole transaction, must have been some younger brother of the family; *Universal History*, l. 1. c. 7.



made some considerable presents to her mother, and brethren, the remainder of the day they devoted to feasting and mirth. In the morning Eliezer, who began to think the time long till his master was acquainted with the good success of his negotiation, desired to be dismissed. The request a little startled them. They promised themselves, that at least he would stay ten days longer : But he persisting in his resolution, the thing was referred to Rebecca, who consented to go with him as soon as he pleased : So that all things being presently made ready, and having \* the bridal blessing bestowed upon her, she took her leave and departed, with her nurse (whose name was *Deborah*) and other servants appointed to attend her.

Whilst Eliezer was conveying his fair charge to his master's house, Providence had so ordered the matter, that Isaac, taking a solitary walk in the fields that evening, happened to espy his servants and camels upon the road, and thereupon went forwards to meet them. As soon as Rebecca was informed who he was, she alighted, and \* throwing her vail over her face (as the manner of women then was) she waited to receive his first compliments. † Isaac, with great respect, addressed himself to her,

\* The blessing is comprised in these words : *Be thou a mother of thousands of millions, and let thy seed possess the gate of those that hate them* ; which was afterwards made a solemn form of benediction in leading the bride to her bridegroom.

\* The use of the vail was the universal practice among all nations, as far as history can inform us, except the Spartans, who are reported to have been singular, in that their virgins were permitted to appear without a vail ; but after they were married they were never to be seen in public without it. It was from this practice of vailing the bride, when she was brought to the bridegroom, in token both of modesty and subjection, that the presents which he made her upon this occasion, were by the Greeks called ἀνακαλυπτήρια : And thus the poets, in celebrating the marriage of Proserpine to Pluto, have this fiction, ——— That, upon unvailing his bride, he presented her with the island of Sicily, in lieu of her vail, which he took from her ; *Bibliotheca Bibl.* vol. 1.

† It may seem a little strange, that upon so singular an occasion, no mention should be made of Abraham, who was a principal party concerned herein ; but for this some account by supposing

A. M. 2108 &c. Ant. Christ. 1896, &c. from Gen. xx.—xxv. 11. her, and conducted her into his mother's tent, which was fitted up for her apartment. Not long after they were married together, and Isaac grew so fond of her, that the love he had for his wife helped to alleviate the grief he had long conceived for the loss of his mother.

After this happy marriage of his son, Abraham still finding himself strong enough to make a new addition to his family, took another wife, † whose name was *Keturah*, by whom he \* had six sons : But lest they should interfere

supposing, that Abraham before this had married *Keturah* (tho' not to break in with the account of his son's marriage, the history relates it later) and resigned his estate, and the government of his family, into the hands of Isaac, chusing to live the remainder of his days in retirement with his new consort.

† *Keturah* is supposed, by some Jewish interpreters, to be the same with *Hagar*, whom Abraham, after his wife's death, sent for again, and by her had all the six sons here mentioned : But besides that *Hagar* must, by this time, have been above eighty years of age, and consequently too old to bear so many children, the text itself seems to be against this supposition ; for it informs, that Abraham added, or proceeded to take another wife, which is a different thing to his recalling the old one. The more probable opinion therefore is, that this *Keturah* was a domestic of his own, a Canaanite perhaps, whom he had converted to the true religion ; but then the difficulty is, how Abraham could dispose of so many sons, in so short a space as that which intervened between his wife's and his own death. To solve this, some have supposed, that this *Keturah* became his wife, *i. e.* wife of the second order, long before the death of Sarah, even immediately after he parted with *Hagar* ; but then this supposition is contrary to the sense of the original ; and therefore, if we are minded to adhere to that, we must say, that Abraham's living almost forty years after Sarah's death, gave him time enough to dispose of the sons begotten of *Keturah*, as the renovation of his strength, which was certainly miraculous, (for forty years before he is said to have been dead to all such purposes ; Rom. vi. 19.) enabled him to beget them ; *Calmet's Dictionary* ; *Ainsworth's Annotations* ; and *Universal History*, l. i. c. 7.

\* His sons were, *Zimram*, *Joksham*, *Medan*, *Midian*, *Ishbak*, and *Shuah*, whereof *Joksham* had *Sheba*, and *Dedan* ; *Dedan* had *Ashurin*, *Letushim*, and *Leummin* : And *Midian* had *Ephah*, *Epher*, *Hanock*, *Abidah*, and *Eldach* ; Gen. xxv. 2. &c.

And

interfere with Isaac in his inheritance of Canaan, as they grew up, he portioned them off, and sent them away towards the east, where, settling in Arabia and Syria, they became, in time, heads of different nations; whereof we have footsteps both in sacred and profane history.

A. M.  
2108, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1896, &c.  
from Gen.  
xx.—xxv.  
11.

This is the substance of what the sacred history relates concerning the great patriarch Abraham. † At length, laden with honours, and outworn with age, after he had lived the space of an hundred and seventy-five years, he took leave of this world: And by his two sons, Ishmael and Isaac, was buried in the cave of Machpelah, (where above forty years before he had repositied the remains of his beloved wife Sarah), leaving a name famous to all posterity behind him.

### The OBJECTION.

“ **B**UT how great soever the name of the patriarch Abraham may be thought, there are some grounds to believe, that he did not deserve properly all the commendations that have been heaped on him. The sacred historian indeed has been very copious upon this

And the footsteps we find of these in history (according to the best conjectures) are such as follow. From Zimram, in all probability, were descended the Zamarens, a people mentioned by Pliny; *Natural History*, l. 6. c. 28. From Sheba, the Sabæans, mentioned in Job i. 15. From Dedan, the Dedanim, mentioned in Isaiah xxi. 13. From Midian, the Midianites, mentioned in several places. From Shuan the Shuites, mentioned in Job ii. 11. From Ephah, was a town of the same name, mentioned by Isaiah, lx. 6. From Hanoah, a country called *Canuana*, mentioned by Pliny; *Natural History*, l. 6. c. 28. And (to name no more) from Medan, a country called *Mediana*, in which is the famous city of Mecca, where Mahomet was born; *Bedford's Chronology*, l. 3. c. 4. and *Well's Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. 1.

† This account of Abraham's death is given by way of anticipation: For when the text has recited his sons, and their settlement, it brings him, and Ishmael to their graves; not that they died before the birth of his two grandsons, Jacob and Esau, as the text has placed things, (for Abraham lived till they were fifteen years old, and Ishmael till they were sixty three), but having no more to say of the father and the son, Moses here concludes their history at once; *Lightfoot*.

“ subject.

A. M. 2108, &c. Ant. Christ. 1896, &c. from Gen. xx.—xxv. 11.

“ subject. He has employed no less than seventeen chapters in recording the transactions of his life, and has drawn some parts of his character in very fair colours. He has represented him \* as a strenuous opposer of idolatry, and a zealous promoter of the true worship of God; wise and prudent, humble and condescending, generous and hospitable; with a courage undaunted, a faith impregnable, and a resolution able to surmount all difficulties; honoured and beloved by his own family, familiar with kings and princes, conversant with angels, and intimate with God. But notwithstanding \* all this  
“ profusion

\* The Jewish writers tell us, that Abraham was bred up in the religion of the Zabii, who in those early times made images or representations of the sun, moon, and stars, to worship, and that his father Terah was a maker, and seller of these images; that Abraham being well skilled in the astronomy of those times, learned from thence, that the celestial bodies could neither make, nor move themselves by their own power, but that there was one only God, who created, preserved, and governed all other things, and that therefore they ought to worship him alone; that his father Terah going from home about particular business, and leaving Abraham in the shop to sell the images, he in his absence broke them all, except the largest of them; that upon this Terah being angry, brought Abraham before the chief king of the Assyrian monarchy to be punished for this crime; that the king, being one of the Magi, commanded Abraham to worship the fire; and upon his refusal, ordered him to be thrown into an hot burning furnace; but that Abraham came out unhurt, in the presence and to the admiration of them all; *Maimonides in Mor. Nevoc. l. 3. c. 29.; Jud. Chat. de Idolatria, c. 1.; Shalsheleth, p. 8.; Inchasin, part 9. fol. 1.* But some think that this whole story rose from taking the word *Ur* to signify *the fire*, as it is, in the Hebrew, and thence interpreting the saying of God to Abraham in this manner: *I am the Lord, that brought thee out of the fire of the Chaldeans, to give thee this land to inherit it.* Since it is expressly said, however, (Gen. xi. 31.) that Terah, Lot, Abraham, and Sarah his wife, came all forth together out of *Ur* of the Chaldees, it may therefore very properly be taken for a city dedicated to the fire, which was there principally worshipped, and from thence it might take its name.

\* Profane authors (if possible) say more in the praise and commendation of Abraham, than do the sacred: But there is reason enough to believe, that their accounts are loaded with  
fictions.

" profusion of praise, upon a nearer inquiry, we shall  
 " find, that some passages have fallen from his pen which  
 " darken and obscure his hero's character not a little.  
 " For,

A. M.  
 2108. &c.  
 Ant. Christ.  
 1896, &c.  
 from Gen.  
 xx.—xxv.  
 11.

" (b) What apology can be made for his denial of his  
 " wife, at his going down into Egypt, and at Gerar?  
 " He, who was under the immediate guidance of God,  
 " and by whose direction he left his country, might have  
 " adventured to tell the truth, and in so doing have com-  
 " mitted his wife to the divine protection, with a much  
 " better grace, than in the method he took of engaging  
 " her in the prevarication. Had he done this but once  
 " indeed, we might have called it the effect of some vio-  
 " lent fear, or apprehension of danger, which put him up-  
 " on an evasion not so commendable; but when we find  
 " him repeating the same fallacy to Abimelech that he had  
 " used before to Pharaoh, and laying it down for a con-  
 " stant rule of practice, that his wife, because she was  
 " beautiful, should in every strange country pass for his  
 " sister; we can hardly forbear thinking, (c) that he had  
 " a secret intent in this transaction to betray her chastity,  
 " and by an infamous lie, to make a market of her honour  
 " and virtue; since the history acknowledges, that by this  
 " conduct he got from one king, (d) *who treated him*  
 " *well for his sake*, cattle in abundance; and from the  
 " other, (e) *a thousand pieces of silver, beside sheep, and*  
 " *oxen, and men servants, and women servants.*

" What apology can be made for his taking Hagar  
 " to wife, and thereby not only establishing polygamy  
 " (for which he has been quoted ever since), but expres-  
 " sing a distrust likewise of God's veracity, by endea-  
 " vouring to have children by her, when God had so

fidions. Some have averred, that he reigned at Damascus:  
 Others, that he dwelt a long in Egypt, and taught the E-  
 gyptians astronomy and arithmetic. Some say, that he in-  
 vented letters, and the Hebrew language; that he was author  
 of several works, and among others, of a famous book, in-  
 titled *Jezera*, or *The Creation*: And among the Persians, so  
 great a man was he accounted, that the Magi or worshippers  
 of fire, believe Zoroastres, (who was their prophet), to be the  
 same with the patriarch Abraham; *Calmet's Dictionary*.

(b) Bayle's Dictionary under the word *Sarah*. (c) Christia-  
 nity as old, &c. p. 248. (d) Gen. xii. 16. (e) Chap. xx. 16.

A. M. 2108, &c. Ant. Chris. 1896, &c. from Gen. xx.—xxv. 11.

“ often promised him issue by Saah? Sarah perhaps might  
 “ be a woman of an easy temper, and ready to connive at  
 “ her husband’s failings: But to have her introduced as  
 “ solliciting her husband to commit adultery with her  
 “ maid, is somewhat incongruous; and the more rational  
 “ supposition is, that what he did of this kind was more  
 “ from his own appetite, than his wife’s request, and pos-  
 “ sibly, with a purpose to make the experiment on which  
 “ side the default in their not having children might lie.  
 “ What apology can be made for his severe treatment  
 “ of Hagar and Ishmael, in sending them both away into  
 “ the wide world, in order to seek their fortune? Ishmael  
 “ perhaps might be a waggish boy, that, upon one occa-  
 “ sion or other, had put some little trick upon Isaac,  
 “ which his mother perceiving, might fall into a passion,  
 “ and pertinaciously insist, that both the mother and son  
 “ should that moment be turned out of doors, which the  
 “ poor patriarch, to preserve family-peace, might possibly  
 “ be induced to do; but then he should have certainly  
 “ sent them away in a better plight than we find he did.  
 “ (f) He is all along represented as a person of great  
 “ wealth and opulence; and therefore to have made some  
 “ competent provision for her and her son, is no more  
 “ than what justice, as well as common compassion, ex-  
 “ acted of him; but to send a woman into a desolate wil-  
 “ derness, with a little child in her arms, and with no more  
 “ than one bottle of water, and such a quantity of bread  
 “ as she could carry, out of a family where she had for a  
 “ long time lived in affluence and plenty, is such cruel and  
 “ barbarous usage, as can hardly be supposed to proceed  
 “ from the divine direction.

“ Above all, what apology can be made for his intent  
 “ to sacrifice his son Isaac? (g) That God is to be obeyed  
 “ above all things, and even in opposition sometimes to the  
 “ passions and affections which he hath made connatural  
 “ to us, is not to be denied; And yet this we may lay  
 “ down for a certain maxim, That the Lord of the uni-  
 “ verse governs himself by the eternal rules of reason, and  
 “ can neither himself act, nor command his creatures to  
 “ act, in any instance, contrary to them. Since therefore  
 “ the command of slaying an innocent child is a con-  
 “ tradiction of that eternal rule of reason, by which pa-

(f) Shuckford’s Connection, vol. 2. l. 6. (g) Christianity as old, &c. p. 79.

"rents are obliged to preserve their offspring, it is not to  
 "be supposed; that such a command ever came from  
 "God. Much more probable it is, that it might be the  
 "delusion of some wicked spirit, delighting in cruelty  
 "and blood; and yet we find the patriarch nor making the  
 "least demur upon this occasion, (b) not once expostu-  
 "lating for the life of his son; though at another time  
 "he could be importunate enough for the pardon of an  
 "impious, inhospitable, and incestuous city.

A. M.  
 2108, &c.  
 Ant. Christ.  
 1896, &c.  
 from Gen.  
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 11.

"(i) *He believed in the Lord*, we are told, *and his faith*  
 "was imputed to him for righteousness; and yet in the  
 "very next verse but one, we find him doubting of the  
 "divine promise concerning the possession of the land of  
 "Canaan, and requiring some sign or token from God,  
 "whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it? A friend he  
 "was reputed to the true worship of God, and a bitter  
 "enemy to all idolatry; and yet we find him planting such  
 "groves, as were (k) afterwards forbidden, and ordered to  
 "be cut down and burnt with fire: and as he gave oc-  
 "casion for these idolatrous places, so it is not unlikely  
 "that the barbarous custom of mens sacrificing their chil-  
 "dren to devils, might be introduced, in imitation of this  
 "attempt of Abraham's to offer up his son.

"So that, upon the whole, this great friend and fa-  
 "vourite of God, as he is called, was not a whit better than  
 "his neighbours; since to this wife Sarah he was perfidi-  
 "ous, and to his wife Hagar inhumane; turned the latter  
 "away shamefully, and would have prostituted the former  
 "for gain; to both his sons was cruel and unnatural, for  
 "as much as he expelled the one and would have destroy-  
 "ed the other; was guilty of lying and dissimulation to-  
 "wards men, of distrust and diffidence towards God;  
 "and perhaps gave occasion to the most horrid kind of  
 "idolatry that ever was invented, *the oblations of sons and*  
 "*daughters to infernal spirits.*

"The like, if not worse, may be said of his nephew  
 "Lot; for (l) what can we conceive more vile and abomi-  
 "nable, than the offer of prostituting his own daughters  
 "to a pack of outrageous Sodomites? The laws of ho-  
 "spitality may engage a man indeed to do much, but ne-  
 "ver surely to commit such an enormity, even for the ac-  
 "quisition of the greatest good. His daughters too seem  
 "to have had too deep a tincture of the vices of Sodom,

(b) Lord Shaftsbury's Characteristics, vol. 3. p. 10. (i) Gen.  
 xv. 6. (k) Deut. xvi. 21. (l) Le Clerc's Commentary,

A. M. 2108, &c. Anc. Christ. 1896, &c. from Gen. xx.—xxv. 11.

“ when they were not afraid to make their father drunk, in order to go to bed to him : nor ashamed to call their incestuous issue by such names as would perpetuate the memory of the fact.

“ Had the father indeed fallen into these crimes but once, something might have been imputed to the imbecility of his age, and the intoxicating quality of the liquor, which at first perhaps he might not perceive ; but to be guilty of drunkenness and incest two nights successively, argues a propensity to vice, and is no small indication of an abandoned character.

“ In this light has Moses represented some part of the conduct of the uncle and his nephew, and in the course of their history, has related several other things highly incredible, and incongruous to reason. For,

“ What an odd character is that of Melchisedeck, a kind of linsley-woolsey brother, part king, and part priest, to whom Abraham gave the tithes of all ; and especially, if we take in the additional titles which the author to the Hebrews gives him, (*m*) of *being without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life ; but being made like unto the Son of God, and abiding a priest continually.*

“ What a strange prophecy is that concerning Ishmael, (*n*) *He will be a wild man, or, as it is in the original, a wild ass-man; his hand shall be against every man, and every man's hand against him, and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren?* Cold comfort, one would think, it should be to Hagar, in her distressed and disconsolate condition, and enough indeed to frighten her out of her senses, to be told by an angel, that what she had conceived in her womb would become a monster, part man and part ass ; and whose fortune should be to live all his life long by thieving and morroading.

“ † What a senseless, as well as immodest a rite, is that of circumcision, (supposing it to be of divine institution), for a sign of a covenant between God and Abraham?

“ Where

(*m*) Heb. vii. 3. &c. (*n*) Gen. xvi. 12.

† The manner of this ceremony's being performed, whether in the public synagogue, or in private houses, is this,——— The person who is appointed to be the god-father sits down upon a seat, with a silk cushion provided for that purpose, and settles the child in a proper posture on his knees, when he who is to circumcise him (which by the by is accounted a great honour



" Where is the sense of mutilating the infant's body, and  
 " thereby endangering its life as soon as it is born ? If a <sup>A. M.</sup>  
 " corporeal mark was absolutely necessary to distinguish <sup>2108, &c.</sup>  
 " Abraham's posterity from the rest of mankind, the di- <sup>Ant. Christ.</sup>  
 " vine wisdom, one would think, should have pitched up- <sup>1896, &c.</sup>  
 " on some other part of the body, rather than that which <sup>from Gen.</sup>  
 " common modesty labours to conceal. (o) The more <sup>xx.—xxv.</sup>  
 " probable opinion therefore is, that a practice so unac- <sup>11.</sup>  
 " countable in itself was not of God's appointment, but  
 " what Abraham learnt when he was in Egypt, and after-  
 " wards imposed upon his posterity to make them more  
 " acceptable to that nation, on whom he foresaw that they  
 " were for some ages to depend.

" What a romantic story is that of Abraham's fighting  
 " four victorious kings, and putting them to the rout,  
 " with a small handful of his own domestics ; especially  
 " when these kings (according to the sense of the best com-  
 " mentators) were not petty princes, but the governors of  
 " vast provinces, under the command of the Assyrian mo-  
 " narch ?

honour among the Jews) opens the blankets. Some make use of  
 silver tweezers, to take up so much of the prepuce as they de-  
 sign to cut off, but others take it up with their fingers. Then  
 he who circumcises the child, holding the razor in his hand,  
 says, *Blessed be thou, O Lord who hast commanded us to be*  
*circumcised* ; and while he is saying this, cuts off the thick skin  
 of the prepuce, and then, with his thumb nails, tears off a finer  
 skin still remaining. After this he sucks the blood, which flows  
 plentifully upon this occasion, and spits it out into a cup full of  
 wine ; and then he puts some dragons blood upon the wound,  
 some coral powder, and other things to stop the bleeding, and  
 so covers up the part affected. When this is done, he takes up  
 the cup wherein he had spit the blood, moistens his lips there-  
 with, and then blessing both that and the child, giveth him the  
 name which his father had appointed, and at the same time  
 pronounces these words of Ezekiel, *I said unto thee, when thou*  
*wast in thy blood, live*, Ezek. xvi. 6. ; after which the whole con-  
 gregation repeats the 128th Psalm, *Blessed is every man that*  
*feareth the Lord*, &c. ; and so the ceremony concludes. Only we  
 must observe, that besides the feat appointed for the god-father,  
 there is always another left empty, and is designed, some say, for  
 the Prophet Elias, who, as they imagine, is invisibly present at all  
 circumcisions ; *Calmet's Dictionary, under the word Circumcision*.

(o) Lord Shaftsbury's Charact. vol. 3. p. 52. ; Marsham's  
 Can. Chron. p. 73. ; and Christianity as old, &c. p. 94,

" What

A. M. 2108, &c. Ant. Christ. 1896, &c. from Gen. xx.--xxv. 11. "What a ridiculous attempt is that of Abraham to sacrifice his son, who (according to the best computation) was then in the prime of his life, at least, of an age sufficient to make a resistance; and resistance we may be sure he would not fail to make, rather than suffer himself to be butchered?

"But above all, what an incredible story is that of Lot's wife's metamorphosis, of her being changed into a pillar of salt, merely for turning about to see the destruction of the city where she had so long lived; \*especially considering the several improvements which later historians have made upon the account, too light and too improbable ever to be named?

"These, and many more, are the incongruities which occur in this period of time; enough to stagger our belief, and to call the authority of the sacred penman into question."

Answered by shewing why Moses is so prolix in the history of Abraham. But we certainly judge wrong of the merits of any author, when we suffer our prejudice to blind our understanding, and to hinder it from attending to its chief drift and design. The great end which Moses had in writing this part of his history, was to instruct the Jews in their rise and original, their election and separation from the rest of mankind, and therefore fit it was, when he entered upon the history of their great founder Abraham, in whom they became a peculiar people, a chosen generation, and a roy-

† The Jewish doctors, as well as some Christian fathers, labour to persuade us, that it was extant in their days; that it was no ways impaired, and would last as long as the world endured; that what it loses by any accident, or the injuries of the weather, is daily supplied, so that it continues ever the same; and, in short, that it has all the signatures and infirmities of the sex attending it, even as if it were alive; *Saurin's Differ.* 18. Whether it was Tertullian or St. Cyprian that was the author of these verses, but so it is, that the poet, be who he will, has tacked together several of these incredible things.

In fragilem mutata salem stetit illa, sepulchrum  
Ipseque imago sui, formam sine corpore servans:  
Durat adhuc, etenim nuda statione sub æthram,  
Nec pluvius dilapsa, situ, nec diruta ventis.  
Quinetiam si quis mutilaverit advena formam,  
Protinus in sese suggestu vulnera complent.  
Dicitur et vivens alio sub corpore sexus  
Munificos solito dispungere sanguine menses.

*Watson. Miscel. sacra. tom. 2.*

al priesthood, (as the Apostle (*p*) styles them), that he should lay aside his usual conciseness, and endeavour to expatiate a little upon so useful and so agreeable a subject.

The Spirit of God very well foresaw, that Abraham's character would become renowned in future generations; that not only the Jews, but several other nations, would lay claim to him, as their progenitor: that not only the saints and prophets in the Old Testament would make him the chief pattern of faith and obedience to God's commands, but that, even under the New, his example would be propounded for our imitation, and (*q*) *his bosom* be made the happy receptacle of the souls of the righteous, between their death and their resurrection; and therefore it is no wonder that he led the holy penman into a longer recital of the life and adventures of a person who is styled *the friend of God, and father of the faithful*; who was the great founder of the very nation he was now writing to; whose sons were to be kings and princes of their several distant countries, and *in whose seed all the nations of the earth were to be blessed*.

We must observe however, that one great error in those that have undertaken to vindicate the Holy Scriptures, is their unwillingness to suppose any faults in the lives of the ancient patriarchs; and therefore they study to apologize for every thing they did, and sometimes labour even to consecrate their very vices. Their opinion is, that the Holy Spirit has prescribed them as patterns every way worthy of our imitation; and therefore they think it a disparagement to the Scriptures themselves, if any blemish or defect should occur in these mens characters; whereas the Scriptures have no manner of concern in any such thing. Their purpose is to represent mankind, as they are, clothed with infirmities, and beset with temptations to sin; and it is a glorious instance of their truth and veracity, when we find the faults and failings of some of their greatest worthies related as they really happened, and set in a true light, without extenuation or excuse. "The most celebrated of the saints of God (*r*) says St. Austin, are not impeccable; and from their faults there is no arguing to the prejudice of the book, in which, as we find them recorded as matter of history, so we find them condemned as matter of morality. God has informed us (says he) of what

(*p*) 1 Pet. ii. 9. (*q*) Matt. viii. 11. (*r*) Faustus, l. 22. c. 41.

"passed

A. M. 2108, &c. Ant. Christ. 1896. &c. from Gen. xx.—xxv. 11. “ passed, but not authorised it, and set the example before us, not for a pattern, but for a warning.

Abraham, in the age wherein he lived, was certainly accounted a man of great piety and worth. (s) We have the testimony of several Heathen authors in his favour, and Berofus in particular, (t) (as he is quoted by Josephus), gives us this character of him, viz. That in the tenth generation, after the flood, there was a man among the Chaldeans, who was very just, and great, and fought after heavenly things. But, notwithstanding this, it must be acknowledged, that in this instance of denying his wife Sarah, he was guilty at least of a manifest dissimulation.

That Abraham, in denying his wife Sarah, was culpable.

It is in vain to say, (u) that she was really his sister by another wife, whom his father Terah might marry after the death of his mother ; for this brings upon him the charge of incest. It is in vain to say, (x) that as he was a prophet, he was directed by the Holy Spirit to make use of this subterfuge, in order to preserve his life ; for this is making God the author of sin. It is in vain to say, (y) that what he declared was truth, though not the whole truth ; that he concealed what was proper, and told nothing that was false ; because his declaring her to be his sister was in effect denying her to be his wife, which was a direct falsehood. Men certainly have a right to conceal their sentiments, upon several occasions, by a prudent silence ; but whenever they make use of words, and pretend thereby to discover their thoughts, they impose upon their hearers, if they do not really express what they pretend : and in this the very formality of lying does consist, namely, in a settled intention to deceive others. “ (z) For whatever is said, whether in itself it be true or false, whether it agrees with the thoughts of the speaker or not, yet, if it plainly tends to deceive the hearer ; if he who says it perceives the tendency, and accordingly uses it to this end, however disguised it is, under whatever forms it is expressed, it is, to all intents and purposes, a lie.”

It is in vain then to pretend to assail the patriarch from the imputation of lying or dissimulation in this case ; but then this may be said in extenuation of his fault,—That it proceeded from a weakness of faith, and a prevalency

(s) *Vid.* Grot. De. verit. l. 3. 16. (t) Lib. 1. c. 8. (u) Calmet's Dictionary under the word *Sarah*. (x) *Vid.* Heidegger's Hist. patriarch. vol. 2. exercit. 4. (y) Waterland's Scripture-vindication, part. 1. (z) Bishop Smalridge's Sermon of lying.

of

of fear, which are sometimes found to be incident to the best of men. He considered himself as a stranger among a licentious sort of people, and exposed to the power of an arbitrary government; and from a principle of worldly caution, both to preserve his own life and his wife's modesty, he concluded that this would be the best expedient; but much more wisely had he done, had he committed the whole matter to God's management, in reliance on his promises, and in confidence of his protection.

A. M.  
2103, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1896, &c.  
from Gen.  
xx—xxv.  
11.

It cannot however, with any tolerable construction, be charged upon him, that he went about to betray his wife's chastity, since, according to his present sentiments, he took the most effectual method to prevent it. (a) For, in declaring her to be his sister, he made it known that she was committed to his care and disposal; and from hence he supposed it would come to pass, that if any of the country was minded to make his addresses to the sister, he would, of course, come and apply himself to the brother. The first motions of love he knew were most impetuous, and apt to hurry men into violence and outrage; and therefore he thought with himself, that if he should pass for her husband, such as were in love with her would have no other way of accomplishing their desires but at the expence of his life: Whereas, if he passed for her brother, time might be gained, the treaty of marriage prolonged, and several unforeseen accidents happen, that might give the divine providence a seasonable opportunity to interpose in his favour, as we find it did.

But he had  
no design to  
betray her  
chastity.

Nor can the presents which both Pharaoh and Abimelech gave Abraham upon the delivery of his wife, with any justice, be imputed to his management; since they were voluntary acknowledgments for his interceding for them; oblations of gratitude for their recovery from the sore plagues wherewith God had afflicted them; and a kind of commutation for the injury and affront they had put upon persons so highly favoured by God, that (b) *at what time they went from one nation to another, from one kingdom to another people, he suffered no man to do them wrong, but reproved even kings for their sakes.*

Hagar, according to the opinion of some of the Rabbins, who love to magnify every matter, was one of the daughters of Pharaoh king of Egypt, whom he sent along

In marry-  
ing Hagar  
he was ex-  
cusable.

(a) Heidegger's Hist. patriar. vol. 2. exercit. 4. (b) Psal.

cv. 13, 14.

VOL. II.

G

with

A. M.  
2138, &c.  
Ant. Christ  
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from Gen.  
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with Abraham, when he dismissed him so honourably : she was an Egyptian indeed, very probably one of those servants that were given to Abraham, and was employed about Sarah's person as her waiting maid ; but we have no grounds to think, that a woman of her extraction (had she been Pharaoh's daughter) would have condescended to serve in any capacity. However this be, Sarah, seeing herself now grown old and barren, and knowing that God had promised a numerous posterity to Abraham, believed that, in order to contribute to the accomplishment of these promises, she ought to give her servant to him for a wife ; and accordingly she is introduced as making the first offer : (c) *Behold now the Lord hath restrained me from bearing, I pray thee go in unto my maid ; it may be, that I may obtain children by her.* This proposal, (as St. Chrysostom (d) observes), and the soft manner of making it, discovered a very uncommon love and respect to her husband ; that she herself should persuade, and urge him to this expedient, in order to make him easy in that particular, which gave him so much disturbance, the want of issue, the default of which she supposed to be owing to herself : \* And it was purely in compliance to this solicitation of hers, that he took Hagar to his bed. Sarah, undoubtedly, was by far the more beautiful woman, at least if so good judges as the king of Egypt and his subjects may be depended on. Abraham had now lived many years, without giving any occasion to have his modesty and continence suspected. Hagar too was no more than his wife's servant, and inferior to her in person as much as in condition. In a short time after, when, upon her conception, she grew undutiful to her mistress, Abraham never interposed in her favour, but left her entirely to her lady's discretion : From

(c) Gen. xvi. 2. (d) In Locum, hom. 38.

\* The words of St. Austin upon this occasion are very nervous, and very significant. *Ulis enim est Hagare (scilicet Abraham) ad generandam prolem, non ad explendam libidinem non insultans, sed potius obediens conjugii ; quæ suæ sterilitati credit esse solatium, si secundum ancillæ uterum (quoniam naturâ non poterat) voluntate fecerit suum. Nulla hic est cupiditas lasciviæ nulla nequitie turpitudine. Ab uxore, causa prolis, ancilla marito, traditur ; a marito, causa prolis, accipitur : De civit. Dei, l. 16. c. 25. where he concludes with these exclamatory words, O virum viriliter utentem feminis, conjugio temperanter, ancilla obtemperanter, nulla intemperanter !*

all

all which circumstances it appears, that his taking Hagar to be his concubinary wife was not from any motive of sensuality, but from a true principle of conjugal affection to Sarah.

(e) God had indeed promised him the land of Canaan, and a numerous issue to succeed him; but whether that son, from whom that issue was to spring was properly to be his own, or only adoptive; or if his own, whether begotten of Sarah, or of some other woman, was not revealed to him. Seeing therefore he had no children of his own, and yet stedfastly believed the promises of God, the only way that he could devise, whereby to have these promises accomplished, was by way of adoption; and therefore he says, (f) *Lo! one born in my house is my heir*; upon which God clears the first of these doubts to him, viz. whether his seed was to be natural or adoptive; (g) *This shall not be thine heir, but one that shall come forth out of thine own bowels, shall be thine heir*: But still the second doubt remained, whether he was to be his heir by Sarah, or by some other woman, which, for the farther trial of his patience, God thought proper to conceal. No wonder then, if Abraham (having no longer hope of issue by his wife, finding her indeed as impatient for a child as himself, and desirous to have such a child as she might account her own, being begotten by her husband and her maid) yielded to her importunity, not so much to pleasure himself, as to gratify her desire. And this seems to be the reason why Sarah made choice of a slave (as Hagar is called in the text) rather than a free woman, to bring to her husband's bed, viz. (h) that the child which the former might happen to bear, might, imputatively at least, be accounted hers; whereas one conceived by a woman that was free, would properly belong to the mother herself.

Whether polygamy, in the age of the patriarchs, was innocent, or no, is a question that has much employed the pens of the learned. \* Most of the ancient fathers of the church

(e) Augustinus contra Faustum, l. 22. c. 32. (f) Gen. xv. 3. (g) Ver. 4. (h) Heidegger's Hist. patriar. vol. 2. exercit. 6.

\* The words of St. Ambrose, l. 1. c. 4. concerning the Patriarch Abraham, are very remarkable, and comprehend indeed the sentiments of most of the rest. Consideremus primum, quia ante legem Moysi, et ante Evangelium, fuit, nondum interdictum adulterium videbatur. Pœna criminis ex tempore legis est, quæ

A. M.  
2108, &c.  
Ant-Christ.  
1296, &c.  
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church maintain its lawfulness, and (i) some of our later divines can hardly persuade themselves, that a practice, which the most holy and venerable men ordinarily engaged in, and, during that engagement, continued an intimate conversation and familiarity with God; a practice which God never blamed in them, even when he sharply reproves other vices, and for which they themselves never showed the least remorse or tokens of repentance, should be detestable in the sight of God. Our blessed Saviour, who has restored matrimony to its primitive institution, has certainly declared it to be criminal; but whether it was so, under a less perfect dispensation, is not so well agreed. At present, if we suppose it only tolerated by God in the time of the patriarchs, we shall soon perceive another inducement for Abraham's complying with his wife's request; and that is, *viz.* the passionate desire for a numerous progeny, which, in those days, was very prevalent; so very prevalent, that we find men accounting of their children as their riches, their strength, their glory, and several families reckoning them up with a sort of pride, and placing the chief of their renown in the multitude of them; (k) *For children, and the fruit of the womb, are an heritage and gift that cometh of the Lord; like as arrows in the hand of a giant, so are young children. Happy is the man that has a quiver full of them; he shall not be ashamed when he speaketh with his enemies in the gate.*

Thus the desire of a numerous issue, the entreaty of a beloved wife, and the supposed innocence of concubinage in that age, may, in some measure, plead Abraham's excuse in assuming Hagar to his bed. But then, what shall we say for his turning her away so abruptly, and in a starving condition, after she had lived so long with him in the capacity of a wife, and had born him a son? To clear up this matter, we must inquire a little into the time and crimen inhibit, nec ante legem ulla rei damnatio est, sed ex lege. Non ergo in legem commisit Abraham, sed legem prævenit. Deus in Paradiso licet conjugium laudaverit, non tamen adulterium damnaverit. Durandus, Tostatus, Selden, Grotius, and others, are clearly of opinion, that before the promulgation of the law, polygamy was no sin; but as their error turns upon this, that the first institution of marriage between one pair in Paradise was not designed by God for a law, so have they received an ample confutation from the learned Heidegger, in his *Historia patriarcharum*, vol. 1. exercit. 1. and exercit. 7.; and vol. 2. exercit. 6.

(i) *Vid.* Saurin in dissertation 19. (k) *Psal.* cxxvii. 3. &c.

occasion



occasion, as well as the manner and consequence of this her dismissal. A. M. 2108, &c. Ant. Christ. 1896, &c. from Gen. xx.—xxv. 11.

The whole account of this transaction is thus related by the sacred historian. *(l)* And the child (meaning the child Isaac) grew, and was weaned, and Abraham made a great feast the same day that Isaac was weaned. And Sarah saw the son of Hagar, the Egyptian, which she had born unto Abraham, mocking; wherefore she said unto Abraham, cast out this bond-woman, and her son, for the son of the bond-woman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac. And the thing was very grievous in Abraham's sight, because of his son. 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: and also of the son of the bond-woman will I make a nation, because he is thy seed. And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and took bread, and a bottle of water, and gave it unto Hagar (putting it on her shoulder) and the child, and sent her away, and she departed, and wandered in the wilderness of Beer-sheba.

What the manner of celebrating this weaning-feast, or feast of initiation was, we can only conjecture from certain circumstances, and some parallel passages, and customs. There are no more than the weaning of Isaac, and the weaning of Samuel, (two very extraordinary persons, both foretold by the spirit of prophecy, and both miraculously born), which are taken notice of in the sacred history. And (if we may be allowed to suppose a parallel between them) as the feast at the weaning of Samuel was a sacred feast, and kept (*m*) before the Lord, (for the child was brought by his mother to the sanctuary, there presented, and there initiated, or dedicated by the high-priest, whereupon a sacrifice first, and then a feast did ensue); so we may suppose, (*n*) 1. That at the weaning-feast of Isaac, there was a burnt-sacrifice which Abraham, as priest and prophet, might early in the morning offer, in order to sanctify both the feast and those that were to communicate in it: 2. That there were changes of raiment given to all the guests, and to all the servants, to keep the feast in, and that, without the festival robes, no one was allowed to sit down at the table: 3. That a new sort of

The nature of weaning-feasts.

(*l*) Gen. xxi. 8. &c. (*m*) 1 Sam. i. 24. (*n*) Bibliotheca Bib. vol. 1. occasional annot. 24.

A. M.  
2108, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1896, &c.  
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vesture was given to Isaac, as an habit of distinction, by which he was declared heir of the family, and the most honourable, next to his father: 4. That there was a dedication of the child, or an holy initiation of him, in a very religious and solemn manner, performed by both the parents: 5. That there was probably a commemoration of the entertainment of angels in pilgrims habit, and of the joyful message then brought, together with the killing of the fatted calf, and other provisions made for them: And, 6. That upon this occasion, there was certainly a sumptuous entertainment made for their guests, suitable to the character of the master of the feast, who was a prince as well as a prophet, and answerable to the end and design of it, which was to commemorate the highest divine blessing that could be given, not to one family only, but to all the generations of the world.

On this festival occasion, it was very probable, that Sarah perceived Ishmael treating her son with contempt and derision. The initiation of Isaac, and his father's declaration concerning him, which Ishmael, who thought he had a prior right, was not able to bear, was enough to exasperate his rough nature to commit such rudeness, as could not but break the merriment of the feast, and thereupon provoke Sarah to exert her authority, by shewing the difference between the son of a bond woman, and the heir apparent of the family. I say, to exert her authority; (o) for as Hagar was Sarah's dotal maid-servant, she was entirely at her disposal. Abraham had no cognisance of her; from his jurisdiction she was exempt, and by marriage-articles (as we call it) reserved to her mistress in property; and therefore we find God interposing in the affair, and advising Abraham, in all that *Sarah should say unto him, (p) to hearken to her voice.*

The expulsion of Hagar and her son is represented indeed, by our translation, under circumstances somewhat dolorous; but if we inquire into particulars, we shall find them not near so full of distress as this representation seems to make them. Abraham is said to have sent them away early in the morning; but this might be done on purpose to prevent what might pass between them, at so sorrowful a parting, from being observed by too many eyes. He is

(o) Bibliotheca Bibl. vol. 1. occasional annot. 32. See also the note at the end of the objection, chap. iii. of this book.  
(p) Gen. xxi. 12.

said to have *given them bread and a bottle of water*; but as bread and water include eatables and drinkables of all kinds; so there is no doubt to be made but that Ishmael was able enough to carry an handsome competency of provision for a few days, or that his mother might very well carry a large bottle of water, or other liquor, to support them for a week, or so, while they were travelling through the wilderness. Their whole misfortune was, in mistaking their way, and wandering about in the desert, until their water was consumed; but this was a mere accident, wherein Abraham had not the least concern.

A. M.  
2108, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1896, &c.  
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Ishmael indeed is, in several places, called a *child*, and from thence we may suppose, that he was a burden and incumbrance to his mother: But if we look into his age, we shall find, that when Isaac was born, he was fourteen; and therefore, allowing two years between Isaac's birth, and his weaning, he could not be less than sixteen, when Abraham sent him and his mother away, and was consequently a youth capable of being a support and assistance to her. (q) For the circumstances of the world, we may observe, at this time, were such, that it was an easy matter for any person to find a sufficient and comfortable livelihood in it. Mankind were so few, that there was, in every country, ground to spare; so that any one who had flocks, or a family, might be permitted to settle any where to feed and maintain them, and so grow and increase, and become wealthy; or creatures in the world were so numerous, that a person who had no flocks or herds might, in the wilderness and uncultivated grounds, (as Ishmael we find became an archer), find game enough of all sorts whereby to maintain himself, and his dependents, without doing any injury, or being molested for so doing.

Ishmael indeed had for sixteen years continued in Abraham's family, and at first perhaps it might be disputed, whether he or his brother Isaac should succeed to their father's inheritance: But after that this point was determined, and God himself had declared in the favour of Isaac, he must of course have become Isaac's bond-man or servant, had he continued in Abraham's family. So that it was both kindly and prudently done of his father, to take occasion from Sarah's disgust against him, to emancipate and set him free, by sending him abroad to acquire an in-

(q) Shuckford's Connection, vol. 2. l. 7.

A. M. dependent settlement, which was all the provision that pa-  
 2103, &c. rents in those days could make for their younger children.  
 Ant. Christ. It was the same provision that his father Abraham made  
 1896, &c. for the sons which he afterwards had by his wife Keturah;  
 from Gen. for so we are told, that (r) *he gave all that he had unto*  
 xx.—xxv. *Isaac, but unto the sons of his concubines he gave gifts, and*  
 1 f. *sent them away from Isaac his son, eastward, unto the east*  
*country.* Nay, it was the same provision which Isaac made  
 for his son Jacob, though he was the heir of the blessing.  
 When he went from his father's house to Padan-Aran,  
 we read of no servants or equipage attending him, nor any  
 accommodations prepared for his journey. He was sent (as  
 we call it now-a-days) to seek his fortune, (s) only instruct-  
 ed to seek it among his kinsfolk and relations, and he went  
 to seek it upon so uncertain a foundation, that we find him  
 most earnestly praying to God to be with him in the way  
 he was to go, not to suffer him to want the necessaries of  
 life, but to *give him bread to eat, and raiment to put on*;  
 and yet we see, that by becoming an hired servant to La-  
 ban, (t) he both married his daughters, and, in a few years,  
 became master of a very considerable substance.

It is our mistake in the customs of the times therefore,  
 that makes us imagine that Hagar and Ishmael had any  
 hard usage in their ejection. Whatever the nature of  
 their offence might be, or whatever grounds Sarah might  
 have for her indignation against them, there is no reason  
 to accuse Abraham's conduct in this affair. Since what he  
 did was pursuant to a divine direction, which he durst not  
 disobey; was agreeable to the practice of the times where-  
 in he lived; and no more than what all other fathers, in  
 those days, imposed upon their younger sons: Since the  
 hardships they suffered were accidental, but the benefits  
 which accrued to them were designed: Since Abraham, by  
 this means, rescued them from a state of servitude for ever;  
 and, according to the divine prediction, was persuaded, that  
 this would be the only expedient to make of Ishmael a  
 flourishing nation.

Abraham's  
 obedience  
 not to be  
 paralleled.

Abraham's great readiness to sacrifice his son, upon  
 the first signification of the divine pleasure, is an instance  
 of duty and obedience, not to be equalled in all the re-  
 cords of history. Sanchoniatho indeed (as he is quoted by  
 (u) Eusebius) tells us of one Chronus, King of Phœnicia,

(r) Gen. xxv. 6.      (s) Ibid. xviii.      (t) Ibid. xxx. 43.  
 (u) Præp. Evan. l. i. c. 10.

who,

who, in a time of great distress, and extreme peril of war, took his son Jeud, (which, according to the Phœnician language, means *only-begotten*), and with his own hand sacrificed him on an altar of his own erecting. But as \* this action was certainly subsequent to the times, we are now speaking of, there are good reasons to believe, that the whole account of it is no more than a relation of Abraham's intended sacrifice of Isaac, bating some additions and mistakes. (x) For whereas it is said of this Chronus, that he was the son of a father who had three children; that himself had one son only by his wife, but more by other women; that he circumcised himself and his family; and that he sacrificed his only son with his own hands; all these circumstances concur in the case of Abraham: The chief difference is, that Chronus is by the Phœnicians called *Israel*, which was properly the name of Abraham's grandson; but this is a small mistake, considering that most of the Heathen writers had a general notion, that Israel was the name of some one famous ancestor of the Israelites, but were not exact in fixing it upon the right person.

A. M.  
2108, &c.  
Ant. Chris.  
1896, &c.  
from Gen.  
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(y) The only instance which seems any ways to come near the case before us, is that of Agamemnon's consenting that his daughter Iphigenia should be sacrificed; but the disparity soon appears, if we consider that Agamemnon, in all probability, had other children, and a queen neither barren nor old, and yet, fore against his will, did he comply, and perhaps for fear of provoking his subjects in arms; nor could he bear the sight of his daughter's last minutes, though he attained thereby his end, *viz.* the gratification of his ambitious views in the war wherein he was

\* A learned author, in his *Connection of sacred and profane history*, having, by two different ways of computation, proved, that Abraham was older than Chronus, subjoins these words: "And thus, by both these accounts, Chronus cannot be more ancient than Abraham, rather Abraham appears to be more ancient than he: And this must be allowed to be more evidently true, if we consider, that it was not Chronus, the son of Ouranus, who made this sacrifice of his only son, but rather Chronus who was called *Israel*, and was the son of Chronus called *Illus*: and therefore still later by one generation;" vol. 2. l. 6.

(x) Shuckford, *ibid.* vol. 2. l. 6.  
vol. 1. occas. annot. 28.

(y) Bibliotheca Bibl.

A. M.  
2108 &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1396, &c.  
from Gen.  
xx.—xxv.  
11.

embarked. Whereas Abraham had no other, nor could expect any other child by his wife, but this son, who was a pledge from heaven of all the glorious blessings that God had promised him; and yet, upon this harsh command, we find him in no uneasiness or confusion, but perfectly composed and easy, fixed and resolved to put it in execution, and waving the weapon in his own arm, stretched out to take away his own child's life; though he could not but foresee, that by such an inhuman act, he would not only exasperate his own family against him, but expose himself likewise to the hatred and indignation of all the nations round about him.

The truth is, several examples there have been, especially of persons of a public character, who have sacrificed themselves, or their nearest relations: But what has it been to? even to desperation, or the apprehension of human force and power; to a wicked and superstitious custom; to pride and vain glory; or to the hopes of preventing or stopping some dreadful and public calamity: But the case of Abraham is so singularly circumstantiated, that none of all these can be imputed to it: The only motive we can possibly imagine, must have been his earnest desire to testify his obedience to God in all, even his most arduous commands.

How he could certainly know that such a command came from God, will best appear by inquiring a little † into  
to

† The usual ways, recorded in the Old Testament, of God's revealing himself to his servants, were by dreams, by voices, and by apparitions. 1. Dreams are, in some places, called *visions*, and *visions of the night*; because persons, under this form of revelation, saw things, and heard voices, as plainly to all imagination as if they had been awake: But what sort of ideas and images affected their minds at such a time, and how they distinguished divine dreams from such as were purely natural, we are no where told; only, if we may be allowed to conjecture, — 1st, Such dreams as were divine had none of those confused and idle phantoms which are found in other dreams, but distinctly represented to their minds whatever things, or beings, God was pleased to send, without any mixture of foreign images or words: 2dly, They were more lively than other dreams; their images were strong and vigorous, and fixed deeply in the soul: And, 3dly, They were either attended with the voices of God or angels speaking distinctly to them, or  
had

to the several ways, wherein we find God revealing himself to this beloved patriarch. And to this purpose, we must observe, that at first he left his own country and kindred, by the express command of God, and went into a strange land which God had promised to give his posterity. We are not told, indeed, in what manner God appeared to him, when he gave him this command; but we can hardly think, that a person of his gravity and years would incline to seek unnecessary adventures; nor can we imagine, why his aged father should accompany him in them, unless there was a manifest conviction that the call was from God.

A. M.  
2108, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1896, &c.  
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After he had been for some time settled in Haran, long enough to have his family and fortune increased in it, and probably long enough to like it, and be contented with it, God commands him thence into another strange country, in all appearance no better than that where he then was, and consequently none of his own option; and

How he was  
convinced  
that the  
command  
of sacrific-  
ing his son  
came from  
God.

had some particular instinct always accompanying them. 2. Voices were frequently heard without any appearance or representation, and proceeded sometimes from the clouds, from out of the fire, out of the whirlwind, &c.; in which cases, to judge of the veracity of a revelation, it was generally thought, that when the voice was greater than any human voice, (as it was on the top of the mountain when God delivered the law), or proceeded from a place where no human creature was, (as in the instance before), that it came either from God himself, or from some messenger sent from heaven. 3. At other times, a figure or resemblance has appeared to persons awake, talked with them, and done several things in their company, as if it had been an human creature; and yet the event has shewn, that it was either God himself, or an angel concealed in human shape. And in this case, the way of discerning them seems to have been, either by the air and majesty of their looks, (as in the angel that appeared to Manoah's wife), or by some miraculous actions that were above the power of human performance (as in that which appeared to Gideon). In any of these methods of revelation, where these several circumstances concurred, it was always presumed, that the dream, or voice, or vision, was from God; since it is not to be supposed, that he who sees and hears all things, and himself is a lover of truths, would ever suffer those that love and fear him, to be imposed upon by evil spirits, or even perplexed by the fantastical operations of nature itself; *Vid.* My Body of divinity, part 2. c. 3.

A. M.  
2108, &c.  
Ant. Chris.  
1896, &c.  
from Gen.  
xx.—xxv.  
II.

there he appeared to him the second time, and renewed his former promise of giving him the land whereunto he had thus conducted him (z).

After this, when he was driven by famine into Egypt, God sufficiently manifested his signal protection of him, by plaguing Pharaoh and his house upon his account. Upon his return to Canaan, he renewed his assurance of giving him the promised land; and then it is said, that *the word of the Lord came to him in a vision*, wherein the promise of an heir, and a numerous posterity is added to that of Canaan; and as Abraham requested a sign in confirmation of all this, so God was pleased to comply with his request; and accordingly again he appears to him in a vision, repeats again the promise to him, supports the promise by a miracle, and confirms a covenant by fire from heaven, to consume the sacrifice which he had commanded him to offer.

Again, when Abraham was ninety-nine years old, God appeared to him; and that his appearance was in some visible form or figure, is sufficiently clear from the text; which tells us, *that Abraham fell upon his face, while God conversed with him*. Here Isaac is promised, and circumcision instituted, a painful hazardous rite, which the patriarch would never have complied with, but from a full conviction of a divine command.

After this, he appeared unto him under the tree of Mamre, in the shape of a pilgrim; and by his whole conversation with him, concerning the fate and iniquity of Sodom, discovered himself to be God, or (to speak more properly) the Messiah in human shape. Soon after this, he appeared to Abimelech in Abraham's behalf, and inflicted a distemper upon his whole house, which was removed upon Abraham's prayer; and soon after this, God's promise of an heir was fulfilled in the birth of a son from a barren woman, which was a proof equivalent to a thousand miracles.

Once more, God commanded Abraham to comply with his wife's request, in casting out Hagar and her son, though the text implies, that he loved them both very tenderly. This was a command so seemingly cruel and severe, that nothing but a full conviction of its coming from God could have exacted Abraham's sub-

(z) Revelation examined, vol. 2. dissertation 8.

mission



mission to it: And now, after all these manifestations of himself to the Patriarch, God commands him to offer up his son Isaac; and will any one say, that Abraham, by this time, had not sufficient evidence that this command was of the same original with the rest? God had, some way or other, appeared and manifested himself to him nine times before this command. Twice in vision, twice in miracle, twice under some sensible appearance, and thrice in some manner not explained. He had given him three preceding commands, which no man in his senses could obey, without full assurance that they were enjoined from above. He had often before this time called to him, spoke to him, conversed with him, and, on one occasion, very familiarly and long; and as we may reasonably suppose, that he always spoke with the same voice, there is no doubt to be made, but that he certainly knew that it was God who spake to him upon this occasion. For why should Abraham suspect that God Almighty would suffer an evil spirit to delude him into the greatest and most irretrievable calamity, acting in the honesty and sincerity of his heart, and from a principle of the most exalted obedience to the divine will? In so long a succession of miracles, discourses, and appearances, he must have acquired as certain and perfect a knowledge of the Deity, whenever he vouchsafed to reveal himself to him, as another man has of his friend, when he hears his voice; and converses in his presence. And if Abraham was fully satisfied in this, his obedience could not fail of being built upon a good foundation.

It is allowed indeed, that there is something shocking, at first sight, in the idea of a parent's taking away the life of his own child; but then an express command from a competent authority alters the case, and makes that, which otherwise would be a sin, become a duty. It may justly be said, that he is a barbarous parent who commands his children to be beat to death with rods before his eyes. — This position is undoubtedly true in the general; but does it follow from hence, that the first Brutus was either a bad man, or a bad parent, for commanding his sons to be served in this manner, when the duty he owed to his country required it? And did Abraham owe less duty to God than Brutus owed to his country? A captain who should command his valiant and victorious son to be put to death for exerting his prowess upon the enemies

A. M.  
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That upon  
such con-  
viction he  
was obli-  
ged to do it.

A. M. 2108, &c. Ant. Christ. 1896, &c. from Gen. xx.—xxv. 11. enemies of his country, must surely be a monster among men. This position, laid down without any limitation, is undeniably true : but will it therefore follow, that Manlius was a monster, though he put his son to death for killing Geminus, general of the Latins, contrary to the discipline of the war ? And yet it would badly become us to say, that the discipline of war is a stronger obligation than an express, positive, unerring command, from the great Ruler of the world, the Sovereign Arbiter of life and death.

His reasoning hereupon.

So good a man as Abraham is represented could not but antecedently be satisfied, that a Being of infinite wisdom and goodness could give no command that would ultimately terminate in calamity upon innocence and obedience ; and therefore, when a command of an intricate and mysterious nature was given him, what had he to do but to obey ? He knew this son whom God now demanded was given him in an extraordinary manner, and why might he not be taken away in a manner as extraordinary ? And when he was taken away, he very well knew that God could again restore him in a manner yet more extraordinary ; and that raising him from the grave had no more difficulty with infinite power than raising him from the womb of a woman barren at first, and now, by the course of nature, long past the power of conception ; which makes St. Paul's reflection a lively comment upon the principles of Abraham's obedience on this occasion : *(a) By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac, and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, that in Isaac shall thy seed be called, accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from whence also he received him in a figure.*

And why he made no remembrance.

And this, by the bye, suggests a reason, why the holy Patriarch, who, in other cases, was charitable enough to intercede for the wicked, does not so much as offer up one petition for the life of his innocent son. He had that true sense of the power and veracity of God, that he was fully persuaded, that the fate of his child, and the tenor of God's promises, would, one way or other, be made consistent ; and therefore he left it upon his infinite wisdom to find out the means of unravelling this intricate affair, without ever once murmuring, or making

(a) Heb. xi. 17. &c.

the

the least remonstrance. But supposing that Abraham had taken upon him to expostulate with God upon this hard injunction; yet, (b) what could he have urged, but that the person whom he ordered him to slay was his son, his only son, his son whom he tenderly loved, and that he could not, without the greatest force upon paternal affection, lay violent hands upon him. But now all pleas of this kind were fully anticipated by the divine command, *Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt-offering, upon one of the mountains, which I will tell thee of; i. e.* "Notwithstanding he is thy son, thine only son, and a son thou hast set thine heart upon, yet must thou sacrifice him unto me."

A. M.  
2108, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1896, &c.  
from Gen.  
xx.—xxv.  
11.

In the case of Sodom, Almighty God is represented as deliberating, and undetermined; and there Abraham's humanity and the rectitude of his mind were at liberty, nay, were engaged to interpose; but in the case of his own son, God appeared fixed and determined, and there his humility, and the deference due to his God, forbade him to expostulate. Not to say, that if he erred in the first case, he knew it was the error of an upright, a humane, and a generous spirit; but an error in the latter would be the effect of partiality and self-interest; and Abraham's heart was too honest, and too enlarged, to allow him in a conduct that could any way fall under the suspicion of such mean and sordid principles. This seems to vindicate the conduct of Abraham in paying a ready obedience to the divine command; but then, what shall we say to the goodness and justice of God in imposing it?

God indeed governs himself by the eternal rules of reason, and can give no command in contradiction to them; but then common sense tells us, that these are rules not of human reason, but divine; and consequently, such rules as must result from the relation which the whole universe, and all the parts thereof, have to one another; an immense compass and variety of things, which nothing but infinite wisdom can comprehend! And therefore we take quite wrong measures, when we estimate the nature and perfections of God from what we find in ourselves; for *as the heavens are higher than the earth,*

Why God  
imposed so  
hard a com-  
mand.

A. M. 2108, &c. Ant. Chriſt. 1896, &c. *ſo are his ways higher than our ways, and his thoughts higher than our thoughts.*

Upon the ſuppoſition, however, that God really intended that Abraham ſhould have taken away his ſon's life, there could have been no injuſtice in the injuncti-  
 from Gen. xx.—xxv. 11.

God, who is the author and giver of life, has an undoubted right to reſume it, when, and in what manner he thinks fit; and in his infinite wiſdom and goodneſs ſecure us from all ſuſpicion of his taking it away arbitrarily or unlawfully: So that had the command been actually executed, we muſt have ſuppoſed it to have been wiſe, juſt, and good; be-  
 cauſe a divine command neceſſarily implies wiſdom, and juſtice, and goodneſs, in the higheſt degree, though the reaſon of that command ſhould not appear to ſuch limited, ſhort-ſighted creatures as we are.

But this was not the caſe. God never intended that this command ſhould be put in execution. His only purpoſe was, to make a trial of Abraham's obedience, not to inform himſelf in any thing, who was omniſcient, and knew beforehand, both what was in Abraham's heart, and how he would acquit himſelf in this important juncture; but to make him more perfect by ſuffering, and his example more conſpicuous, (c) *that the trial of his faith* (as the Apoſtle words it) *being much more precious than of gold, that periſbeth, (though it be tried by fire), might be found unto praiſe, and honour, and glory;* and that all future generations, reading the hiſtory of his patience and perſeverance, his courage and conſtancy, his faith and hope, and magnanimity, might glorify God in him, and look upon his example as a ſhining light which the hand of Providence has ſet up in the firmament of his church, to guide ſucceeding ſaints in the intricate and arduous paths of their duty.

The meaning of Abraham's re-  
 queſting a ſign. Thoſe who would gladly find any flaw in our pa-  
 triarch's character, are apt to ſuggeſt, that his deſiring of God a ſign concerning the land of Canaan, which had been ſo lately promiſed to him, (d) *(whereby ſhall I know that I ſhall inherit it?)* proceeded from a defect of faith, for which, as ſome pretend, he was ſo renowned. But, without ſtraining any point to get over this difficulty, we may fairly own, that Abraham is here doing no more than what many worthies of old are known to have done

(c) 1 Pet. i. 7.

(d) Gen. xv. 8.

after

after him, when they were put upon any difficult services ; A. M. 2108, &c. Ant. Christ. 1896, &c. fr. m Gen. xx. — xxv. 11.  
namely, requesting of God some outward token or representation, to strengthen and confirm his faith concerning the divine promises, which is an argument of modesty, not of any diffidence in the divine veracity ; and therefore the words are very properly paraphrased by St. Chrysostom :  
“ I firmly believe, that what thou hast promised shall  
“ come to pass ; and therefore I ask no questions out of  
“ distrust ; but I shall be glad to be favoured with some  
“ such token or anticipation of it, as may strongly affect  
“ my senses, and raise my poor weak ideas and imagina-  
“ tions about it.”

Those that are disposed to find faults are always pro- His practice gave no occasion to idolatry.  
vided with an handle ; otherwise one would wonder that Abraham's making groves the constant place of divine worship should be ever brought as an accusation against him, merely because, in after ages, they came to be perverted into scenes of the grossest superstition and idolatry ; or that, because his intention to offer up his son gave umbrage to human sacrifices afterwards, he should be thought chargeable with the event. The groves of Moreh and Mamre, which were the principal ones that he planted, were (e) (as we hinted before) certain oratories or sanctuaries, exposed to the open air, (f) but planted with trees, for the benefit of their shade, and for the more solemn composure of the mind, and recollection of the thoughts for heavenly contemplation. Before the institution of more commodious receptacles for divine worship, these, and such like places, were usually frequented for that purpose ; and therefore they had sometimes the name given of *the houses of God, the courts of God*, and their trees were called *the trees of God*. In these places it was that Abraham offered up his morning and evening sacrifice with acceptance ; and if, in after ages, they came to be applied to abominable purposes, he is no more to be blamed for that abuse than Moses was for setting up a brazen-serpent in the wilderness, which was afterwards perverted to idolatry, though, in its primary intendment, it was sanative and medicinal.

And, in like manner, if the custom of sacrificing children took its origin from some tradition founded on the

(e) *Vid.* page 3. in the notes.  
vol. I. occas. annot. 20.

(f) *Bibliotheca Biblica*,

A. M. 2108, &c. Ant. Christ. 1896, &c. from Gen. xx.—xxv. 11.

history of Isaac's being offered, wherein, I pray, is either Abraham to be blamed, or God, for appointing him to this office; since, whether the custom was prior or subsequent to this transaction, God has herein taken an effectual care to discountenance it?

(g) For if, as some imagine, this impious and abominable rite obtained at this time, it is evident that nothing could be better calculated to abolish it than this command to Abraham, which was a plain document to the whole world, that human sacrifices were not acceptable to God: For if they could be acceptable from any hand, they must certainly have been so from his, who, of all men in the world, stood highest in the favour of Almighty God. And therefore, when it appears in the event, that this command was only in trial of obedience; and that when it came to the point of execution, Abraham was expressly forbid to execute it by a voice from heaven; and (to shew God's aversion to human sacrifices) by his appointment, a brute-animal was substituted in the place of Isaac; when all this is considered, I say, we can hardly think of a clearer monition to mankind upon this head than God's own prohibition of that practice by a command from heaven, and a miraculous interposition of a vicarious oblation.

On the other hand, if this impious custom had not yet obtained, but God, in his great knowledge, foresaw that superstition would soon introduce it; what could be a more effectual means, either to prevent or repress it, than the attestation of all Abraham's dispersed servants and descendants, vouching every where with one voice, that God himself had prohibited their master from practising it. And it is not improbable (from the fable of the goddess Diana's substituting a deer in the room of Iphigenia, who was to be offered) that the memory of God's prohibiting all human sacrifices was handed down to late posterity.

How far Lot and his daughters were to blame.

Thus we have endeavoured to vindicate some passages in Abraham's life, which seemed most liable to exception; and come now to inquire into the obnoxious part of the conduct of his nephew Lot.

(h) It is not to be doubted, but that Lot, who, by the assistance of his uncle Abraham, had done such signal services to the Sodomites, was by this time become a person of some eminence among them; had probably married

(g) Revelation examined, vol. 2. dissert. 8. (h) Biblioth. Bib. vol. 1. occas. annot. 21.

a woman of a principal family, and was admitted into some considerable post of honour and authority. The Jewish doctors will need persuade us, that he was now one of the judges in Sodom, and, as such, sat at the gate of the city, where the courts of judicature were usually held. His sitting at the gate, however, seems rather to have been (according to the hospitality of those days) with an intent to invite strangers into his house, the better to secure them from the libidinous outrage of his neighbours.

Two strangers (who afterwards proved two angels) he had now under his roof; when the inhabitants, from all parts of the city, flocking together, stormed the house, and demanded the two strangers to be brought out to them that they might abuse their bodies: Whereupon Lot, deeply concerned lest the right of hospitality should be violated, is resolved to expose both himself and his, to the utmost peril, rather than those whom he had taken under his protection should come to any harm. Upon this principle he ventures out of doors alone among this lewd licentious rabble, that he might calmly expostulate the matter with some of the chief of them, and divert them, if possible, from the violence they intended against his guests.

The offer which he made them upon this occasion, viz. to give up his two daughters to their lust, seems to be a strange one; but then we are to consider, that, as it was made in the utmost perplexity of mind, and out of a vehement desire to secure his guests; so may it, after all, imply no more than this,—“ God forbid, my friends, that you should make yourselves guilty of a crime of so high a nature, as to offer the least indignity to these noble strangers whom I have received into my house, and whom I therefore cannot put in your power upon any terms whatever. Much rather had I part even with my own dear daughters, who are in my power, and who are also marriageable, than with those whom I am not authorized to dispose of. Wherefore, I beseech you, brethren, deal not so foolishly in this matter, but consider what you are now going to do; and since, of two evils, it is better to commit the less than the greater, are there not women among you whom ye may chuse for the satisfying the desires of your flesh, and not sin against the order of nature? But if there are none found that can please you, and you will nevertheless persist, I protest to you, Sirs, I will sooner lose my own children, with all that I have in the world, than ever once consent

A. M.  
2108, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1896, &c.  
from Gen  
xx.—xxv.  
II.

A. M. 2108, &c. Ant. Chris. 1896, &c. from Gen. xx.—xxv. 11.

“ to depart from my word, which I have given to these worthy persons. Therefore do as you please with me and mine, seeing that I am in your hand; only touch not these \*.” This seems to be, in a great measure, the purport of Lot’s proposal to the men of Sodom; and yet, with all this molification, it has not unjustly incurred the censure of (i) St. Austin. “ We must not consider, (says he) the offer which Lot made to the inhabitants of Sodom, as proceeding from a wise, sober, and a premeditated design, but rather as a speech which dropped from a man struck with horror at the thoughts of the abominable sin they were going to commit, and who, by the surprise and trouble that he was in, had lost the use of his reason and discretion. For if once we may lay it down for a rule, that there may be a compensation of sin, (as he calls it), *i. e.* that we may commit less sins, in order to prevent others from running into greater, we shall, in a short time, lay waste all bounds, and see every manner of wickedness come rushing in upon us without control.”

After the destruction of Sodom, and Lot’s departure from Zoar, he retired, we are told, into a cave, where his two daughters betrayed him into the double sin of drunkenness and incest; and with what design they did it, (k) the authors who would fain apologize for their conduct do generally run into this strain, *viz.* that these two maids having some notions of a general conflagration of the world, and seeing their own city and country consumed by fire, were fully persuaded, that the divine indignation,

\* Le Clerc, in his commentaries upon the place, assigns another reason why Lot might, with better courage, make an offer of his daughters to the Sodomites. For, supposing him to be a considerable man in the city, and his daughters both betrothed, (as we find they were betrothed, Gen. xix. 14.) to two young gentlemen of eminence, he might safely propose the thing, as knowing very well that they neither durst, nor would accept of it. That they durst not, for fear of punishment from persons of their rank and authority; and that they would not, because brothers in iniquity (however outrageous they may be against others) affect always to maintain some form of decency between themselves. But it is hard to say what persons of their complexion would either have been afraid or ashamed to do, had the bent of their inclination tended that way.

(i) In Gen. tom 4. quæst. 46; et contra Mendatium, c. 9. et c. 7. (k) Origen’s Hom. 5. p. 15. col. 2.; St Ambrose De Abrahamâ, l. 1.; and St Chrysostom’s Hom. in locum.

which



which had consumed the Sodomites; had fallen over the face of the whole earth, and that their father was the only man left, from whose body mankind was to be repropagated. They were young, and unexperienced, say they, and might therefore very well be ignorant, that several parts of the earth was inhabited, as well as the plain of Sodom had been. As far as their eye would reach, they saw nothing but sulphureous flames, and a wide theatre of perdition; and this they looked upon as the final catastrophe, which, as they had been told, was to put a period to nature. They had unaccountably lost their mother too; so that they concluded, that they, and their father, were the only survivors of human nature, (as Noah and his family had been after the flood), and that therefore it was their duty to take care to prevent the extinction of the species. And though they knew it to be a very grievous sin in itself, to betray their own father into a carnal knowledge of themselves; yet they thought they should be more inexcusable, if they should rate the chasteness of their bodies so high, as not to part with it, rather than mankind should be no more.

A. M.  
2108, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1896, &c.  
from Gen.  
xx.—xxv.  
11.

But all this is no more than a plausible fiction, without any foundation to support it. They had lately left Zoar, and knew that it was well inhabited; and were therefore convinced, that they and their father were not the only three persons left alive in the world: but this they knew very well, (1) that there was not so much as one of all their kindred left, by whom they could raise up seed or successors to their father; those of their father's side being at a vast distance from them; and those of their mother's every one destroyed in the conflagration of Sodom.

Now, it was at that time an universal law, which became afterwards a particular one of the Jews, that marriages should be contracted within the family, to preserve inheritances, and to avoid the mixture of seeds: so that the two sisters here argued very justly upon the principles then universally admitted, *i. e.* upon the general law of nations. For seeing they had no brother to keep up their name and family, and their father had lost their mother, by whom he might have had other children, and they themselves their husbands, before consummation, in the common destruction, there was no apparent possibility of preserving their fathers family from utter extinction after their three wives, or of averting the sad curse of excision, but by the very method which at last they concerted between them.

(1) Bibliotheca Bibl. vol. 1. occas. annot. 23.

A. M.  
2168, &c.  
Ant. Chris.  
1896, &c.  
from Gen.  
xx.—xxv.  
§ 1.

So that they had the plea of necessity on their sides to excuse, if not to justify them : and that they were not led by any spirit of uncleanness to this action, we have these presumptions to believe :——That in the midst of all the impurities of the most wicked city under heaven, they had preserved their innocence and virginity ; that they unanimously joined together in the same contrivance ; whereas vicious intrigues are seldom communicated, and whenever they are, always occasion quarrels ; that which they did once they never repeated, and so cannot be suspected of having been incited by brutal lusts ; and lastly, that they were so far from being conscious to themselves of having acted upon any base and sinful inducement, that in the names of their children, they took care to perpetuate the memory of it to posterity ; which they never would have done, had they thought it a reproach to their father's name.

Their father too, in the matter of incest, may in some measure be excused ; for as much as he offered no violence to his daughters, but was altogether passive, and imposed upon by them ; but then, it must be considered, that had he not allowed himself to drink to excess, it had not been in the power of his daughters to deceive him. The daughters indeed, without this expedient, could not have attained their end ; but then the unjustifiableness of the means discredits the end, even tho' it were good and laudable before. The short is, both father and daughters, in this whole transaction, were not without sin ; and therefore, whatever may be said in mitigation of their faults, we mistake the matter widely, if we think that the sacred history, in barely relating them, means either to approve or commend them.

Melchisedeck's character explained and justified.

It cannot be denied indeed, but that sundry difficulties occur in the character of Melchisedeck, as he is described in the Holy Scriptures ; but there is certainly no incongruity in his being both king and priest in one person. For if we cast our eye into any ancient writer, we shall find, that before the institution of a separate order of men, the regal and sacerdotal offices both went together ; and that he who was appointed to govern the affairs of state, had always a right to minister about holy things. This is an observation that the writings of Homer will verify in almost innumerable instances ; but (to mention but one out of each of his poems) after Agamemnon was constituted the head of the Grecian army, (*m*) we find him every where in the public sacrifices performing the priest's office, and

(*m*) Iliad 3. Iliad 8. et in aliis locis.

the

the other Grecian kings and heroes bearing their parts under him in the administration : and (n) when Nestor made a sacrifice to Minerva, Stratius and the noble Echephron led the bull to the altar ; Aretus brought the water, and canisters of corn ; Perseus brought the vessel to receive the blood ; Thrasymedes, son of Nestor, knocked down the ox ; but Nestor himself acted as priest, and performed the rest of the ceremony.

A. M.  
2108, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1896, &c.  
from Gen.  
xx.—xxv.  
11.

If we look into some of the best historians, we shall find this point more confirmed. For among the Lacedemonians, whenever they went to battle, the king, according to (o) Plutarch, always performed the sacrifice ; and in the army (as Xenophon (p) informs us) his chief business was, to have the supreme command of the forces, and to be their priest in the offices of religion. In the time of the heroes, says Aristotle, (q) the custom was, for one and the same person to be general of the forces, judge, and high-priest, according to that known verse in (r) Virgil,

*Rex Anius, rex idem hominum, Phœbique sacerdos.*

So that, in short, from any thing that appears in history, we have no reason to think, that until some ages after Homer, mankind had any other public ministers in religion, but those who were the kings and governors of the state.

There were indeed, in ancient times, many little islands, and small tracts of land, where civil government was not set up in form ; but the inhabitants live together, in peace and quiet, under the direction of some eminent person, who ruled them by wise admonitions, and by instructing them in the great principles of religion ; and the governors of these countries affected \* to be called *priests* rather than kings. But if, at any time, they and their people came to form a political society, upon more express terms and conditions, then we find these sort of persons called both priests and kings. These small states indeed

(n) Odyss. 3. (o) In Lycurgo. (p) De repub. Lacedæm. (q) Polit. l. 1. (r) Æneid. iii. ver. 80.

\* Thus Jethro is called by Moses, not the king, but the priest of Midian ; and thus Chryses, the priest of Apollo at Chrysa, and not the king of Chrysa, tho' both he and Jethro were the governors of the countries where they lived ; *Shuckford's Connection*, vol. 2. l. 6

could

A. M. 2108, &c. Ant. Christ. 1896, &c. from Gen. xx.--xxv. 11. could but have little power to support themselves against the incroachments of their neighbours. Their religion was their greatest strength; and therefore it was their happiest circumstance that their kings or governors were reputed sacred by their neighbours, and so highly favoured by God for their great and singular piety, that it was thought a dangerous thing to violate their rights, or injure the people under their protection.

Such a king as this was the great Melchisedeck, who came out to gratulate the patriarch Abraham: and it is no bad conjecture of some, that he was called the King of Salem, not so much upon account of Salem's being the proper name of any determinate place, the seat of his dominion, as that in general it signified *peace*; and that therefore Melchisedeck was *the king of peace*, or *the peaceable king*, because the sacredness of his character secured him from being invaded by his neighbours, and his wife administration kept all things in good order, so that he was never molested by his subjects.

This however is no more than a conjecture; because it is certain, that there were two places in Palestine which went under that name, the one the same with that which was afterwards called *Jerusalem*, and the other a town lying upon the banks of the river Jordan, not far from the place (s) where John (our Saviour's forerunner) is said to have baptized. Here formerly were seen the ruins of the palace of this Melchisedeck, which, in the time of St. Jerom, (as he tells us) discovered the magnificence of its structure; and upon that father's authority, several modern authors have gone into the opinion, that this place was the metropolis of that prince. But since that city, even according to the testimony of the same St. Jerom, was quite demolished by Abimelech, it is hardly conceivable, how such remarkable remains should be of so long continuance, and yet escape the observation of Josephus, who was no undiligent inquirer into the antiquities of the Jewish nation; and yet his express declaration is, That Melchisedeck (t) was king of Solyma, which is now called *Jerusalem*.

It is the much more probable opinion therefore, (u) that this palace was built by Jeroboam, when he repaired Salem, and that the inhabitants (possibly the Samaritans) in after ages, either devised or promoted a false tradition, that it

(s) John iii. 22. (t) Antiq. l. i. c. 11. (u) Heidegger's Hi. patriarch. vol. 1. exercit. 2

originally belonged to Melchisedeck. For the general con-  
 sideration of the ancients give it clearly for Jerusalem, as duly  
 considering, that Abraham's rout in returning from the  
 territories of Damascus to Hebron, was directly through  
 its coasts, (whereas the other Salem lay devious to the  
 north); and that there was a kind of propriety in the my-  
 stery, and what the analogy of the thing seemed to require,  
 that Melchisedeck should be king of that very place in which  
 the true Prince of Peace (whereof he was a type and re-  
 presentation) was in future ages to make his appearance.

A. M.  
 2108, &c.  
 Ant. Christ.  
 1896, &c.  
 from Gen.  
 xx—xxv.  
 11.

Who this Melchisedeck was, is still an hard question  
 that has puzzled most interpreters. The author to the He-  
 brews indeed has recorded a description of him; but this is  
 so far from giving us any light, that it has, in a great mea-  
 sure, been the occasion of leading some into a persuasion,  
 (x) that the person here called *Melchisedeck* was an angel;  
 others, that he was the son of God; and others, that he  
 was the Holy Ghost, in the shape and appearance of man;  
 because they cannot conceive how the qualities ascribed to  
 this excellent personage can comport with any human crea-  
 ture. The phrase however made use of by the apostle,  
*ἀγενεαλόγητος*, *without descent*, or *without genealogy*, explains  
 what the apostle means by, *without father*, and *without*  
*mother*, i. e. \* without any father or mother mentioned in  
 the genealogies of Moses, which the parents of all pious  
 worthies are generally set down with great exactness: (y)  
 So that there being no genealogy at all of Melchisedeck re-  
 corded in Scripture, he is introduced at once; even like a  
*man dropped down from heaven*, for so the description goes  
 on, *having neither beginning of days nor end of life*, i. e.  
 in the history of Moses, which. (contrary to its common  
 usage when it makes mention of great men) takes no no-  
 tice at all of the time either of his birth or death; and  
 herein *he is made like unto the Son of God*, i. e. by the history  
 of Moses, which mentions him appearing, and acting upon  
 the stage, without either entrance or exit, as if, like the  
 Son of God, he had abode a priest continually.

(x) *Vid.* Calmet's and Saurin's Dissert. sur Melchisedeck;  
*Heidegger's Hist. patriarch.* vol. 2,

\* From the times of Epiphanius there were names invented  
 for the father and mother of Melchisedeck. To his father was  
 given the name of *Heraclas*, or *Heracles*, and to his mother,  
 that of *Astaroth*, or *Astaria*; Calmet's Dictionary.

(y) Scott's Christian life, part 2. c. 7.

A. M.  
2108, &c.  
Ant. Chrif.  
1896, &c.  
from Gen.  
xx.—xxv.

11.

Who ths  
Melchife-  
deck was  
not.

This is the common, and † the best approved interpretation of the apostle's words; but still the question returns upon us, to whom can this character, even with this comment, belong?

The Jews are generally of opinion, and herein are followed by some Christians, that Melchisedeck was the same

† The learned Heidegger, in my opinion, has taken the right method to explain this difficult passage of St. Paul to the Hebrews. He supposes (as there really is) a twofold Melchisedeck, the one historical, whereof Moses gives us an account in the 14th chapter of Genesis, as that he was the king as well as priest of Jerusalem; the other allegorical, whom St. Paul describes in the words now under consideration, and this allegorical person is Christ. The word *Melchisedeck*, simply considered, means *the king of righteousness*; and from this sense of the word, in its appellative acceptation, and the remembrance of this person's being a priest as well as a king, the apostle took occasion to draw the comparison between him and Christ, in order to shew the pre-eminence of the Christian above the Aaronical priesthood; and what he ascribes to the historical Melchisedeck, upon this account is only to be understood in an imperfect and improper sense, that is really and literally true only in the person of Christ. The apostle was minded, in short, to illustrate his argument with some comparison; and writing at this time to the Jews, (who were well acquainted with this allegorical way of arguing), he could meet with none, in the whole compass of their law, so commodious for this purpose, as this Melchisedeck: And therefore as Christ, the heavenly Melchisedeck, was *without father, without mother, without descent* here on earth, in respect of his divinity, *having neither beginning of days, nor end of life*; so the like properties may, in some measure, be applied to the earthly Melchisedeck; forasmuch as, in the book of Genesis, wherein all great mens genealogies are supposed to be recorded, there is no mention made, either of his birth, family, or death; only he was invested with a royal priesthood, which assimilates him to Christ. He had a father and mother, no doubt, and was born, and died like other men; but because these things are not related by Moses, the apostle looks upon them as though they had never been. So that the whole hinge of comparison turns upon the silence of the sacred historian, who, in a book (wherein it might be expected otherwise) makes no manner of mention, either of the beginning or ending of Melchisedeck's life or priesthood: and it is for this reason, that he who wrote by the guidance of the blessed Spirit, was directed to conceal these matters; that in this situation, this same Melchisedeck might be a more proper type of so sublime a thing as that of the priesthood of Jesus Christ; *Hist. patriar. vol. 2. exercit. 2.*

with

with Shem, one of the sons of Noah, whom they suppose alive in the days of Abraham, the only person upon earth, say they, who could, with justice, be called his superior, and whom the description of the apostle could, in any tolerable manner, besit, as being a person of many singularities, born before the deluge, having no ancestors then alive, and whose life had been of an immense duration in comparison of those who came after him. But not to dispute the fact, whether Shem was at that time alive or no, (z) it seems very incongruous to think, that Moses, who all along mentions him in his proper name, should, upon this occasion, disguise his sense with a fictitious one; and very incompatible it is with what we know of Shem, that he should be said to be *without father*, and *without mother*, when his family is so plainly recorded in Scripture, and all his progenitors may, in a moment, be traced to their fountain-head in Adam. Besides, had Melchisedeck and Shem been the same person, the apostle would hardly have made him of a family different from Abraham, much less would he have set him in such an eminence above the patriarch, or thereupon broke out into this exclamation concerning him; *Consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils!*

These arguments seem to evince, that Melchisedeck and Shem were different persons, and much more reason have we to suppose, that he and Ham, that wicked son of Noah, were so. For who, upon deliberate thoughts, can believe, that this cursed person was the priest of the most high God, from whom Abraham so joyfully received the sacerdotal benediction, that he returned it with the payment of his tithes? And much less can we believe, that one of his ill character was the type of the blessed Jesus. Jesus indeed himself, if he be taken for Melchisedeck, appearing to Abraham in an human shape, (as he is often supposed to do in Scripture), will answer all the character which the apostle gives of this extraordinary person. But then the wonder is, that the historian should never give us the least intimation of this; that Abraham should express no manner of surprise upon such an interview; and (what is more) how the type and the antitype can possibly be represented the same. (a) For this is the case: Here Melchisedeck was a representative of our Saviour, according to that of the apostle, *Jesus was a priest after the order of Melchisedeck*, which

(z) Bochart's Phaleg. 1. 2. c. 1.  
of religion, vol. 1

(a) Edward's Survey

A. M.  
2108, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1896, &c.  
from Gen.  
xx.—xxv.  
11.

he explains in another place, *after the similitude of Melchisedeck there ariseth another priest*; as much as to say, Melchisedeck and Christ were like one another in several things; and thereupon one was designed to be a fit type of the other: But as it is unreasonable and absurd to say, that a person is like himself, so we cannot rationally imagine, that Christ, who, as St. Paul says, was *after the similitude of Melchisedeck*, was in reality the same person with him.

Thus we have looked into \* some of the chief conjectures concerning this great man, which seem to have any plausibility in them; and, after all, must content ourselves with what the Scriptures nakedly report of him, *viz.* That this Melchisedeck was both a king and a priest (for these two offices were anciently united) in the land of Palestine, in the city of Jerusalem, descended, not improbably, \* from wicked

\* The sole question concerning the person of Melchisedeck would supply matter for a whole volume, even tho' one should do no more than recite the catalogue of the different opinions, to which it has given rise, and the reason upon which each conjecturer has endeavoured to establish his own. The Melchisedecians, a sect in the early times of the church, maintained, that he was a certain divine power superior to Christ: Hieraxes the Egyptian, that he was the Holy Ghost, because compared to the Son of God: The Samaritans, and many Jews, that he was Shem the son of Noah. Mr. Jurieu (in his *Hist. critique des dogmes, &c.* l. 1.) of late, that he was Ham, another son of his: Origen, that he was an angel: Athanasius, that he was the son of Melchi, the grandson of Salaad: Patricides, that he was the son of Phaleg: Irenæus, that he was king of Jerusalem: St. Jerom, that he was king of Salem in Scythopolis: And a certain anonymous author, that he was a man immediately created by God, as was Adam: And because he is said to have had no relations, some have given out, that the earth opened her mouth and swallowed them all up; whilst others, because he is said to have had no end of life, suppose that he was translated, and is now with Enoch and Elias, in a state of paradise; *Heidegger's Hist. patriarch. vol. 2. exercit. 2.* But all these opinions are at present reduced to these two; whether this Melchisedeck was mere mortal man, or the son of God in human shape; which the reader may find supported with arguments on both sides, in both Saurin's and Calmet's Dissertations upon this subject.

\* Those who make him to be the son of Melchi, an idolatrous king, and of a queen named *Salem*, have an ancient tradition, that Melchi, having resolved to offer a sacrifice to his gods, sent



wicked and idolatrous parents, but himself a person of singular virtue and piety, *the priest of the most high God*, but perhaps the first and the last of his race who was so, which might give occasion to the Apostle to describe him under such ambiguous terms: For the whole of these (according to the judgment of a learned author) \* may not improperly

A. M.  
2108, &c.  
Ant. Chris.  
1896, &c.  
from Gen.  
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sent his son Melchisedeck to fetch him seven calves, that he might sacrifice them; but that, as he was going, he was enlightened by God, and immediately returned to his father to remonstrate to him the vanity of idols. His father in wrath sent him back to fetch the victims, and while he was gone, offered up to his gods his own son, who was the elder brother of Melchisedeck, with a great number of other children. Melchisedeck returning, and conceiving a great horror at his butchery, retired to mount Tabor, where he lived for seven years without cloaths, and without any other fruit but wild fruits, or any other drink but the dew that he sucked up from the plants; till at length Abraham, by the direction of God, went up to the mount, found out Melchisedeck, clothed him, and brought him down with him. But those who would have him to be the son of Phaleg relate a still stranger story, *viz.* That Noah, upon his death-bed, charged his son Seth to take Melchisedeck, the son of Phaleg; with him, and go to a place which the angel of the Lord should shew them, and there bury the body of Adam, which he had preserved in the ark during the flood; that in that place Melchisedeck should fix his habitation, lead a single life, and entirely addict himself to the practice of piety, because God had made choice of him for his priest, but allowed him not to shed the blood of any animal, nor to offer any other oblation to him, but that of bread and wine only; that Seth and Melchisedeck did as Noah had enjoined them, and buried Adam in the place which the angel pointed out; that upon their parting, Melchisedeck betook himself to the monastic course of life which Noah had prescribed him; but that twelve neighbouring kings hearing of his fame, and desirous of his acquaintance, consulted together, and built a city, whereof they constituted him king and governor, and, in honour to his merit, called it *Jerusalem*. Vid. *Selden De jure nat. l. 3. c. 2.*; and *Heidegger's Hist. patriar. vol. 2. exercit. 7.*

\* The same learned author, who makes the Melchisedeck spoken of in Scripture in one sense to be historical, and in another allegorical, defines the historical in these words,—"Verus, et merus homo, ex Adamo et Noacho, perejus filium Chamum, et nepotem Canaanum, fatus, Hierosolymæ rex, veri Dei sacerdos, gratia communi omnibus fidelibus regeneratus et sanctificatus, atque ad beatam resurrectionem, et vitam æternam obfignatus."

And

A. M.  
2108, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1896. &c.  
from Gen.  
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The prophecy concerning Ishmael explained, and justified.

improperly be reduced to this single proposition, (*b*) that Melchisedeck was the most illustrious of his family, and had neither predecessor nor successor in his employ.

We readily grant indeed, that there is something very strange and uncommon in the prophecy relating to Ishmael; but the question is not concerning the singularity, but the reality rather, of the matters contained in it. If these are explicable in themselves, and, upon examination, found to be true, then is the prophecy so far from losing its credit upon the account of its strangeness, that for this very reason it demonstrates its divine origin; because nothing but an omniscient mind could foresee things so strange and unaccountable; and nothing but an almighty power and providence could bring these things to pass, and make the event exactly agree with the prediction.

Now, in order to explain the prophecy itself, and thence to observe how perfectly it has all along been fulfilled, it must be remembered, that (according to the known style of the Old Testament) what is here said of Ishmael must be chiefly understood of his descendants, in the same manner (*c*) as what Jacob predicts of Judah and the rest of his sons, was to relate to their posterity, and be indeed the characteristic of their several tribes. And therefore (to take notice of two of the most odd and unaccountable branches of his character) *he will be a wild man*, or a man like a wild ass; this (from the known properties of that creature) several interpreters have resolved into these qualities,—*Fierce and cruel, loving solitude, and hating confinement of any kind.*

How far this part of the character was verified in Ishmael, who lived in the wilderness, and became an expert archer, his very condition of life shows us; and how properly it belongs to his posterity, the Arabians, who in every nation have very justly obtained the appellation of *wild*, a small inspection into history will inform us.

To this very day (as (*d*) modern travellers do inform us) great numbers of them live in the deserts, and wander

And the allegorical in these of St. Paul,—“ Qui est rex justitiæ et pacis, sine patre, sine matre, sine genealogia, sacerdos in perpetuum, et habens testimonium quod vivat. Quæ omnia, ut jam annuimus, (says he), conveniunt Melchisedeco, in sensu minutiore, et allegorico, et (ut patres amant loqui) καὶ οὐνογενῆαν; Christo autem in emphasi, et rei veritate;” *Hist. patriarch. vol. 2. exercit. 2.*

(*b*) Outram De sacrificiis. (*c*) Gen. xlix. (*d*) Vid. Rauwolf's Travels, part 2. c. 3.

about

about from place to place, without any certain habitation. They neither plow the ground, nor apply themselves to any kind of husbandry, though there are several fruitful places in the wilderness that would repay their pains. Their whole occupation (besides spoiling their neighbours) lies in hunting and killing wild beasts, in which there are but few that make use of fire-arms. The much greater part of them make use of the bow, and do herein imitate their great progenitor, that they are the most exquisite archers in the world.

A. M.  
2108 &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1896, &c.  
from Gen.  
xx.—xxv.  
II.

Before the introduction of Mehometanism, they were as vagrant in their lust, and as little restrained in the use of females, as the brutal herd: And even now, they take as many wives as do the Turks, *i. e.* as many as they can keep, whom they purchase of their parents, use with indifference, and dismiss at pleasure. They rove about like the fiercest beasts of prey, seeking continually whom they may devour; insomuch, that the governour of Grand Cairo is forced to keep a guard of four thousand horsemen every night on the side of the city next the wilderness, to secure it against their incursions. Nor is the wilderness only the scene of their depredations. They rove all over the southern and eastern seas, visit every creek, and coast, and island, and (as the *(e)* historian compares them) comes fousing like an hawk, with incredible swiftness, upon their prey, and are gone again in an instant. And as they have always thus preyed upon mankind, the necessary consequence is, that they have always been at variance and hostility with them; and therein have made good the other branch of Ishmael's character, *His hand shall be against every man, and every man's hand against him.*

There is not the least hint in Scripture, nor any manner of reason to believe, that Ishmael dwelt in a personal state of hostility with his brethren; nor is it conceivable how he could have maintained himself against their united forces, had he so done; and therefore this prediction can no otherwise be understood, than as it relates to his posterity, the Arabians. Now, that any one nation should be of so singular and perverse a character, as to set themselves in open opposition to the rest of the world, and live in perpetual professed enmity with all mankind; and that they should continue to do so, not for one age or two only, but for four thousand years together, is surely the

(e) Ammianus Marcellinus.

strangeft

A. M.  
2108, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1896, &c.  
from Gen.  
xx.—xxv.  
II.

strangest and most astonishing prediction that ever was read or heard of. And yet, if we attend a little to the history of these people, (as soon as history takes notice of them), we shall find, in several instances, a full accomplishment of it.

When Alexander and his victorious army over-ran a great part of the east, the Arabians, (as we are told by Arrian and Strabo), of all the Asiatics, were the only people who sent him no ambassador, nor made any submission to him; which indignity he intended to have revenged in a particular expedition against them, but was prevented by death.

(f) What Alexander intended, Antigonus, the greatest of his successors, attempted; but he was repulsed with disgrace, and the loss of above 8000 men: And when, enraged at this repulse, he made a second attempt upon them with a number of select men, under the command of his valiant son Demetrius, the resistance he met with was so obstinate, that he was forced to compound the matter, and leave them in the quiet possession of their liberty and peace.

When the Romans and Parthians were rivals for the empire of the east, the Arabians joined, and opposed each nation as they thought fit, but were never entirely devoted to either; for their character always was, that they were fickle, if not faithless friends, and fierce enemies, who might be repulsed, and repressed for a season, but could never be totally vanquished or subdued.

Men of this character soon became the objects of the Roman enmity and ambition, which could endure nothing that was free and independent; and accordingly several attempts were set on foot by Pompey, Crassus, and other great generals, in order to enslave them; but all proved unsuccessful: And though they are sometimes said to have been defeated, yet there is no account that we can properly depend on, until we come to the expedition which Trajan is known to have made against them.

(g) Trajan was certainly a long experienced and successful warrior. He had subdued the German, humbled the Parthian, and reduced already one part of Arabia into a province; and yet, (h) when he came to besiege the city

(f) *Vid.* Dr. Jackson on the Creed. (g) Dio, Hist. 1. 68.  
(h) Revelation examined, vol. 2. dissert. 4.

of the Hagarens, upon every assault \* his soldiers were so annoyed with whirlwinds and hail, and so frightened with thunder and lightning, and other apparations in the air (whilst their meat was spoiled and corrupted with flies, even as they were eating it), that he was forced to give over the siege, and was not long after seized with a disease, whereof he died.

A. M.  
2108, &c.  
Ant. Christ  
1896, &c.  
from Gen.  
xx.—xxv.  
11.

About eight years after this, the Emperor Severus, a very valiant and prosperous warrior, whom Herodian makes no scruple to prefer even before Cæsar, Marius, and Sylla, disdaining (as Trajan had done) that the Hagarens should stand out still against the Romans, when all the rest about them had yielded, besieged their city (though it was but a small one) twice, and was twice repulsed with shame, and great slaughter of his men. In the second assault indeed, he beat down some of their city-wall, and thereupon founded a retreat, in hopes that they would have capitulated, and surrendered up the hidden treasure, supposed to be consecrated to the sun: But when they continued resolute a whole day, without giving any intimations of a treaty for a peace, on the morning following, the Roman army was quite intimidated. The Europeans, who were gallant men before, refused to enter the breach; and the Syrians who were forced to undertake that service, had a grievous repulse. Whereupon the Emperor, \* without making any fresh

\* The above-recited author, from whom I have compiled this account, assures his reader, that he had, with all the care he could, examined all the accounts of Arabia that came in his way, to see whether the phænomena and calamities here mentioned by Dio to have distressed the Roman army were frequent in that region, and that he had never been able to meet with any instance of one of them, except sometimes storms of wind. If hail, frightful appearances in the air, and food infested with flies, were ordinary calamities in this region, all the accounts of the caravans, that travel through the deserts, would necessarily be full of them; whereas it is notorious, that the best writers who have left us faithful diaries of these affairs, do not so much as mention any of them; and therefore they must certainly have proceeded from a divine interposition in favour of the Hagarenes, in accomplishment of the prediction concerning Ishmael and his posterity.

\* The historian tells us farther, that after the breach was made, the conquest of the city was deemed so easy, that a certain captain in the army undertook to do it himself, if he might

A. M.  
2168, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1896, &c.  
from Gen.  
xx.—xxv.  
11.

fresh attack, decamped from before the city, and departed to Palestine. Thus God delivered the city, (says Dio), recalling the soldiers by Severus, when they might have entered, and restraining Severus the second day by the soldiers backwardness.

There are only these two things more, which we may observe from our historian, worthy our notice upon this occasion. The first is, that the Arabians stood single, in this their extremity, against the whole Roman power; for none of their neighbours would assist them. The other thing is, that the Emperor had soldiers of all nations in his army; for “whereas other emperors (i) (says our “author) were contented with guards of four different “European countries, Severus filled the city with a mixed “multitude of soldiers of all kinds, savage to look on, “frightful to hear, and rude and wild to converse with.” So that, considering all things, I think we may fairly conclude, that every man’s hand was at this time against Ishmael, and his hand, his only hand, against every man’s; and yet he dwelt, and still dwelleth, in the presence of all his brethren: For not long after this, it is very well known that the Ishmaelites joined the Goths against the Romans, and having afterwards overcome both, \* under the name

have but 550 European soldiers assigned him. But where shall we find so many soldiers? (says the Emperor) meaning it of the disobedience of the army, to which he imputed his not carrying that place. But now, how a commander, who was at once beloved and revered almost to adoration by his soldiers, could not, with all his authority, influence them to assault, when they were in a manner at his mercy, this can be nowise reconciled, without the supposition of that mighty being occasioning it, *who poureth, when he pleases, contempt upon princes, and bringeth their counsels to nought*

(i) Ammianus Marcellinus.

\* The Ishmaelites, as some imagine, upon the reproaches of the Jews, who upbraideth them with bastardy, became ashamed of their old names, derived from Hagar and Ishmael, which carried an odium in the sound, and took upon them the name of *Saracens*, desiring to be accounted as the descendants of Abraham by his wife Sarah; but what destroys this etymology is this, that the ancients called them *Sara kenoi*, and *Saraenoi*, as they must have been called, if their name had been derived from Sarah: and therefore the learned Scaliger supposes the word to come from the Arabic word *sarack*, which signifies *to steal or plunder*; Calmet’s Dictionary.

of *Saracens*, they erected a vast empire upon their ruins ; A. M. 2108, &c.  
and thus Ishmael, in the full extent of the prophecy, became Ant Christ.  
*a great nation.* 1896, &c.  
from Gen.

Circumcision is the cutting off the fore-skin of the member which in every male is the instrument of generation ; and whoever considers the nature of this operation, painful if not indecent in those of maturity, and to such as live in hot countries, highly inconvenient, if not dangerous ; an operation wherein we can perceive no footsteps of human invention, as having no foundation either in reason, or nature, or necessity, or the interest of any particular set of men ; we must needs conclude, that mankind could never have put such a severity upon themselves, unless they had been enjoined and directed to it by a divine command. Nay, this single instance of Abraham, who, in the advanced age of ninety-nine, underwent this hazardous operation, and the very indecency of it in a man of his years and dignity ; these two considerations are in the place of ten thousand proofs, that it was forced upon him ; but nothing but the irresistible authority of God could be a force sufficient in those circumstances. So that the strangeness and singularity of this ordinance is so far from being an argument against it, that it is an evident proof of its divine institution ; and what was originally instituted by God cannot in strictness be accounted immodest, (though we perhaps may have some such conception of it), since (k) *unto the pure all things are pure, but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure, but even their mind and conscience is defiled.*

The Egyptians indeed (as (l) Herodotus informs us) pretended to practise this rite, from no other principle but that of cleanliness ; and possibly at that time they might so far have lost the memorial of its true origin, as not to retain any other reason for their observation of it. But since it is evident to a demonstration, that they might, to all intents and purposes, be as clean without this rite as with it, it is absurd to suppose, that any man of common sense should undergo pain, and hazard himself, and force the same inconveniencies upon his posterity, merely for the attainment of an end which could as fully and perfectly have been accomplished without it.

There is a passage indeed in the same Herodotus, where in he tells us, " That the Colchians, the Egyptians, and

Not found first among the Egyptians.

(k) Tit. 1. 15.

(l) Lib. 2.

A. M. 2108, &c. Ant. Christ. 1896, &c. xx.—xxv. 11.   
 “ the Ethiopians, were the only nations that circumcised from the beginning, and that the Syrians and Phœnicians, who lived in Palestine, acknowledged they borrowed that rite from them.” But here the historian is less to be blamed for having run into this error, since the Egyptians were a people naturally so vain and conceited of their antiquity, that they chose rather to impose upon him by a false information (for all this account he had but from information) than confess that they received circumcision from any other people. In the other part of the story it is manifest that they did impose upon him, when they told him that the inhabitants of Palestine, (whom he calls *Syrians* and *Phœnicians*) confessed that they received circumcision from them; whereas there were no inhabitants in Palestine circumcised but the Jews, and these always professed to have received it directly from Abraham.

(*m*) Herodotus indeed, in all his writings, has shown, that he was a great stranger to the affairs of the Jews, and much more to the history of the patriarchs, who so long preceded the institution of their republic. What he tells us of the origin of circumcision, *viz.* that it was among the Egyptians from the beginning, is in a loose and vagrant expression accidentally dropt from him, or rather contrived on purpose to conceal his ignorance of the matter: whereas Moses, who was long before him, knew the history of the patriarchs, and particularly that of Abraham; and therefore he does not content himself with popular or fabulous reports, or endeavour to conceal his meaning under indefinite and general expressions, but marks out the particular period, and gives us a plain and full account both of the causes and circumstances of the whole institution. The truth is, there is no comparison between the two historians in this particular; and therefore, if we will credit the sacred Penman in a point wherein his knowledge could hardly be defective, so far were the Egyptians from prescribing to the Hebrews in the rite of circumcision, that when Abraham was in Egypt, there was no such custom then in use.

Not in Egypt in Abraham's time.

It was twenty years after his return from that country, that God enjoined him the rite of circumcision; and then it is said, that (*n*) *Abraham took Ishmael his son, and all*

(*m*) Bafnage's History of the Jews. 25, 27.

(*n*) Gen. xvii. 11,

that



*that were born in his house, and all that were bought with his money, and circumcised the flesh of their foreskin.* Now it is evident, that when he came out of Egypt he brought men servants and maid servants with him in abundance ; and therefore, unless we can suppose that all these Egyptian men servants died within twenty years, when the ordinary period of life was at least an hundred ; or that when they died, none of them left any male-issue behind them ; we cannot but conclude, that circumcision was not known in Egypt in Abraham's time, because it is expressly said, that *every male among the men of Abraham's house, was circumcised* at the same time that he was, which could never have been, had they undergone that operation before.

At what time the rite of circumcision obtained in Egypt, is not so easy a matter to determine ; there is a passage, however, in the prophet Jeremiah, which, if taken in a literal sense, is far from encouraging any high pretension to antiquity : (o) *Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will punish all them that are circumcised with the uncircumcised ; Egypt, and Judah, and Edom, and the children of Ammon, and Moab, &c. for all these nations are uncircumcised, and all the house of Israel are uncircumcised in their hearts* : The plain sense of which word is this,—That God would visit the house of Israel like strange nations ; because, as the latter were uncircumcised in the flesh, so the former were in the heart. Not but that, in the days of Jeremiah, the rite of circumcision was known and practised among the Egyptians, as well as among other nations ; but then it was not so common and general, nor was it at all used any where till long after Abraham's days.

One probable opinion therefore is, that the Arabians received it from the Ishmaelites ; that the Egyptians received it from the Arabians, or perhaps from Abraham's children by Keturah ; and that from the Egyptians the people of Colchis, knowing themselves to be of Egyptian extract, embraced it, in imitation of their illustrious ancestors. But even suppose that this custom was not established in Egypt by the posterity either of Hagar, or Keturah ; yet why might not Joseph, in the course of a most absolute ministry for fourscore years together, be able to introduce

(o) Jer. ix. 25, 26.

A. M.  
2108, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1896, &c.  
from Gen.  
xx.—xxv.  
II.

A. M.  
2108, &c.  
Ant. Chrif.  
1896, &c.  
from Gen.  
xx.—xxv.  
II.

it? (p) It is the practice, we know, nay, it is the pride of slaves to intimate their masters manners, especially if he seems solicitous to have them do so; and therefore we need not doubt, but that, upon the least intimation of his pleasure, the Egyptians would readily embrace the religious rites of so great, so wise, so powerful a minister, who had preserved every one of their lives, who had saved the whole kingdom from ruin, and was himself so visibly and so remarkably guided by the Spirit of God. But whensoever, or from whomsoever it was, that the Egyptians, learned this rite, it is certain, that the reason of its institution was not with them the same that it was among the Jews, and therefore the circumcision itself must not be accounted the same.

Reasons  
and ends of  
its institu-  
tion.

Whoever looks into the life of Abraham, will soon perceive, that God did all along design him for a pattern of faith and perfect obedience to all succeeding generations. (q) The more his faith was tried, the more illustrious it became, and the more obstacles there were raised in the accomplishment of the divine promises, the more the good patriarch shewed (in surmounting these obstacles) the high conception he had entertained of him from whom these promises came. For after a promise of a numerous posterity, why was it so long before he gave him any son at all? After the birth of Ishmael, why so long before the promise of an heir by his wife Sarah? And after that promise was given, why so long, even till the thing was impossible, in an ordinary course of nature, before the promise was accomplished, and the child sent? All this was to exercise his faith, and to give him an opportunity of shewing to the world, how fully he was convinced, that, notwithstanding all these impediments and delays, God would certainly, by one means or other, effectually make good his promises. The like may be said of the command of circumcision. God did not only defer, for the space of twenty whole years, the birth of that son, who was so solemnly promised, and so impatiently desired, but even when that time was expired, and Abraham might now justly hope to see the promise accomplished and his faith crowned, God was pleased to cross it again, by requiring of him the performance of an act, which,

(p) Revelation examined, vol. 2. dissertation 4. (f) Saurin's Dissertation 15.

in all appearance, would be a total defeat to all his hopes. For this injunction, *My covenant shall be in your flesh*, to a man of advanced age, seems as opposite to the promise of having a son, as that other of *taking his son, his only son Isaac, and offering him up for a burnt sacrifice*, was to the promise of his being the father of a numerous posterity.

A. M.  
2108, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1896, &c.  
from Gen.  
xx.—xxv.  
11.

But Abraham's faith triumphed over this, as well as all other obstacles. He immediately performed the operation, notwithstanding its oddness, its danger, its seeming indecency, and the apparent opposition it had to the divine promises: And it is to preserve the remembrance of the faith of their great ancestor, who, in so many discouraging circumstances, *waited patiently on God, and against hope believed in hope*, (as the apostle expresses it), that God prescribed to the Jewish nation the sacrament of circumcision. For this was a farther end of its institution, not only to be a mark of distinction between the posterity of Abraham, and all other nations, but a token likewise of God's covenant made with him, and his posterity, and a note of commemoration to put those who bore it continually in mind whose offspring they were, and what advantages intitled to upon that account, provided they took care not to degenerate from the glories of that stock from whence they sprang.

And indeed, considering that Abraham was the first we read of whom God rescued from the general corruption of faith and manners, which the world had now a second time relapsed into; and considering withal, that this person and his posterity were singled out for a chosen generation, the repository of truth, and the receptacle of God incarnate; there was reason in abundance, why this remembrance should be very grateful to them: And apt enough, it is plain, upon all occasions, they were to value themselves, and despise others upon the account of so particular an honour. (r) But the misfortune was, the most useful part of the reflection, *viz.* the eminent faith and ready obedience of so renowned an ancestor, and the noble emulation of his virtues, which such a pattern ought to have inspired; this they were too apt to overlook, tho' any considering man (as the apostle (s) excellently argues)

(r) Stanhope on the epistles and gospels.

(s) Rom. iv.

A. M. could not but perceive, that the only valuable relation to  
 2108, &c. Abraham is not that of consanguinity and natural descent,  
 Ant. Chris. 1896, &c. but the resemblance of his virtues, and claiming under him  
 from Gen. as *the father of the faithful*.

xx.—xxv. And this suggests another, and indeed none of the least  
 11. considerable ends for which circumcision was instituted ;  
 viz. to be a sign of inward virtue, and to figure out to us some particular dispositions of mind which bore resemblance to the outward ceremony, and were required to render it effectual : For which reason it is that we read so much in the old law (t) of *circumcising the foreskin of the heart*, and hear the Apostle so frequently telling us in the new, (u) of *putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ* ; (x) *for he is not a Jew, who is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh ; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God*.

Abraham's conquest of the four kings accounted for. It may seem a little strange at first perhaps, that Abraham, whose course of life was retired and philosophical, should all on a sudden commence so great a warrior, as to be able to defeat four kings at once, and their victorious armies, with a small number of his domestics, and some assistance that was given him by his neighbours. His own men were three hundred and eighteen ; and what force his confederates, the three Phœnician princes, brought to his assistance, we do not find mentioned. We may probably enough suppose, that they did not exceed his own domestics ; but then we are not obliged to affirm, that he fell upon the whole body of the Assyrian army with this small retinue. This certainly would have been too bold an attempt for the little company which he commanded ; and therefore the more likely supposition is,——That coming up with them by night, he divided his men into two or three parties, the better to make a diversion, and conceal his strength ; that with one party himself might attack the head-quarters of King Chedorlaomer, where the chief feasting and revelling was kept for joy of their late victories ; that with another he might fall upon those who were appointed to guard the captives and the spoil ; and

(t) Deut. x. 16.  
 28, 29.

(u) Col. ii. 11.

(x) Rom. ii.

with

with a third might be beating up other quarters; so that the Assyrians, being fatigued in their late battle, surprised at finding a new enemy, and not knowing what their number or strength might be, or where their principal attack was to begin, might endeavour to save themselves by flight; which Abraham perceiving might take the advantage of their fright, and pursue them, until he had made himself master of the prisoners and the spoil, and then retire himself, as not thinking it adviseable to follow them until the day-light might discover the weakness of his forces.

All this might well enough be done by a common stratagem in war, without any miraculous interposition of Providence: But it is much more likely, that the same God, (y) who in after-ages instructed one of his posterity, even with such another little handful of men, not only to break an army of about two or three hundred thousand, but to kill them, upon the spot, no fewer than an hundred and twenty thousand; to disperse at least as many more; to vanquish after this a party of fifteen thousand that had retired in a body; and at last to take all the four kings, who were the leaders of this numerous, or rather numberless army (z); it is much more likely, I say, that the God of Abraham would not be wanting to his servant in his counsels and suggestions, upon this important occasion: And, if a party of three hundred men, under the conduct of a person every way inferior to Abraham, was, by a stratagem in the night, and by the help of a sudden panic, which God injected, enabled to defeat four mighty princes, and to make such a prodigious slaughter in their camp; I cannot see, why a person of that consummate wisdom, and so highly favoured by God with extraordinary monitions upon all remarkable emergencies, as Abraham was, might not, by God's advice, make use of some such stratagem as Gideon did, though the Scripture is herein silent, that the success might be imputed to the operation of faith in him, and not to the agency of second causes, or, what some call *the chance of war*.

Of what age Isaac was, when Abraham was ordered to offer him up, is nowhere declared in Scripture. The opinion of some learned Jews, that he was but twelve years old, is ridiculous; since, at that age, it would have

A. M.  
2108, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1896, &c.  
from Gen.  
xxi.—xxv.  
11.

Why Isaac  
submitted  
to be sacrific-  
ed.

(y) Judges, at the 7th and 8th chapters.  
thea Bibl. vol. I occas. annot. 19.

(z) Biblio-

A. M. 2108, &c.  
Ant. Chris.  
1896, &c.  
from Gen.  
xx.—xxv.  
11.

been impossible for him to have carried such a load of wood, as was requisite upon that occasion: And others run into a contrary extreme, by supposing that he was then seven and thirty years of age, which must have been the year wherein his mother died; and yet she is said to have been alive when this transaction happened. Josephus indeed makes him five and twenty, and some Christian (both ancient and modern) commentators suppose, that he was past thirty; but whatever his age might be, it is acknowledged, that he was capable of making resistance, and would certainly have done it, had he not been very well satisfied that the command came from God. To this purpose the \* Jewish historian introduces Abraham, as making a very tender and pathetic speech to his son; inspiring him with a just contempt of life; and exhorting him to a due submission to the divine order and

\* The words wherein Josephus makes Abraham address his son upon this occasion, are these:—" My dear son, thou  
 " hast been the child of many prayers to me, and since thy  
 " coming into the world, I have spared for nothing in thy  
 " nurture and education. There is not any happiness I have  
 " more wished for, than to see thee settled in a consummated  
 " state of age and reason, and whenever God shall take me  
 " to himself, to leave thee in possession of my authority and  
 " dominions. But since it has been the will of God, first to  
 " bestow thee upon me, and now to call thee back again, my  
 " dear son, acquit thyself generously under so pious a necessity.  
 " It is to God that thou art dedicated and delivered up on this  
 " occasion, and it is the same God that now requires thee of  
 " me, in return for all the blessings and favours he hath  
 " showered down upon us, both in war and peace. It is  
 " agreeable to the law of nature, for every one that is born,  
 " to die; and a more glorious end thou canst never have, than  
 " to fall by the hand of thy own father, a sacrifice to the God  
 " and father of the universe, who hath rather chosen to re-  
 " ceive thy soul into a blessed eternity, upon the wings of  
 " prayer, and ardent ejaculations, than to suffer thee to be  
 " taken away in sickness, war, passion, or any other of the  
 " common chances of mankind. Consider it well, and thou  
 " wilt find, that in that heavenly station, to which thou art  
 " now called, thou mayest make thyself the true support of  
 " thy aged father, and that instead of my son Isaac, I shall  
 " have God himself for my guardian;" *Antiq.* l. i. c. 14.

decree;

decree; to all which Isaac attended (says our author) with a constancy and resignation becoming the son of such a father: And upon this their mutual behaviour, (a) a very eloquent father of the Greek church has made this beautiful reflection: "All the strength of reluctant love could not withhold the father's hands; and all the horror of a dissolution could not tempt the son to move for his own preservation. Which of the two, shall we say, deserves the precedence in our wonder and veneration? For there seems to be a religious emulation or contest between them, which should most remarkably signalize himself; the father, in loving God more than his own child, and the son, in the love of duty above his own life."

A. M.  
2108, &c.  
Ant. Chris.  
1896, &c.  
from Gen  
xx.—xxv.  
11.

This is a gallant instance of a profound submission to the divine will; and yet (not to detract from the merit of it) if we consider the matter coolly, it was no more than what many martyrs, even under the Jewish oeconomy, equally have performed. They have given themselves up, in testimony of their love to God, to deaths as cruel, as terrible, as this which Isaac was to suffer: (b) *They were stoned, were sawed asunder, were tortured; and yet they accepted not deliverance, that they might inherit a joyful resurrection.*

The metamorphosis of Lot's wife is one of the most wonderful events in Scripture; and therefore those who are unwilling, as they say, to multiply miracles without a cause, from the different senses which the words in the text are capable of, have endeavoured to affix another interpretation to them. Thus the word, which we render *pillar*, or *statue*, besides its obvious signification, may, in a metaphorical sense, be applied to denote any thing, that like a pillar or stone is immoveable and hard; and according to this acceptation, these interpreters suppose, that Moses might intend no more, than that Lot's wife was struck dead with fear, or surprise, or any other cause, and so remained motionless like a stone.

Various  
opinions  
concerning  
the pillar  
of salt.

In like manner, (c) the word, which we render *salt*, besides its common signification, does sometimes denote a *dry and barren soil*, such as is found about the Asphaltic Lake: And thus the sense of the words, applied to Lot's wife, intimates, that the place of her death was in a

(a) Gregor. Nyss. de Deitate Fil. et Spirit. Sanct. p. 908.  
(b) Heb. xi. 35, 37. (c) Vid. Le Clerc's Dissert. in locum.

A. M. barren country, or in the land of salt. At other times it  
 2103, &c. signifies a long space, or continuance of time, because (d) we  
 Ant. Chris. find an *everlasting covenant* called a *covenant of salt*, (salt  
 1896, &c. being therefore an emblem of eternity, because the things  
 from Gen. that are seasoned therewith continue incorrupt for many  
 xx.—xxv. years), and in this sense Lot's wife may be said to become  
 II. an (e) *everlasting monument* of the divine displeasure,  
 without any consideration either of the form or matter,  
 whereinto she was changed : And from these significations  
 of the words, they draw this explication of the passage. —  
 “ That Lot's wife, either looking back upon the city,  
 “ when she saw it all in a smock, and fire from heaven  
 “ pouring down upon it, was struck dead with the fright-  
 “ ful sight, in a country that was afterwards barren and  
 “ unfruitful : Or that, not only stopping, but returning  
 “ towards the city, (when the angel was gone), she was  
 “ suffocated by some poisonous vapour, and perished in  
 “ the common conflagration.” And this, as they say,  
 saves a miracle, and answers the end of Providence full as  
 well, as if the woman had actually been turned into a pil-  
 lar of salt, which never was, and never will be proved by  
 any authentic testimony.

All this is plausible enough ; and yet those who adhere  
 to the literal sense of the words, have this to say in their  
 vindication, — That the vale of Siddim, where Sodom,  
 and the other cities stood, was originally a very fruitful  
 soil, (as most bituminous countries are), which induced  
 Lot to make choice of it for the pasturage of his cattle ;  
 but is at present the very reverse, a poor barren land, full  
 of sulphur and salt-pits : And hence they infer, that all  
 the sulphureous and saline matter which is found in this  
 tract of ground now, was the effect of divine vengeance,  
 and showered down upon it, when God destroyed Sodom,  
 and its neighbouring cities. They therefore suppose, that  
 the woman, standing still too long to behold the destruc-  
 tion of her country, some of that dreadful shower, in the  
 manner of great fleaks of snow, fell upon her, and  
 clinging to her body, wrapped it all over as it were in a  
 sheet of nitrosulphureous matter, which congealed into a  
 crust as hard as a stone, and made her appear like a

(d) Numb. xviii. 19.

(e) Deut. xxix. 23.

statue,



statue, or pillar, of † metallic salt, having her body enclosed, and, as it were candied all over with it. And, to maintain this their hypothesis, they assert, that all indurated bodies (as chymists well know) are (as they speak) highly saturated with a saline principle, and that all coagulations and concretions, in the mixture of bodies, are effected by this means: So that it was not possible to express such a transmutation as Lot's wife underwent, whether it was simply by incrustation, or by a total penetration, more properly than Moses has done. They produce instances from the best historians of several petrefactions, both of men and cattle, (almost as wonderful as this of Lot's wife), standing in the very same posture wherein they were found at the instant of their transmutation, for several generations afterwards; and, for the confirmation of this in particular, they vouch the testimony of the author of the book of wisdom, who makes mention of a standing pillar of salt, as a monument of an unbelieving soul, and the authority of the LXX interpreters, who expressly render it so. Among Jewish writers, they cite the words (f) of Josephus, who tells us, that Lot's wife, casting her eye perpetually back upon the city, and being too much concerned about it, contrary to what God had forbid her, was turned into a pillar of salt, which I myself (as he tells us) have seen. They cite the words of Philo, who frequently takes notice of this metamorphosis, and, in his allegories of the law more particularly, declares, that for the love of Sodom, Lot's wife was turned into a stone. And among Christian writers, they produce that passage of Clemens, in his epistle to the Corinthians; *Lot's wife went along with him, but being of a different spirit,*

A. M.  
2108, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1896, &c.  
from Gen.  
xx.—xxv.  
11.

† Most of the interpreters have observed to us, that we must not take the salt here mentioned for common salt, which water soon dissolves, and could not possibly continue long, being exposed to the wind and rain; but for metallic salt, which was hewn out of the rock like marble, and made use of in building houses, according to the testimony of several authors: Watfius, Miscell. tom. 1. and Pliny (l. 31. c. 7.) tells us, that in Africa, not far from Utica, there are vast heaps of salt, like mountains, which, when once hardened by the sun and moon, cannot be dissolved with rain, or any other liquor, nor penetrated with any kind of instrument made with iron; *Heidegger's Hist. patriar. vol. 2. exercit. 8.*

(f) Antiq. l. 1. c. 12.

and

A. M. 2108, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1896, &c.  
from Gen.  
xx.—xxv.  
11.

*and not persisting in concord with him, she was therefore placed for a sign, and continues a statue of salt to this very day ; together with the testimony of Irenæus, and several other fathers of the church.*

The accounts which modern historians and travellers give us of this matter are so very different and uncertain, that we cannot so well tell where to fix our belief. Bochart, in his description of the Holy Land, tells us, that he gave himself the fatigue of a very troublesome journey to behold this statue, but was not so happy as to satisfy his curiosity ; for the inhabitants assured him the place was inaccessible, and could not be visited without apparent danger of death, because of the prodigious beasts and serpents that abounded there, but more especially because of the Biduini, a very savage and inhuman sort of people, that dwelt near it : And yet, if we will believe other writers of this kind, they will tell us expressly, that there is still some part of it remaining, and to be seen, between Engaddi and the Dead-sea.

We will suppose however for once, that the long duration of this monument is an imposition of the inhabitants upon the credulity of strangers ; yet it will not therefore follow, that there never was any such thing in being, unless we can think it inconsistent with the nature of God to work a miracle for the punishment of a wicked woman. Miracles indeed are not to be multiplied, unless there be occasion for them : but when the plain sense of the words lead us to such a construction, it is a niceness, I think, no way commendable, to endeavour to find out another, merely for the sake of avoiding the miraculousness of the fact ; as if the Scriptures were more valuable for containing nothing but obvious matters, and the majesty of God any way magnified by seeming to exert as little of its omnipotent power as possible.

The short of the matter is this,——We have a clear account in a book full of wonders, of a woman, confessedly guilty of disobedience and ingratitude, struck dead by the hand of God, and turned into a statue of salt for a monument of terror to future generations. And is there any thing in this so repugnant to reason, or so incongruous for God to do, that we must immediately fly to another interpretation, and to make the matter easy, resolutely maintain that the whole purport of the thing is only this,——That the poor woman either suddenly died of a fright, or indiscreetly fell into the fire ? God certainly may work a miracle when he pleases, and punish any wicked person in what manner

manner he thinks fit ; nor is there any more wonder in the metamorphosis of Lot's wife, than there was in changing the rod of Moses into a serpent. The same power might do both ; and since the same history has recorded both, there is the same reason for the credibility of both. Nay, of the two, the transformation of Lot's wife seems more familiar to our conceptions, \* since we want not instances, as I said before, of persons struck with lightning, and killed with cold vapours, that have immediately petrified in the same manner.

Why she was turned into a body of salt, rather than any other substance, is only resolveable into the good pleasure of God. The conjectures of Jewish writers upon this head, we acknowledge, are trifling ; nor are we responsible for the reveries of such Christian commentators as would crowd in a multitude of palpable absurdities, merely to make the miracle more portentous : But why God exacted so severe a penalty for an offence so seemingly small, is not so hard to be resolved ; because, according to the light wherein we are to consider this woman, her disobedience to the divine command had in it all the malignity of an obstinate and perverse mind, unthankful to God for his preservation

A. M.  
2103, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1896, &c.  
from Gen.  
xx—xxv.  
11.

Why God  
punished  
Lot's wife  
so severely.

\* Besselius (in his Argon. Americ. l. 14. c. 2.) has a very remarkable story to this purpose. He tells us, that Badicus Amalgrus, who was the first man that ever marched an army over the mountains between Peru and Chili, by the extremity of the cold, and unwholesomeness of the air, lost in that expedition a great many men. Being obliged, however, some few months after to return the same way, what the historian tells us upon this occasion is very wonderful—Stabant adhuc equites peditesque, qui, quinto ante mense, obriquerunt, immoti, inconsumpti, situ, forma, habitu, quo repentina pestis quemque alligaverat. Alius pronus, humi stratus, alius rectis, non nemo videbatur inserta manibus fræna quassare. Ad summam, invenit eos tales, quales reliquerat ; odore nullo tetro, colore non solito funeribus, ac, nisi quod anima dudum intercidisset, cætera spirantibus, quam extinctis, similiores. To the like purpose it is related by Aventinus, (Annot. Bavar. l. 7.) a credible historian, that in his time above fifty country people, with their cows and calves, in Corinthia, were all destroyed at once by a strong suffocating exhalation, which immediately after an earthquake (in the year 1348) ascended out of the earth, and reduced them to saline statues, such as that of Lot's wife, which he tells us were seen both by himself, and by the Chancellor of Austria ; *Bibliotheca Bibl. vol. 1. occas. annot. 22.*

A. M.  
2108, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1896, &c.  
from Gen.  
xx.—xxv.  
31.

of her, and too closely attached, if not to the wicked customs, at least to the persons and things which she had left behind her in that sink of sin and sensuality.

But there is another observation which we may draw (*g*) from our Saviour's application of this story, as well as (*h*) the angel's expressions to Lot, *viz.* that she loitered by the way, if not returned to the city; and if so, it is no wonder that she suffered when she was found within the compass of the sulphureous streams from heaven; nor can God be blamed for his exemplary punishment of her, unless we think it reasonable for his providence, in this case, to have interposed, and wrought a miracle for her preservation, who had so little deserved it, and had run herself voluntarily into the jaws of destruction.

Heathen  
testimonies  
to the same  
purpose.

Thus we have endeavoured to vindicate the character of the Patriarch Abraham, and to account for several transactions and passages in Scripture which seem to give umbrage to infidelity during the compass of his life. And for the confirmation of all this, we might now produce the testimony of profane authors, and make it appear, that Abraham's fame for a just, virtuous, and religious man, is spoken of by Berofus in a fragment preserved (*i*) by Josephus: That his being born in Ur of the Chaldees, his removal into Canaan, and afterwards sojourning in Egypt, is related by Eupolemus, as he is quoted (*k*) by Eusebius: That the captivity of his nephew Lot, his victory over the four kings, and honourable reception by Melchisedeck king of the sacred city of Argarize, and priest of God, are recorded by the same author: That his marrying two wives, one an Egyptian, by whom he had a son, who was the father of twelve kings in Arabia, and the other a woman of his own kindred, by whom he had likewise one son, whose name in Greek was Γελλος, which answers exactly to the Hebrew word *Ishac*; and that this Isaac he was commanded to sacrifice, but when he was going to kill him, was stopped by an angel. and offered a ram in his stead; all this is related by Antiphanus, as he is quoted (*l*) by the same Eusebius: That the ancient custom of circumcision is taken notice of (*m*) by Herodotus, Diodorus, Strabo, and others: That the burning of Sodom and Gomorrah, and the strange waste it

(*g*) Luke xvii. 31, 32. (*h*) Gen. xix. 22. (*i*) Antiq. l. i. c. 8. (*k*) Prepar. Evan. l. 9. c. 17. (*l*) *Ibid.* c. 18. (*m*) Hug. Grot. De veritate.

has made in a once most beautiful country, is described (n) <sup>A. M.</sup> by Strabo, Tacitus, and Solinus : That (o) Isaac's being <sup>2108, &c.</sup> born to a father when old, and to a mother incapable of <sup>Ant. Christ.</sup> conception, gave occasion of the story of the miraculous <sup>1896, &c.</sup> birth of Orion, by the help of the gods, even when his fa- <sup>from Gen.</sup> ther Hyreus had no wife at all : That Lot's kind reception <sup>xx.—xxv.</sup> of the two angels in Sodom, his protecting them from the <sup>11.</sup> insults of the people, and escaping thereupon the destruc- tion that befel them, are all well delineated in the common fable of Baucis and Philemon : And (to mention no more) that the fate of his wife, for her looking back upon Sodom, and her being thereupon changed into a statue of metallic salt, gave rise to the poet's fiction of the loss of Eurydice, and her remission into hell, for her husband's turning to look upon her, and of Niobe's being changed into a stone for resenting the death of her children. So well has infi- nite wisdom provided, that the sacred truths of divine re- velation should not only be supported by the attestation of all ancient history, but preserved likewise even in the vanity and extravagance of fables ; for even *they*, O Lord, *show the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power ; that thy power, thy glory, and the mightiness of thy kingdom, might be known unto men.*

## DISSERTATION I.

### *Of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.*

OF all God's judgments upon the wicked, next to that <sup>The reality</sup> of the universal deluge, the destruction of Sodom, <sup>of it.</sup> and the neighbouring cities in the plain of Jordan, seems to be one of the most remarkable, and the most dreadful interpositions of providence ; and may therefore in this place deserve a particular consideration.

That this catastrophe (as (p) the Apostle calls it) did really happen, according to the account which Moses gives us of it, we have the concurring testimony of all histo- rians, both ancient and modern, to convince us. (q) Dio- dorus Siculus, after having given us a description of the lake Asphaltites, (which now fills the place where these cities once stood), acquaints us, that the adjacent country was then on fire, and sent forth a grievous smell, to which he

(n) Hug. Grot. De veritate. (o) Huet. Quæst. Ainetan.  
l. 2. (p) 2 Pet. ii. 6. (q) Lib. 19.

A. M. 2108, &c. Ant. Chr. ft. 1896, &c. from Gen. xi. — xxv. xi.

imputes the sickly and short lives of the neighbouring inhabitants. (r) Strabo, having made mention of the same lake, pursues his account, and tells us, that the craggy and burnt rocks, the caverns broken in, and the soil all about it adust, and turned to ashes, give credit to a report among the people, that formerly several cities stood there, (whereof Sodom was the chief), but that by earthquakes, and fire breaking out, there were some of them entirely swallowed up, and others forsaken by the inhabitants that could make their escape. (s) Tacitus describes the lake much in the same manner with these other historians; and then adds, that not far from it are fields, now barren, which were reported formerly to have been very fruitful, and adorned with large cities which were burnt by lightning, and do still retain the traces of their destruction. (t) Solinus is clearly of opinion, that the blackness of the soil, and its being turned into dust and ashes, is a sure token of its having suffered by fire from heaven; and if we may believe the report of (u) a late traveller, according to the account which he had from the inhabitants themselves, some of the ruins of these ancient cities do still appear whenever the water is low and shallow.

The number of cities that were destroyed.

What the number of these cities were, is a matter wherein we can have no absolute certainty. Moses, in the text, makes mention but of two, Sodom and Gomorrah; but in another place he enumerates four, and gives this description of their dreadful punishment. (x) *When the generations to come shall see the plague of that land, and the sicknesses which the Lord hath laid upon it, and that the whole land thereof is brimstone, and salt, and burning like the overthrow of Sodom, and Gomorrah, Abnoth and Zeboim, (which the Lord overthrew in his anger, and in his wrath), even all the nations shall say, Wherefore hath the Lord done this unto the land? Nay, if we will believe (y) the historian above cited, and who perhaps might have an account of the thing from some Phœnician writer, the number of the cities which at this time were destroyed were thirteen; and to this there is a passage in the Prophet, which seems to give some countenance, tho' not as to the precise number of them: (z) *As I live, saith the Lord God to Jerusalem, Sodom, thy sister, has**

(r) Lib. 10. (s) Lib. 5. (t) Chap. 35. (u) Maundrell's Journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem. (x) Deut. xxix. 22, 23, 24. (y) Strabo, l. 16. (z) Ezek. xvi. 48.

not done, *ſhe nor her daughters* (i. e. the cities which were built round it, and were tributary to it) *have not done, as thou and thy daughters have done.* But whatever the number of the cities might be, it will be proper for us, before we come to inquire in what manner they were destroyed, to give some account of their situation.

(a) The plain of Jordan includes the greatest part of the flat country, through which the river Jordan runs, from its coming out of the sea of Galilee, to its falling into the Asphaltite lake, or Salt-sea. But we are not to imagine, that this plain was once a continued level, without any risings or descents. The greatest part of it indeed was champion country, (and for this reason was commonly called *Μεγαλειον*, or *the great field*), but therein we read (b) of the valley of Jericho, and (c) of the vale of Siddim; in the latter of which these cities stood, in a situation so very advantageous, that we find it compared (d) to the land of Egypt, nay even to the garden of Paradise, upon account of its being so well watered. And well it might, seeing it had (as the *Lacus Asphaltites* has to this day) not only the streams of the river Jordan running quite through it, but (e) the river Arnon from the east, (f) the brook Zered, and the (g) famous fountain *Callirhoë* from the south, falling into it. Now, since all this water had no direct passage into the sea, it must necessarily follow, either that it was conveyed away by some subterraneous passage, or was swallowed up in the sands, that every where encompassed it; which might the more easily be done, because the inhabitants of those hot countries used to divide their rivers into several small branches, for the benefit of watering their fields.

And as this plenty of water gave great riches to the soil, and fertility to the country, so wealth and abundance of all things (as mankind are too apt to abuse God's gifts) made Sodom and the neighbouring cities very infamous for their wickedness and impiety. The Prophet Ezekiel gives us a description of them: (h) *Behold this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom: pride, fullness of bread, and abundance of idleness, was, in her, and in her daughters.*

(a) Well's Geography of the Old Testament, vol. 1. (b) Deut. xxxiv. 3. (c) Gen. xiv. 3. (d) Chap. xiii. 10. Vide page 7. vol. 2. in the notes. (e) Joseph. Antiq. l. 4. c. 4. (f) Numb. xlii. 12. (g) Pliny, l. 5. c. 16. (h) Chap. xvi. 49, 50.

A. M. 2108, &c. Ant. Christ. 1896, &c. from Gen. xx.—xxv. 11.

ters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy, but was haughty, and committed abomination before me: which (i) Josephus might have in his eye when he gave us this account of them. “The Sodomites (says he) waxed proud, and, by reason of their riches and wealth, grew contumelious towards men, and impious towards God; so that they were wholly unmindful of the favours they received from him. They were inhospitable to strangers, and too proud and arrogant to be rebuked. They burnt in unnatural lusts towards one another, and took pleasure in none but such as ran to the same excess of riot with themselves.”

The manner wherein they were destroyed.

These, and other abominable enormities, provoked the divine Ruler of the world to destroy their cities, whose cry was now grown great for vengeance; and the manner wherein it was effected, Moses has recorded in these words; (k) *Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven, and he overthrew the cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground*; and, for the better understanding of this, we must observe, 1st, (l) That in the vale of Siddim (the tract of ground which was now destroyed) there were a great many pits of bitumen, which being a very combustible matter, (m) is in some places liquid, in others solid; and not only found near the surface of the earth, but lies sometimes very deep, and is dug from the very bowels of it. 2dly, We must observe, that the brimstone and fire which the Lord is said to rain upon Sodom and Gomorrah, means *brimstone inflamed*; that in the Hebrew style brimstone inflamed signifies *lightning*; and that the reason why lightning is thus described, no one can be ignorant of, that has either smelt the places which have been struck with thunder, or \* read what learned men have wrote upon

(i) Antiq. l. 1. c. 12. (k) Gen. xix. 24, 25. (l) Le Clerc's Commentary. (m) Pliny's Natural history, l. 25. c. 15.

\* Thus thunder and lightning, says Pliny, (lib. 35. c. 15.) have the smell of brimstone, and the very light and flame of them is sulphureous. And Seneca (Quest. nat. l. 2. c. 21.) tells us, that all things which are struck by lightning have a sulphureous smell; as indeed our natural philosophers have plainly demonstrated, that what we call the thunderbolt, is nothing else



on the subject: 3dly, We must observe further, that God is not only said to have *rained down brimstone and fire*, but brimstone and fire *from the Lord*; where the addition of *from the Lord*, which at first sight may appear to be superfluous, or to denote a plurality of persons in the deity, (as most Christian interpreters would have it), does more particularly describe the thunderbolt, \* which, by the Hebrews, as well as other nations, is frequently called *the fire of God, the fire from God, &c.*; and the reason is,—Because men having no power over this kind of meteor, and it being impossible for them, by any kind of contrivance, to ascend up to the clouds, God is therefore supposed to dwell there, and to cast down his bolts from thence.

Now, from these observations put together, we may, in some measure, form a notion to ourselves, how this destruction came to be effected. For tho' Moses does not inform us, after what manner the lightning and thunderbolts from above subverted these cities, and their adjacent territories; yet, since he plainly makes mention of them, we cannot comprehend how it could happen any otherwise, than that the lightning and thunderbolts falling in great abundance, upon some pits of Bitumen \*, the veins of that

else but a sulphureous exhalation. Persius, in his second satire, calls it *sulphur sacrum*.

Ignovisse putas, quia cum tonat, ocyus ilex

Sulphure discutitur sacro, quam tuque, domusque.

And for this reason the Greeks, in their language, call brimstone *θεον*, i. e. *divine*, because the thunderbolt, which it assimilates, is supposed to come from God; *Le Clerc's Dissertation*.

\* Thus, in the second book of Kings, *the fire of God came down from heaven, and devoured them*, ch. i. 12. And Isaiah uses the same expression, ch. lxvi. 16. *He shall be punished with the fire of the Lord*; to which the passage in the Latin poet exactly agrees:

Illicit igne Jovis, lapsisque citatior astris,

Tristibus exiit ripis. ————— Stat. Theb. l. 1.

Some however have remarked it, as a peculiar elegance in the Hebrew tongue, that it very often makes use of the antecedent instead of the relative, or the noun instead of the pronoun, especially when it means to express a thing with great vehemence, or to denote any action to be supernatural or miraculous; *Heidegger's Hist. patriarch. vol. 2. exercit. 8.*

\* In Lycia, the Hephestian mountains, says Pliny, (l. 2. c. 106.), if you do but touch them with a lighted torch, immediately

A. M.  
2108, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1896, &c.  
from Gen.  
xv.—xxv.  
31.

that combustible matter took fire immediately, and as the fire penetrated into the lowermost bowels of the bituminous soil, these wicked cities were subverted by a dreadful earthquake, which was followed with a subsiding of the ground; and that, \* as soon as the earth was sunk, it would unavoidably fall out, that the waters, running to this place in so great an abundance, and mixing with the bitumen, which they found in great plenty, would make a lake of what was a valley before, and a lake of the same quality with what † the Scripture calls the *Salt-sea*.

ex descrip-  
tion of the  
Lacus As-  
phaltites.

This lake, according to the account we have of it, is inclosed to the east and west with exceeding high mountains; on the north it is bounded by the plain of Jericho, on which side, it receives the waters of Jordan; on the south it is open, and extends beyond the reach of the eye, being twenty-four leagues long, and six or seven broad.

ately take fire; nay the very stones in the rivers, and sands in the waters, burn. If you take a stick out of these waters, and draw furrows upon the ground with it (according to the common report) a tract of fire follows it; *Le Clerc's Dissertation*.

\* Strabo in his first, and Pliny in his second book, will furnish us with several examples of this kind. Strabo out of Posidonius, tells us, (p. 40.) That in Phœnicia, a certain city situate above Sidon, was absorbed by an earthquake; and out of Demetrius Scepſius, that several earthquakes have happened in Asia Minor, by which whole towns have been devoured, the mountain Siphylis overthrown, and the marshes turned into standing lakes: and Pliny (l. 2. c. 88.) testifies, that by a fire which suddenly broke out of it, the mountain Epopos was levelled to the ground, and a town buried in the deep: for the arch that supported the ground, breaking in, the matter underneath being wholly consumed, the soil above must of necessity sink and be swallowed up in these caverns, if they were of any large extent; *Le Clerc's Dissertation*.

† It is called the *Salt-sea*, not only because its waters are salt to a great degree, but to distinguish it likewise from two other lakes, the lake of Samachon, and the lake of Gennasareth, (through which the river Jordan runs), which are fresh water. It obtained in time the name of the *Dead-sea*, not only because its waters are immoveable, and more like a sea of liquid pitch than of water; but because no living creature can abide in it, nor any plant, or tree grow near it, by reason of those bituminous effluviæ, which it sends forth; and from the abundance of this matter, it most frequently occurs in Heathen writers under the title of *Lacus Asphaltites*; Heylin's *Cosmography*.

Its water is extremely deep and heavy; so heavy, that a man cannot, without difficulty, sink in it; but of so nauseous a taste, and noisome smell, that neither fish, nor fowl, accustomed to the water, can live in it. It is full of bitumen, which at uncertain seasons boil up from the bottom in bubbles, at which time the superficies of the lake swells, and resembles the rising of an hill. Adjoining to the lake are fields, which formerly (as we shewed from Tacitus) were fruitful, but are now so parched and burnt up, that they have lost their fertility, insomuch, that every thing, whether it grows spontaneously, or be planted by man, whether it be herb, fruit, or flower \*, as soon as it is compressed, moulders away immediately into dust; and to this (n) the author of the book of wisdom seems to allude, when he tells us, that *of the wickedness of those cities, the waste land, that smoketh to this day, is a testimony, and the plants bearing fruit, that never come to ripeness.*

"The cinders, brimstone, and smoke," (o) says Philo, "and a certain obscure flame, as it were of a fire burning, still perceivable in some parts of the country, are memorials of the perpetual evil which happened to it:" and, as (p) Josephus adds, "the things that are said of Sodom are confirmed by ocular inspection, there being some reliëts of the fire, which came down from heaven, and some resemblance of the five cities still to be seen;" And it is the duration of these monuments of divine wrath perhaps, which gave occasion to St. Jude to say, that the wicked inhabitants of these cities were *set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire*, i. e. of a fire, whose marks were to be perpetuated unto the end of the world: † for it is a common thing in Scripture,

\* Whether there be any truth in this part of the account of Tacitus, it is hard to tell. As for the apples of Sodom (to which he seems to allude) Mr. Maundrell tells us, that he never saw, nor heard of any thereabouts, nor was there any tree to be seen near the lake, from which one might expect such kind of fruit; and therefore he supposes the being, as well as the beauty of that fruit, a mere fiction, and only kept up, because it served for a good allusion, and now and then helped poets to a pat similitude; *Journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem.*

(n) Chap. x. 7. (o) In vita Moïsis, l. 3. (p) De Bello Jud. l. 5. c. 27.

† Thus God threatens to make the people of Israel *ἐρημικὰ αἰώνιον*, a perpetual desolation, Ezek. xxxv. 9.; *στέργμα αἰώνιον*.

A. M.  
2708, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1896, &c.  
from Gen.  
xx.—xxv.  
11.

How far it  
was miracu-  
lous.

ture; to express a great and irreparable vastation, whose effects and signs shall be permanent to the latest ages, by the word *αἰώνιος*, which we here render *eternal*.

Thus, in all probability, were the cities of the plain of Jordan overthrown: nor is there any doubt to be made, but that the miraculous hand of God was employed in sending down this heavy judgment. For (q) though in a soil impregnated with bitumen, the cities which are built thereon may be shaken with an earthquake, and swallowed up by a sudden *hiatus*; though thunderbolts may fall, and set the veins of sulphur and bitumen on fire, which afterwards breaking out, and mingling with the water, may, in a low valley, easily cause a lake full of asphaltus: Though these things, I say, in process of time, might have come to pass in an ordinary course of nature; yet if they were done before their natural causes were in a disposition to produce them; if they would not have been done that instant, unless it had been for some extraordinary interposition of God, or his blessed angels; it ought to be reputed no less a miracle, than if every particular in the transaction had plainly surpassed the usual operations of nature. And that the judgment now before us happened in this manner, (r) the two angels dispatched by almighty God upon this important occasion, (s) God's foretelling Abraham his design, the angel's acquainting Lot with the errand about which they came, and their urging and instigating to him to be gone, (t) to make haste and *escape to Zoar, because they could do nothing until he was come thither*, are arguments

a perpetual hissing, Jer. xviii. 16.; and *ὀνειδισμὸν αἰώνιον*, an everlasting reproach, Jer. xxiii. 20.; and this more especially is threatened, where the destruction of a city or nation is compared to the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah; *ὅτι καὶ οὐκ ἐκδοθήσεται εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα χεῖρον*, it shall never be inhabited, Isa. xiii. 20. Whether Sodom really underwent this fate, or some time after was rebuilt, is a question that has exercised the learned. It is certain, that in the Notitia, express mention is made of Sodom, as an Episcopal city; and among the bishops of Arabia, there is found one Severus, a bishop of Sodom, who subscribed to the first council of Nice: Mr. Reland however cannot persuade himself that this impious place was ever rebuilt; and therefore he believes that the word *Sodora*, which is read among the subscriptions of that council, must be a fault of the copiers; *Catmer's Dictionary on the word Sodom*.

(q) Le Clerc's Commentary in locum.

(r) Gen. xviii. 22.

(s) Ver. 17.

(t) Gen. xix. 22.

sufficiently

sufficiently convincing, that the thunder and lightning, or (as (u) others will have it) the showers of liquid fire, or rather (x) storms of nitre and sulphur mingled with fire, which fell upon these wicked places, were immediately sent down by the appointment of God, and by the ministry of his angels, who, knowing all the meteors of the air, and their repugnant qualities, did collect, commix, and employ them, as they thought fit, in the execution of God's just judgment upon a people devoted to destruction.

Thus we have considered the manner of the destruction of the cities of the plain, how far natural causes might be concerned, and wherein the miraculous hand of God did intervene. Whether a deluge or a conflagration be the more formidable judgment of the two, we cannot tell; our imaginations will hardly reach the dreadfulneſs of either; and to enter into the comparison, is a task too shocking. As the history however of those who suffered these punishments is recorded in Scripture for our admonition, (y) *that we should not lust after evil things, even as they lusted*; so the apostle has set both their examples before us, and laid it down for a sure proposition,—That (z) *if God spared not the old world, but brought in a flood upon the ungodly, and if he, turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them with an overthrow, or (according to (a) St. Jude, condemned them to the vengeance of eternal fire*; we need not doubt, but that, as he is in all ages the same, a God of justice, as well as mercy, no iniquity can ultimately escape. For though, upon every occasion, he does not lay bare his vindictive arm, tho' (b) *he is strong and patient*, so that he seldom *wheteth his sword, and prepareth the instruments of death*; yet a few of these remarkable, these monumental instances of his severity against sin, are enough to convince us, that *he hath reserved the unjust (however they may escape now) unto the day of judgment to be punished*.

(u) Howell's History. (x) Patrick's Commentary. (y) 1 Cor. x. 6. (z) 2 Pet. ii. 5. (a) Ver. 7. (a) Psal. vii. 12. &c.

A. M.  
2148, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1856, &c.  
from Gen.  
xxv. 20. to  
xxviii. 8.

## C H A P. II.

*Of the life of Isaac, from his marriage to his death.*

## The HISTORY.

The birth  
Esau and  
Jacob.

ISAAC was forty years old \* when he married Rebekah, the daughter of Bethuel; but his mother Sarah's misfortune attended his wife, viz. that she was without issue for almost twenty years together, till God at last was pleased to hear † his earnest prayers, and grant him the blessing he so much longed for. Rebekah however had not many months conceived before the struggles of the two children (for she had twins) in her womb gave her such pain and uneasiness, that she began, in a manner, to wish

\* How old Rebekah was when she was married to Isaac, the Scripture does nowhere inform us; but the conjectures of most of the Jewish commentators make her to be extremely young. The oldest that they will allow her to be, is not above 14, which was a thing hardly customary in those days: and yet, considering her absolute management of all affairs, even when Isaac was alive, we cannot but suppose, that although she lived not so long, she was a considerable deal younger than he; *Heidegger's Hist. patriarch. vol. 2. exercit. II.*

† The word in the original signifies *to pray with constancy, vehemence, and importunity*; and the Jews hereupon have a traditional explication, which is preserved in Jonathan's Targum, viz. that he carried his wife to the place of the altar, upon mount Moriah, where he himself was once bound to be sacrificed, and there made a most solemn invocation, by the faith of his father Abraham, and by the oath of God, that she, tho' barren by nature, might conceive by virtue of the covenant, and supernatural blessing; and accordingly he prevailed with God to grant him his request. What we render *for his wife*, may likewise signify *in the presence of his wife*: and so the import of the words will be, that besides their more private devotions, they did oftentimes, in a more solemn manner, and with united force, pray for the mercy wherein they were equally concerned: nor could there be any presumption in their thus petitioning, what at present was denied them, because they knew very well, that God's purpose and promise did not exclude, but rather require the use of all convenient means for their accomplishment; *Pool's Annotations*; and *Bibliotheca Bibl. in locum.*

himself

herself not with child again ; and when she went † to consult the divine oracle, what the meaning of this uncommon conflict might be, she had it returned for answer, that the two children which she then bore, were to be the heads of two different nations, should long contest it for superiority, but that at length the younger should get the dominion over the elder.

A. M.  
2148, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1856, &c.  
from Gen.  
xxv. 20.  
xxviii. 3

When the appointed time for their birth was come, the child which Rebekah was first delivered of, was all covered over with red hair, for which reason his parents † called him *Esau* ; and the other came after him so very close, that he took hold of his heel with his hand, and was therefore called *Jacob*, to denote (what he afterwards proved) the sup-

† The most early and common method of inquiring of the Lord, was, by going to some one of his prophets, and consulting him ; but then the question is, who the prophet was whom Rebekah, upon this occasion, consulted ? Some of the Jewish doctors are of opinion, that she went to the school, or oratory of Shem, (whom they suppose then alive), or to some other person constituted by him, and called of God to that ministration. Some Christian commentators imagine, it was *Melchisedeck the priest of the most high God* whom she consulted ; but if it were any priest, or prophet, that then she applied to, her father-in-law, Abraham, who was certainly then alive, and is expressly called a *prophet*, Gen. xx. 7, seems to have been the most proper person, not only because he was highly interested in her concerns, but had likewise the *Shechinah*, or divine appearance (as most imagine) continually resident with him. But as there was another manner besides that of answering by prophets, customary in those days, *viz*, by dreams and visions, their opinion seems to be most probable, who suppose, that Rebekah retired into some secret place, and there having poured out her soul before God in ardent prayers, received an answer, not long after, either in a dream or vision, by a voice from heaven, or by the information of an angel sent for that purpose ; *vid*. Le Clerc's Commentary ; Bibliotheca Bibl. in locum ; and Heidegger's Hist. patriarch. vol. 2. exercit. 11.

† The meaning of the word *Esau* is somewhat obscure, unless we derive it from *Hassab*, to make, or be perfect ; because he was of a stronger constitution than ordinary infants, as having hair all over him, which is an indication of manhood, whereas other children are born with hair only on their heads : and as for *Jacob*, it is derived from an Hebrew word, which signifieth to supplant ; and by the addition of the letter *Jod*, one of the formatives of nouns, it denotes a supplanter ; or one that taketh hold of, and trippeth up his brother's heels ; *Peei's Annotations*, and *Universal History*, c. 7.

A. M.  
2148, &c.  
Ant. Ch. 11.  
1856, &c.  
from Gen.  
xxv. 20 to  
xxviii. 8.

planter of his brother ; and as they advanced in years, their tempers and occupations were quite different. Esau was a strong and active person, who delighted much in hunting, and thereby supplying his father with venison, very frequently, won his particular affection ; while Jacob, who was of a more gentle and courteous disposition, by staying at home in the tent, and employing himself in family-offices, became his mother's darling.

Jacob's purchase of his brother's birth-right.

One day, when Jacob had made him some lentil pottage, Esau, returning from his sport, quite spent with hunger and fatigue, was so taken with the looks of it, that he earnestly desired his brother † to let him eat with him : but his brother, it seems, being well instructed by his mother, refused to do it, unless he would make him an immediate deduction of his birth-right. Esau, considering to what a multitude of dangers his manner of life, in encountering wild beasts, did daily expose him, made no great esteem of what Jacob required ; and Jacob, perceiving his disposition to comply, (that he might have the right more firmly conveyed to him) † proposed his doing it by way of oath, which the other never scrupled, and after the bargain was made, fell to eating very greedily, never once reflecting on what a vile and scandalous thing it needs must be, to sell his birth-right, and † all the great privileges thereunto belonging, for a mess of pottage.

In

† Lentils were a kind of pulse, somewhat like our vetches, or coarser sort of pease. St. Austin, upon Psal. lxi. says, that these were Egyptian lentils, which were in great esteem, and very probably gave the pottage a red tincture.

† Some imagine, that Esau did not know what this lentil-foop was, and therefore he only called it by its colour, *Give me of that red, that same red* ; as it is in the Hebrew, for which reason he was likewise called *Edom*, which signifies *red* : but there is no occasion to suppose, that he was ignorant of what lentils were, only his repeating the word *red*, without adding the name of a thing, denoted his great hunger, and eagerness of appetite, which was probably still more irritated by the colour of the foop : *Biblioth. Bib.*

† The birth-right, or right of primogeniture, had many privileges annexed to it. The first-born was consecrated to the Lord, Exod. xxii. 29. ; had a double portion of the estate allotted him, Deut. 21. 17. ; had a dignity and authority over his brethren, Gen. xlix. 3. ; succeeded in the government of the family or kingdom, 2 Chron. xxi. 3. ; and (as some with good

reason



In Abraham's time the famine was so severe in Canaan, that he was forced to remove into Egypt; and upon the same account his son Isaac had now left his habitation, near the well Lahairoi, and was come as far as Gerar, † where Abimelech at this time was king, in order to proceed in his journey; but while he was deliberating what to do, God admonished him in a dream not to go down into Egypt, but to tarry in the country where he then was; and at the same time assured him, that he would not only secure him from the danger of the famine, but, in performance of the oath which he had sworn to his father Abraham, his faithful and obedient servant, would cause his family (to which he would give the whole land of Canaan in possession, and from which the Messias, the desire of all nations, should descend) to multiply exceedingly.

A. M.  
2148, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1856, &c. 1  
from Gen.  
xxv. 20. to  
xxviii. 8.

Isaac, according to the divine direction, went no farther than Gerar; and here it was that he fell into the same weakness that his father had formerly done in the same place, viz. his making his wife pass for his sister, for fear that some wicked man or other might be tempted to destroy him, in order to enjoy her. But so it was, that the king, from his window, observing some familiarities pass between them that did not so well comport with the character of a brother, sent for him immediately, and complained of his dissimulation; charged him with being married, and (not unmindful, very probably, of what had befallen the nation upon the account of Sarah) with a design of entailing guilt, and therewith a judgment of God upon his subjects, in case any attempt had been made upon her virtue. Fear of death, and the desire of self-preservation,

reason imagine) succeeded to the priesthood, or chief government in matters ecclesiastical. He had a right to challenge the particular blessing of his dying parent. He had the covenant which God made with Abraham, that from his loins Christ should come, consigned to him. And (what is more) these prerogatives were not confined to his person only, but descended to his latest posterity, in case they comported themselves so as to deserve them; *Pool's Annotations; and Le Clerc's Commentary.*

† It is not unlikely, that this Abimelech might be the son of that Abimelech, king of Gerar, with whom Abraham had formerly made a covenant, supposing Abimelech to be here the proper name of a man. But it is much more probable, that at this time it was a common name for the kings of the Philistines, as Cæsar was for the Roman Emperors, and Pharaoh for the kings of Egypt.

A. M. 2148, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1856, &c.  
from Gen.  
xxv. 20. to  
xxviii. 8.

were the only apology that Isaac made for his conduct ; which Abimelech was pleased to accept ; and accordingly issued out an edict, that none, upon pain of death, should dare to offer any injury, either to Isaac, or his wife.

The great accession of wealth, however, wherewith God had blessed him during his stay in Gerar, raised the envy and indignation of the Philistines. That very year

His leaving  
Gerar.

wherein he thought of going down into Egypt for fear of the famine, he sowed a piece of ground, and, to the great surprise of his neighbours, received † an hundred-fold produce from it ; so that Abimelech's subjects began all to malign him, and (to oblige him to depart the country) filled up the wells which his father's servants had digged. Nay, the very king himself, to satisfy the resentment of his people, desired of him to leave the city of Gerar, and to find him out another habitation ; for that, in his opinion, ‡ he had improved

† This hundred fold increase in one year was given by God unto Isaac for a sign of his purpose to fulfil the covenant made with his father, and lately renewed to him ; particularly for the confirmation of the truth and reason of the warning against his going down into Egypt, as he was inclined, according to the natural prospect of things. Such an increase was at this time a singular blessing of God, after there had been a considerable dearth ; and the soil perhaps that afforded so large a crop not so rich ; otherwise we may learn from Varro [De re rustica, l. 1. c. 44.] that in Syria, near Gadera, and in Africa, about Bizantium, they reaped an hundred bushels from one ; Nay Bochart [in Canaan. l. 1. c. 25.] shews, from several good authors, that some places in Africa are so very fruitful, that they produce two or three hundred fold, which makes this account of Moses far from being incredible ; *Bibliotheca Biblica* ; and *Patrik's Commentary*.

‡ The words of Abimelech, according to our translation, are these, *Thou art much mightier than we* ; but certainly he could not mean that Isaac was more powerful than the whole people of Palestine, or that he had a larger family, or more numerous attendance than himself had, and consequently was in a condition, if he had been so minded, to disturb the government. This we can by no means conceive to be possible ; and therefore the words in the original [*cignatzampta mimennu*] do not mean, *because thou art mightier than we*, but *because thou art increased, and multiplied from us, or by us*, i. e. thou hast got a great deal by us ; while thou hast continued amongst us, thou hast made a great accession to thy substance, and we do not care to let thee get any more ; so that the Philistines did not fear him, but envy him ; they grudged that he should get so much among them, and therefore desire

improved his fortune sufficiently while he had been among them: So that to secure himself, as well as make the king easy, he retired into the valley of Gerar, where his father had formerly fed his cattle, and there began to open the wells which his father had caused to be dug, but the Philistines had filled up, and called them by their ancient names. But the people of the country thinking him too well situated there, quarrelled with his shepherds, took away their wells, and put him to many inconveniencies; so that, being quite tired with their repeated insults, he removed farther from them, and went and lived in the most distant parts of their country.

A. M.  
2148, &c.  
Ant. Chris.  
1856, &c.  
from Gen.  
xxv, 20. to  
xxviii. 8.

Here it was that he dug another well; and meeting with no opposition, called it *Rehoboth*, i. e. *room*, or *enlargement*, because God had now delivered him from the straits and difficulties he had lately been in, by reason of a scarceness of water, and not long after, settled his constant abode at Beer-sheba; where he had no sooner arrived, but that very night God appeared to him in a vision, promising him his favour and protection, and that he would bless him, and multiply his seed for his servant Abraham's sake: So that Isaac, intending to continue here, built him an altar and place of religious worship, and cleared out the well † which his father had formerly dug.

Nor had he been long here, before Abimelech, conscious of the peculiar manner wherein God had blessed him, sensible of the ill usage he had received from his subjects, and apprehensive, perhaps, that in time he might think of revenging the injuries he had suffered, came (attended with † the chief of his nobility, and with the captain-general of his forces) either to renew the old league which had

His treaty  
with Abi-  
melech.

formerly desired him to absent their country; *Shuckford's Con.* vol. 2. l. 8.

† The reasons that induced Isaac to open the old wells, rather than dig new ones, might be, 1. Because he was sure to find a spring there, which he could not be certain of in other places; 2. Because it was easier, and less liable to censure and envy; 3. Because he had a right to them, as they were his father's purchase and property: and, 4. Because he was minded to preserve and do honour to his father's memory, for which reason he called them by the same names that his father had done before him; *Bibliotheca Biblica, in locum.*

† The two that are mentioned here are Phicol and Ahazzah. Phicol is of the same name, and bore the same office which he had who is mentioned ch. 21. 22.; but we must not suppose, that he was the same man, any more than Abimelech was the same

same

A. M.  
2148, &c.  
Ant. Chris.  
1856, &c.  
from Gen.  
xxv. 20. to  
xxviii. 8.

formerly been made with his father Abraham, or to enter into a new one.

It was but proper that Isaac, upon this occasion, should, in some measure, resent the indignities that were offered him: And therefore at first he expostulates the matter with them, and seems to wonder why they came to visit him whom they had so lately expelled their country. Abimelech made the best excuse for their behaviour that the nature of the thing would bear; told him that he had all along perceived that the divine favour attended him in all his undertakings, and that therefore, that he might not be thought to oppose God, he was come to renew the covenant depending between his people and Abraham's posterity, and was ready to engage in the same conditions and obligations.

This speech, so full of submission and acknowledgments, soon pacified Isaac, who was naturally of a quiet and easy disposition; so that, having entertained the king and his attendants in a very respectful and generous manner that night, the next † morning they confirmed the league with the usual ceremonies; and Abimelech took leave, and returned home: But before he departed, Isaac's servants brought him word, that in the well which they had been clearing out, and which Abraham in former times had bought of the king of Gerar, they had happily found a spring of water; for which reason, in the hearing of Abimelech and all the company, he called it again by the name of *Beer-sheba*, *the well of the oath*, "i. e. the well wherein water" was discovered on the day that Abimelech and I entered

same king. The word properly signifies *face*, or *head*; and as the captain-general is head of the forces he commands, so some have imagined that it is the appellative name (like that of *tribunus* or *dictator* among the Romans) for every one among them that were advanced to that dignity. And, in like manner, though the Septuagint seem to make Ahazzah a proper name, and call him the *para-nymph* or *bride-man* to Abimelech, which was always accounted a post of the first honour; yet I should rather chuse, with Onkelas, to make the word signify *a train*, or great number of nobility which came in attendance on Abimelech, and to do the Patriarch the greater honour upon this occasion; *Le Clerc's Commentary*; and *Howell's History*.

† The articles were agreed upon over night, and, by a mutual oath, ratified in the morning. And the reason why men took public oaths in the morning fasting, seems to have been *ob reverentiam juramenti*, as the Jews call it, because they looked upon them as very solemn and sacred things; *Bibliotheca Bibl.*

" into

“into a treaty of peace, and ratified the same with the solemnity of oaths.”

By this time Isaac's two sons were arrived at the age of forty; and Esau, who had contracted an acquaintance with the people of the land, had married two wives. Judith, the daughter of Beeri, and Bethshemath, the daughter of Elon, both Hittites, which was no small affliction to his parents. This in a manner quite alienated his mother's heart from him; but as for his father, his affections continued the same. And therefore, finding himself grow old and feeble, and his eyes quite dim with age, and apprehending his death to be nearer than really it was, he called him one day, and declared to him his purpose of giving him his paternal benediction before he died; but wished him withal to take his hunting instruments, and go into the fields, and kill him a little venison, and dress it to his palate, that when he had eaten thereof, and refreshed nature, he might bless him with a more tender affection, as well as a more becoming pathos.

Rebekah overheard all this discourse; and as soon as Esau was well gone, she called Jacob, and acquainted him with what was transacting; that his father was going to bestow a benediction, which was final and irrevocable, upon his brother; but that, if he would listen to her, and do what she ordered him, she had an expedient, by substituting him in his room, to turn aside the blessing where she desired it. Jacob was willing enough to comply with his mother's request; but if he was to personate his brother, the difference of his skin and voice made him apprehensive that his father might discover the imposture, and thereupon be provoked, instead of his prayers and best wishes, to load him with imprecations. But so confident was his mother of success in this matter, that she took all the curses upon herself, and encouraged him to follow her directions. Hereupon Jacob hastened to the fold, and brought two fat kids from thence, which his mother immediately took, and dressed the choice pieces of them with savoury sauce, like venison; and so, having covered his neck and his hands with the skins of the kids, and † arrayed him with Esau's best robes, she sent him in trembling with the dish to his father.

His

† The Jews have a fancy, that it was the robe of Adam, which had been transmitted down from father to son, in the line of blessing, (as they call it), till it came to Abraham, who left

A. M.  
2148, &c.  
Ant. Chris.  
1856, &c.  
from Gen.  
xxv. 20. to  
xxviii. 8.

His blessing  
Jacob in-  
stead of  
Esau.

A. M.  
2148, &c.  
Ant. Chris.  
1856, &c.  
from Gen.  
xxv. 20. to  
xxviii. 8.

His father was lying upon the bed when Jacob entered the room, and upon his demanding who he was, he roundly answered, that he was his elder son Esau, who had brought him some venison to eat. Surprized at the great expedition he had made, and not knowing indeed what to think, the old man put several times the question to him, whether he was in reality his son Esau or no; to which he as often answered in the affirmative, and desired him, in short, to arise, and taste of what he had prepared for him, since God, who knew his zeal to obey his father, had brought it into his hands much sooner than he could otherwise have expected.

The difference between Jacob's and Esau's voice was so remarkable, that Isaac could not but suspect some delusion in the case; and therefore he desired him to draw nearer, that he might be the better satisfied; and when he had felt the hairy skin on his hands and neck, he owned that *the hands were the hands of Esau, though the voice was the voice of Jacob.*

Thus satisfied, or rather thus deluded, he arose, and eat heartily of his son's pretended venison: And as soon as he had dined, and drank \* a cup or two of wine, he bid him draw

it to Isaac, and he designing Esau as his eldest, for his successor, gave it to him. Some of them imagine, that this was a sacerdotal habit, wherein Esau, in his father's illness, was supposed to officiate, and for this reason it might be kept in Isaac's tent, near to which, very likely, was the place of religious worship. In all probability it was a vestment of some distinction, which the heir of the family, upon some solemn occasions was used to put on; and Jacob at this time being to personate his brother, there was a necessity for him to have it. But how his mother should come by it, or why she should have the keeping of it, when Esau had wives of his own, is a question that Musculus raises, and then answers it, by saying, — That because Esau had married these wives without the consent of his parents, especially his mother, she, for this reason refused to give it him, and perhaps reserved it for this very occasion. But, in my opinion, there seems to be no necessity for this supposition, since it was sufficient for her purpose, that she knew where it was in Esau's apartment; *Bibliotheca Biblica. in locum.*

\* There is a tradition among the Jews, that Jacob having omitted to bring wine for his father, an angel prepared it, and brought it into his apartment; that he gave it into Jacob's hands, and Jacob poured it out for his father; that the wine was

draw near, that he might now bestow upon him his promised blessing. The smell of Jacob's garments contributed not a little to Isaac's cheerfulness. He smelled and praised them. In a kind of extasy of pleasure, he embraced and kissed his pretended first-born; and after having \* wished him all heavenly and earthly blessings, he at length dismissed him.

A. M.  
2148, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1856, &c.  
from Gen.  
xxv. 20. to  
xxviii. 8.

Jacob was scarce got out of the tent, when Esau, having returned from hunting and just made ready his venison, came and invited his father in the same dutiful manner that his brother had done. Surprised at this address, his father asked who he was; and when he understood that it was his elder son Esau, he was quite in a maze, and began to enquire who, and where that person was who had been there before, and taken away the blessing which he neither could nor would revoke. Esau, too well perceiving that it must have been Jacob who had thus supplanted him, complains of his double perfidy; first, in extorting his birth-right from him, and now in robbing him of his father's blessing; and then seems to wonder very much that his father's store should be so far exhausted, as (since he would not revoke the other) not to have reserved one blessing for him.

Isaac was willing enough to gratify his son's request; and it grieved him, no doubt, to hear his bitter lamentations; but what could he do? all the choicest of his blessings he had bestowed upon Jacob; and as they were gone, he could not recal them. However, that he might in some

was the same with the wine of paradise, which had been laid up from the beginning; and that his father having drank of it, kissed him, and blessed him, as one now filled with the spirit, even with the spirit of prophecy and blessing. But the custom of the Jewish doctors is to magnify every little matter.

\* The prayer which Josephus makes Isaac offer up to God upon this occasion is in words to this effect. "Eternal God, the Creator of all things that are made; thou that hast been so gracious and bountiful to my father, to myself, and to our offspring, promising, and possessing us of all things, and giving us assurances of greater blessings to come: Lord, make thy words good to us by effects, and do not despise thy servant for his present infirmities, which make him the more sensible of his need of thy support. Preserve this child from all evil in thy mercy and infinite goodness: Give him a long and happy life: Bless him with all worldly enjoyments that may be for his good; and make him a terror to his enemies, and an honour and comfort to his friends;" *Antiq.* l. i. c. 48.

A. M.  
2148, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1856, &c.  
from Gen.  
xxv. 20. to  
xxviii. 8.

measure pacify Esau, by the same prophetic spirit, he acquaints him, "That though § his posterity should not enjoy a very plentiful country, yet they should become a great people, and mighty warriors; who should live by the dint of their sword; and though they should sometimes become subject to the descendents of Jacob, yet, in process of time, they would † shake off their yoke, and erect a dominion of their own."

§ The words in our translation carry a sense quite different to what we have here suggested: *Behold thy dwelling shall be of the fatness of the earth, and of the dew of heaven.* But besides, that this makes the blessing the same with that which was given to Jacob, ver. 28. which Isaac professes himself incapable of doing; it is manifest, that Idumæa, where the descendents of Esau dwelt, was far from being a fat and fruitful country. Had it been so, there had not been that reason for the subsequent words, *by thy sword thou shalt live*; for a rich and plentiful country would have secured them from living by spoil and plunder, as it is manifest the people of that country did, if we can credit the character which Josephus, both in his history of the Antiquities, l. 13. and of the wars of the Jews, l. 4. gives us of them; *Le Clerc's Commentary*; and *Universal History*.

† The Edomites, or Idumæans, who were the posterity of Esau, for a considerable time were a people of much more power and authority than the Israelites, till, in the days of David, they were entirely conquered, 2 Sam. viii. 14.; they were thereupon governed by deputies or viceroys appointed by the kings of Judah; and whenever they attempted to rebel, were for a long time crushed, and kept under by the Jews. In the days of Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat, they expelled their viceroy, and set up a king of their own, 2 Kings viii. 20.; and tho' they were reduced at that time, yet, for some generations after this, they seemed to have lived independent on the Jews; and when the Babylonians invaded Judea, they not only took part with them, but violently oppressed them, even when the enemy was withdrawn; so that, remembering what they had suffered under Joab, in the days of David, they entered into the like cruel measures against the Jews, and threatened to lay Jerusalem level with the ground. Their animosity against the posterity of Jacob seems indeed to be hereditary; nor did they ever cease, for any considerable time, from broils and contentions, until they were conquered by Hyrcanus, and reduced to the necessity of embracing the Jewish religion, or quitting their country. Hereupon, consenting to the former, they were incorporated with the Jews, and became one nation; so that, in the first century after Christ, the name of Idumæan was lost, and quite disused; *Le Clerc's Commentary*; and *Universal History*, l. 1. c. 4.

Esau



Eſau was now become ſo ſenſible of what he had loſt by the frauds and deceptions of his brother, that he was reſolved, at a proper ſeaſon, to be revenged of him. His regard to his father would not permit him to expreſs his reſentment in any violent act as yet ; but as he ſuppoſed that he could not live long, he was determined to kill his brother, as ſoon as his father was dead. Some ſpeeches of this kind had accidentally dropped from him, which were brought to his mother's ears. Whereupon ſhe acquainted her favourite ſon with the bloody deſign his brother had conceived againſt him ; told him, that the wiſeſt way would be for him to withdraw ſome where, until his fury was aſſuaged ; and the properſt place for that purpoſe would be his uncle Laban's, in Meſopotamia ; that thither he might retire a little while. and as ſoon as his brother's paſſion was over, ſhe would not fail to recal him ; that to part with him indeed was no ſmall affliction to her, but nothing comparable to the miſery that would enſue, if in one day ſhe ſhould be bereaved of them both ; of him by the hands of his brother ; and of his brother by the hand of juſtice.

A. M.  
2148, &c.  
Ant. Chriſt.  
1856, &c.  
from Gen  
xxv. 20. to  
xxviii. 8.  
His being  
ſent into  
Meſopotamia.

Jacob, who was of a mild, if not a timorous temper, readily complied with his mother's propoſal ; but then his father's conſent was to be had ; and this Rebekah undertook to obtain by artful inſinuations to her huſband, that Eſau's Hittite wives were a perpetual grief and trouble to her ; that the whole comfort of her life would be loſt, if Jacob ſhould chance to marry in the like unhappy manner ; and therefore, to prevent this diſaſter, ſhe thought it not amiſs (if ſhe might but have his approbation therein) that he ſhould go to her brother Laban's in Meſopotamia, and there ſee if he could fancy any one of his daughters for a wife.

Jacob's departure into Meſopotamia.

Iſaac was unacquainted with the main drift of her diſcourſe ; but being himſelf a pious man, and knowing that the promiſe made to Abraham, and renewed in him, was to be completed in the iſſue of Jacob, called him to him, and upon his bleſſing, gave him a ſtrict charge not to marry with any Canaanitiſh woman, but to go to Padan-Aram, to the houſe of his uncle Laban, and there provide himſelf with a wife ; which if he did, " God would bleſs him," he ſaid, " and raiſe him up a numerous poſterity, and give " that poſterity the poſſeſſion of that very country, where " now they were no more than ſojourners, according to " the

A. M. 2148, &c. " the promise which he had made to his grandfather A. braham."

Ant. Chris. 1856, &c. With these words he dismissed Jacob to go to his uncle's from Gen. in Mesopotamia: And of the patriarch Isaac we read no xxv. 20. to more, only that he was alive at his son's return, and xxviii. 8.

lived three and twenty years longer still; that he had removed from Beerseba, where his son left him, and dwelt now at Mamre, not far from Hebron; where, at the age of 188 years, he died, and was buried in the same sepulchre with his father Abraham, by his two sons Esau and Jacob.

### The OBJECTION.

" OF all the promises that God made unto the pa-  
 " triarchs, none is so frequently repeated, as that of a  
 " plenteous issue; and yet, if we look into the history, we  
 " shall find, that no mens wives were so frequently barren  
 " as theirs. Sarah had surpassed the ordinary term of con-  
 " ception above thirty years; Rebekah had been married  
 " almost twenty; and Rachel full as long, before any of  
 " them had a child; and yet God all along promises their  
 " husbands an innumerable offspring, which can hardly be  
 " accounted for, unless we can suppose, that barrenness and  
 " fruitfulness are compatible, and that to close up the  
 " wife's womb is the readiest way to make the man's seed  
 " like the stars in heaven for multitude.

" But after all these large promises, Isaac, we read, had  
 " but two sons; and yet, (what is more surprising in the  
 " divine conduct) the younger of these was not only  
 " (a) preferred before the elder, quite contrary to the esta-  
 " blished right of primogeniture; but (as (b) the Scrip-  
 " ture expresses it) *God loved Jacob, and hated Esau,* (c)  
 " *even when the children, being yet unborn, had neither done*  
 " *good nor evil,* which is a manifest instance of God's  
 " partiality, and no small argument for the doctrine of  
 " predestination: And yet, if we inquire into the cha-  
 " racter of this child of promise (as he is called) we shall  
 " find, that his behaviour did hardly deserve so particular  
 " a favour.

(a) Gen. xxv. 23.  
 ix. 11, &c.

(b) Mal. i. 2, 3.

(c) Rom.

“ For what apology can we make for his taking the advantage of his brother's hunger, and thence overreaching him in the matter of his birth-right? There is something so inhuman in denying an hungry person a little victuals; something so selfish, in expecting an exorbitant price from one's own brother, for a mess of pottage; something so crafty and designing, in bringing an eager appetite under the obligation of an oath, that Jacob seems to have acted the mere sharper in this whole affair; nor (d) can Esau's supine negligence, in giving up the privilege, be reputed near so culpable, as the other's covetous, unlawful method of obtaining it.

A. M.  
2148, &c.  
Ant. Christ  
1856, &c.  
from Gen.  
xxv. 20. to  
xxviii. 8.

“ And if we cannot excuse him in this, what shall we say for his fraudulent practice in intercepting his father's blessing; in averring himself to be the person he was not; in telling a multitude of positive lies; in listening to the instigation of a crafty woman, his mother; in imposing upon the blindness and infirmity of his aged father; and in making even God himself a party to the fraud? For so he confidently tells his father, (e) *The Lord thy God hath brought the venison to me.* And if we cannot acquit the son, who acted only in subordination, what shall we say for the mother herself, who was the prime author or contriver of the whole plot?

“ Constant conversation, and a whole similitude of features, temper, or manners, may be allowed to engage a mother's affections more towards one child than another; but certainly that parent is justly to be censured, who trains up her child in any the least wickedness, for the acquisition even of the greatest good; and that child is liable to the divine malediction, (f) *who deceiveth his neighbour, much more his father, and (g) maketh the blind to go out of his way.*

“ The truth is, Rebekah, in her whole conduct, appears to be a woman of craft and intrigue; dextrous in contriving, and bold in executing any means to accomplish her design. She had a peculiar art in imposing upon her husband, by concealing her real sentiments, (as she did in the case of sending away Jacob), and fobbing him off with a cunningly devised tale:

(d) Le Clerc's Commentary. (e) Gen. xxvii. 20. (f) Mal. i. 14. (g) Deut. xxvii. 18.

A. M. 2148, &c. Ant. Chris. 1856, &c. from Gen. xxv. 20. to xxviii. 8.

“ and as to her husband, whatever boast may be made of his greatness, (*b*) even to outvie the wealth and power of kings; (*i*) yet Jacob’s being sent away to Mesopotamia, all alone, and without any servant to attend him in so long a journey; Esau’s finding no kind of eatables in his father’s house, when he returned from hunting, so that (*k*) he was ready in a manner to be famished to death; himself being glad of a piece of venison, whenever his son Esau could catch it, and for that reason (*l*) loving him more than he did his brother; and the great rout and bustle, that we find him so frequently making about a well that his father had dug, and therefore he thought his own property, are manifest tokens that his circumstances at this time were but strait, and that (*m*) *his possession of flocks, and possession of herds, and great store of servants, &c.* might be designed to give an heightening to his character, but do not appear to be matters of fact.”

Answered, by shewing why the patriarchs wives were for some time barren.

Nothing can be more obvious, than that the promises which God was pleased to make to the patriarchs, were not to be accomplished in their persons, but in their posterity. Abraham had but one son by his primary wife, and Isaac but two; and therefore the blessing of a numerous offspring could not be verified in them; but in Jacob it began to operate. He had twelve sons; and these, when in Egypt (notwithstanding all lets and impediments to the contrary) mightily increased; and upon their return from thence, made up an army sufficient to expel the old inhabitants, and to take possession of the land of promise. for thus it is that Moses bespeaks the people: (*n*) *Thy fathers went down into Egypt, with threescore and ten persons, and now the Lord thy God has made thee as the stars of heaven for multitude*; wherein he alludes to the very words in which the promise, the original promise was made.

If then the numerous posterity wherewith God blessed the Jewish patriarchs, did, in a due course of years, tho’ not immediately ensue, there is no foundation for our calling in question his truth and veracity; but then his wisdom; and almighty power are much more conspicuous in raising so large an increase from so small a beginning. For

(*b*) Gen. xxi. 13, 16. (*i*) Chap. xxviii. 5. (*k*) Chap. xxv. 32. (*l*) Chap. xxv. 28. (*m*) Gen. xxi. 14. (*n*) Deut. x. 22.

besides that the long sterility of these holy matrons gave a proper occasion for the exercise of faith, and patience, and reliance on God; (o) it tended not a little to illustrate the nobility of the Jewish extraction, when it came to be considered, that their progenitors were descended from women that were complexionally unfruitful, and brought into the world at no less an expence than that of a miracle. It showed plainly, that the multiplication of the promised seed was not effected by any natural succession, but by the divine favour and benediction. It prepared the way for the coming of the Son of God in the flesh, and as St. Chrysostom (p) expresses it, predisposed the world to the belief of the miraculous conception of the Virgin Mary. It administered comfort to such married women as were childless, giving them encouragement still to hope on, and restraining them from murmuring, or being impatient at any retardation; and therefore we find the angel, in his address to the Blessed Virgin, (both to enforce the credibility of the message he brought her, and to revive the hope of such as were destitute of children), expressing himself in this manner: (q) *Behold thy cousin Elisabeth, who was called barren, she also hath conceived a son in her old age, for with God nothing shall be impossible*: And it is a glorious demonstration of the sovereign power of God, when (according to the apostle's manner of expression) (r) *he chuses the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty, the base things of the world, and the things that are despised, yea, and the things that are not, to bring to nought the things that are, that no flesh should glory in his presence*.

The same apostle, in relation to the subject we are now upon, has, by a familiar similitude, evinced the right which the great Ruler of the world has to make a discrimination (as to the temporalities I mean only) between man and man: for *hath not the potter power over the clay, says he, of the same lump, to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?* He who has a present intuition of all things future, knows how every person, when born into the world, will comport himself; and therefore, as he has the right, so he is the only Being that is duly qualified to allot men their different stations

(o) Heidegger's Hist. patriarch. vol. 2. exercit. 8. (p) In Gen. ch. xlix. (q) Luke i. 36, 37. (r) 1 Cor. i. 27, &c.

A. M. in life; but it is their different stations in this life, that God  
 2148, &c. thus determines, and not any necessity either of their hap-  
 Ant. Christ. py or unhappy condition in the next.  
 1856, &c.

from Gen. Esau and Jacob were both in the womb, when God thought  
 xxv. 20. to fit to declare his choice of the one, rather than the other,  
 xxviii. 8. to be the founder of the Jewish nation, and of *whom, ac-  
 cording to the flesh, Christ should come*: And as this was a fa-  
 vour of a temporary consideration only, and no ways affect-  
 ed their eternal state, I know of no attribute of God that  
 could restrain him in this option. Loving and hating are  
 terms of a strong signification sometimes; but that here  
 they can mean no more than a bare preference of one be-  
 fore another, is plain from the whole tenor of the apostle's  
 discourse. The truth is, (*s*) his words (as well as those of  
 Moses) relate (as we said before) not to the persons, but to  
 the posterity of Jacob and Esau, or not to them personally,  
 but nationally considered. As to their persons, it was never  
 true, that the elder did serve the younger, but only as to  
 their posterity, when the (*t*) Edomites became tributary to  
 David: and therefore the apostle cannot be supposed here  
 to discourse of any personal election to eternal life, or any  
 absolute love or hatred of these two brothers, with respect  
 to their interest in another world, but only of the election  
 of one seed, or nation, before another, to be accounted  
 and treated as the seed of Abraham, which is all that the  
 apostle's argument drives at.

In a word, the case of these two patriarchs has no-  
 thing to do with the election or reprobation of particular  
 persons. It shews us indeed, that God may make choice  
 of one nation rather than another, to be his peculiar  
 people; but to apply this to particular persons, or to sup-  
 pose that the condition of mens souls, even before they  
 come into the world, is determined by a fatal irrevocable  
 decree, is foreign to the apostle's meaning, and abhor-  
 rent to his word, who has so plainly declared himself to be  
 (*u*) *no respecter of persons, but that in every nation, he that  
 feareth God, and worketh righteousness, shall be accepted with  
 him.*

The birth- (x) Some are of opinion, that the chief prerogative of  
 right what. the primogeniture was nothing else, but a double portion

(*s*) Whitby on Rom. ix. (*t*) 2 Sam. viii. 15. (*u*) Acts  
 x. 34, 35. (x) Bibliotheca Bib.

of the father's estate, and that this was all that Esau parted with to his brother: But had this been so, we cannot see wherein he was so mightily to blame, or why the apostle, who certainly understood the meaning of the birth-right as well as any modern commentator, should give him the hard name of a *profane person*, merely for selling the reversion of a temporal estate, to save his life, in a time of the greatest exigence. Had the birth-right, I say, consisted chiefly in this, we cannot see how Jacob could have been reduced to the straits we afterwards find him in, or Esau, as to his outward fortune, have flourished more prosperously than his brother did. When his father Isaac died, and he came from mount Seir, to assist in his funeral, upon his departure from his brother, he is said to have (y) *carried away with him all the substance which he had got in the land of Canaan*. (z) Now it is plain, that he had no substance in the land of Canaan of his own getting, for he lived at Seir, in the land of Edom, beyond the borders of Canaan; and therefore the substance which was gotten in the land of Canaan, must be the substance which Isaac died possessed of, and which Esau, as his heir, took along with him. So that after the birth-right was sold, he was still heir to his father's substance; and therefore a right to this was not the thing which Jacob purchased of him. Others are of opinion, that the birth-right was the blessing promised to the seed of Abraham; and this the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews seems, in some measure, to favour; *Left there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for a morsel of meat sold his birth-right. For ye know, how that afterwards, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: where, not inheriting the blessing, seems to have connected with his having sold his birth-right*; as if, having parted with the one, he could not possibly obtain the other; but it is much to be questioned, whether this be the true sense of the passage. Esau himself, when he sold his birth-right, did not imagine that he had sold, at the same time, his right to the blessing; for when his father told him, that his brother had come with subtilty, and taken away the blessing, his answer is, *Is he not rightly named Jacob, for he hath supplanted me these two times; he took away my birth-right, and behold*

A. M.  
2148, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1856, &c.  
from Gen.  
xxv. 20. to  
xxviii. 8.

(y) Gen. xxxvi. 6.

(z) Shuckford's Connection, vol. 1.

1. 7.

A. M.  
2148, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1856, &c.  
from Gen.  
xxv. 20. to  
xxviii. 8.

*now he hath taken away my blessing?* Had he apprehended that the blessing and birth-right were things inseparable, having sold the one, he would never have laid any claim to the other; whereas the defrauding him of his blessing is another hardship he complains of, distinct and different and independent on the former: And therefore Esau's birth-right was most probably his right of being priest, or sacrificer for his brethren; and for parting with this he is justly termed *profane*, because he hereby showed himself not to have a due value and esteem for the religious employment that belonged to him.

Jacob censured.

But though this employment might better comport with Jacob, yet we cannot pretend to justify him in his method of obtaining it. (a) Moses, who records the story, does not commend him for it; and therefore we are left at our liberty to pass what censure upon it we think reasonable. God indeed, before he was born, designed and promised this privilege to him; but (b) then he should have waited until the Divine Wisdom had found out the means of executing his promise in his own way, as David did, till God gave him possession of Saul's kingdom, and not have anticipated God, and snatched it by an irregular act of his own. In the whole affair indeed, Jacob acted with a subtlety, not at all becoming an honest man. He knew that delays were dangerous, and that his brother's consideration, or second thoughts, might possibly spoil his bargain; and therefore he required haste, both in the sale, and in his oath, and thereby incurred another sin, in hurrying his brother into an oath by precipitation, which he neither should have taken, nor Jacob have advised him to take, without mature advice and deliberation.

And in like manner, as to his interception of the blessing, which his father designed for his brother Esau; it is in vain to have recourse to † forced constructions, or  
to

(a) Bedford's Scripture-chronology. (b) Pool's Annotations.

† Upon Jacob's answering his father, *that he was Esau his first born*, the Rabbins are put to great perplexity, how to as-fail the patriarch from the sin of lying; and therefore some of them paraphrase the word thus,—*I am*, i. e. *he*, who brings thee something to eat, *but Esau is thy eldest son*; while others understand them in this manner rather; *I am Esau*, i. e. *I am in his stead*, because he has sold me his birth-right; for by this sale, as they tell us, a proper permutation being made of persons



to plead the lawfulness of mental reservations, in order to excuse him in the lying and dissimulation, wherein he was certainly culpable. The best way is, upon this occasion, to lament the infirmity of human nature, which cannot always stand upright, and to admire the impartiality of the sacred writings, in which the very blemishes and transgressions of such as are designed to make the top figure therein are not forgotten to be recorded.

A. M.  
2148; &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1856, &c.  
from Gen.  
xxv. 20. to  
xxviii. 8.

(c) It cannot be denied indeed, but that both Jacob and his mother were justly to be praised for having a due

Wherein he  
was commendable.

persons and titles, the first became really last, and the last first; the elder became the younger, and the younger the elder, as to the style, and all the privileges of eldership; so that Jacob was in reality as much the heir and successor of Isaac as if Esau had been actually dead. And though Esau was still alive, and had the name of Esau, yet Jacob was properly (what his brother had been) his first-born Esau, since Esau was reduced to the station of a younger brother only. St. Austin [ad Consentium de mendacio, c. 10.] pretends, that Jacob's words have a figure in them much in the same nature with that in the gospel, where John the Baptist is called *the Elias that shall come*; but the misfortune is, that there was a great similitude between Elias, and the Baptist, as to their spirit and office, but between Jacob and Esau there was none at all; and therefore some other fathers, seeing the impossibility of explaining the words by any of these subtleties, have boldly asserted, that there was no iniquity in the lies which Jacob told, because they did not proceed from any malevolent intent, but from a design of promoting the greatest good; for which end it was as lawful for a wise man to employ officious lies, as it is to make use of physic for the preservation of health. And from such dangerous positions as these the Jesuitical doctrine of equivocation and mental reservation has in a great measure proceeded: "Quid vero faciemus hujus commatis hominibus," says our author, "qui hac ratione mendacii, et perjuriis decumanam aperire portam non verentur? Conclamatum erit de pastorum omnium et contractuum fide, adeoque universæ societatis humanæ vinculo si perversa ea sententia reciperetur. Quod si sanctus patriarcha resurgeret, haud dubie, illam audacissimorum hominum impietatem valide responderet, et damnaret ipse: Tantum adest, ut ejusdem vecordiae se reum fecerit: Qui, si humana infirmitate lapsus est, at certe artificiosum illud et affectatum mentiendi genus minime sectatus est;" *Heidegger's Hist. patr. vol 2. exercit. 14.*

(c) Heidegger, *ibid.*

esteem

A. M.  
2148, &c.  
Ant. Chris.  
1856, &c.  
from Gen.  
xxv. 20 to  
xxviii. 8.

esteem of the paternal benediction, and for their endeavouring to attain it; since this could proceed from no other motive than a full persuasion of the truth of God's promises and covenant with Abraham. For as the paternal blessing was thought to be a means instituted by God for the conveyance of this covenant, it could not but deserve their care and assiduity. It cannot be denied farther, but that if this blessing was (as some imagine) an appendage to the birth-right, Jacob, in purchasing the one, had acquired a lawful title to the other, a title established not only upon the express designation of God, but by a deed of sale likewise, executed and ratified by a most solemn and sacred oath. It cannot be denied likewise, but that, pursuant to this divine designation, Isaac was obliged to have conferred his blessing upon Jacob; and therefore his wife, perceiving that he was going to promise the blessing of Abraham where his affection led him to wish it, and not where she knew that God had designed to bestow it, laid a scheme which induced her husband to do that unwittingly which God had preordained was to be done, but what she knew her husband would not do knowingly without some uneasiness. Nay, it cannot be denied, once more, but that (*d*) when her artifice had succeeded, and Jacob was accordingly blessed, Isaac was so far from being displeased with his wife, or angry with Jacob for imposing upon him, that we find him fully satisfied in what he had done: (*e*) *I have blessed him, says he, yea, and he shall be blessed.* Which sudden change of mind can be imputed to nothing else but some divine inspiration, which at that time opened his understanding, and convinced him that he had given the blessing to the right person.

Wherein  
blameable.

Thus, from the consideration of Jacob's right, and Isaac's duty, the goodness of the end, the preordination of God, and his approbation of the thing, when done, may be drawn some arguments to alleviate their crime; but still we must ingenuously own, (*f*) that Rebekah was guilty of a fault, in suggesting such dangerous advice to her son; that Jacob committed another, in suffering himself to be seduced by so bad a guide; and that both of them presumed to limit the power of God, by thinking that a complication of frauds was necessary for the accomplish-

(*d*) Shuckford's Connection, vol ii. l. 7.      (*e*) Gen. xxvii. 33.  
(*f*) Saurin's Dissertation 25.

ment of a divine prophecy. (g) Had Rebekah indeed put her husband in remembrance of this prophecy, and shewn how Esau had forfeited the blessing by selling his birth-right and by marrying strange wives, this had been a much more honourable proceeding; but therefore she was left to pursue her own indiscreet method, that God might have the honour of serving his own purposes by the follies of men.

But how culpable soever Rebekah may be thought in this instance, yet there is not the like imputation upon her in hiding from her husband the true reason of her sending away Jacob. (h) It is certainly a point of great prudence to conceal truth, when the discovery of it will occasion more harm than good; and therefore, that she might not afflict her husband's old age with the unwelcome news of his son Esau's wicked intent against his brother, and thereby provoke his indignation against him, she covered the dismissal of Jacob with a reason that was true indeed, but not that chief and latent one which gave her the most uneasiness, and which, if communicated to her husband, might have been a means of *bringing his grey hairs with sorrow to the grave*. So that, in the whole, and according to the Proverbs of the wise man, she acted the part both of a careful wife and a prudent woman; for (i) *the tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright; and she (k) that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter*.

When Abraham sent his servant into Mesopotamia to negotiate a marriage for his son Isaac, he had an equipage appointed him suitable to the dignity of his master, that God might be more honoured by so fine an appearance, and his veracity publicly justified in the advancement of that Abraham who had quitted all to follow him; but we shall soon perceive, that there was not the like reason for Isaac's sending away his son Jacob with such an honourable retinue if we do but consider, (l) that the family of Nahor was already sufficiently apprised of the divine blessing which had attended Abraham and his family; that as Rebekah was sister to Laban, the head of the family, there was no need of any farther recommendation than that of a letter to her brother; that in this affair it was prudence to make Jacob appear as little as might be, in order to give the less umbrage to his brother, and, if possible, to appease his resentment; that it was highly expedient for Jacob to tread

(g) Millar's history of the church, c. 1. period 3. (h) Heidegger's Hist. patriar. vol. 2. exercit. 14. (i) Prov. xv. 2.

(k) Chap. xi. 13. (l) Bibliotheca Bib. in Gen. xxviii. 5. in

A. M.  
2148, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1856, &c.  
from Gen.  
x v 20. n.  
xxviii. 8.

Wherein  
Rebekah  
may be ju-  
stified.

Jacob's be-  
ing sent a-  
way in a  
poor condi-  
tion.

A. M. in the steps of his grandfather Abraham, whose heir he  
 2148, &c. was now become, and should therefore depart from his fa-  
 Ant. Christ. ther's house, and cast himself entirely upon the providence  
 1856, &c. of God for his subsistence, even as he had done; and that  
 from Gen. of God for his subsistence, even as he had done; and that  
 xxv. 20. to it was necessary for him to give a demonstration that it was  
 xxviii. 8. not merely (as some suppose) an earthly inheritance which  
 he had purchased, or a secular blessing which he had ac-  
 quired, but that there was something far greater (tho' not  
 discernible by every common eye) which he had in view in  
 this acquisition: For (m) his confessing in this manner,  
*that he was but a stranger and pilgrim on earth*, (notwith-  
 standing the right of primogeniture in him), declared plain-  
 ly, that as heir of the promise with Abraham and Isaac,  
 he was seeking a better country than either that from  
 whence he departed, or that whereunto he was sent, *i. e.*  
 an heavenly.

Esau's hun- From these, and such like considerations, and not from  
 ger upon any family-poverty, it was, that Jacob was sent into Me-  
 his return sopotamia all alone, and without any attendance. And in  
 from hunt- like manner, when Esau, upon his return from hunting  
 ing. complains of his extreme hunger, we can scarce suppose,  
 that he found nothing at home to eat, except the portage  
 which his brother had made. Frugality indeed was a virtue  
 of much more esteem among the ancients than it is among  
 us; but it is hard to imagine how Isaac, who was a man  
 confessedly of a plentiful estate, and had doubtless a large  
 family to maintain, should keep a house utterly destitute of  
 all manner of eatables. Provision there was no doubt enough,  
 but Esau's fancy ran upon something else. He longed, gree-  
 dily longed for the soap, and the soap he would have,  
 whatever it cost. Its flavour and colour had enticed him,  
 and every thing he resolved to part with rather than not  
 gratify the present cravings of an intemperate appetite.  
 And accordingly we may observe, (n) that his reasoning  
 upon this occasion was not, that he was ready to die for  
 famine, and therefore he would part with his birth-right;  
 but that, according to his course of life, and the perils which  
 he every day ran in hunting, in all probability he would  
 not survive his father, and his birth-right of consequence  
 would avail him nothing; and therefore, having but a flen-  
 der opinion of what was to come hereafter, he made his  
 conclusion much in the same form with the Epicurean

(m) Heb. xi. p. 10. (n) Heidegger's Hist. patriarch. vol. ii.  
 exercit. 12.

in the prophet, (o) *Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.* A. M.  
2148, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1856, &c.  
from Gen.  
xxv. 20. to  
xxviii. 8.

Whoever considers the chronology of that transaction, will find that (p) Isaac lived about forty years after his parting with his prophetic blessing; and consequently, (q) that it was not old age, but some sickness and indisposition of body, that at this time had seized him, and made him apprehensive of his approaching death. In this condition, it is no uncommon thing, we know, for mens thoughts to run upon one kind of meat rather than another, and when the stomach is depraved, or any wise out of order, generally to long for such things as are of a flavoury taste: and if venison in those countries was more particularly adapted to that purpose, wherein, I pray, is Isaac to be blamed, for loving a son who took such pains, and exposed himself to such dangers, that he might show his respect to his aged father, and procure him now and then some little thing to please his palate, and humour his sickly appetite? Those who think proper to blame the patriarch's kind resentment of his assiduity, seems to have forgot the workings of human nature, and how apt the very wisest of parents are to have their affections won every day more and more, by the sedulity and officiousness of their children.

The dressing this venison is represented indeed as a province which Esau himself took upon him; and to have the eldest son and heir of a family stand cook, (as we call it) seems to portend no great wealth or magnificence in it; but when we urge this, we forget the simplicity of the times wherein Moses wrote, and wherein it was customary for men of the first rank to submit to offices much meaner than this. Herein then do the truth and authority of the sacred history most eminently appear, that all its accounts and descriptions of things do agree with the sense of the most ancient writers, and are found conformable to the manners and customs that then prevailed.

And in like manner, we may say, that (r) it is our ignorance of the patriarchal manner of living which makes us think it unaccountable to hear, in those early days, of so many contests about wells. For were we to take a nearer inspection into the thing, we should soon find, that in those hot countries, where water was so very scarce, a well or fountain of living water was a possession of in- And his  
contesting  
his right to  
several  
wells are  
all no re-  
fection up-  
on the pa-  
triarch.

(o) Isa. xxii. 13.  
Annotations.

(p) Gen. xxv. 28, 29.

(q) Le Clerc's  
Bibliotheca Bibl. occas. annot. 29.

A. M. 2148, &c. Ant. Christ. 1856, &c. from Gen. xxv. 20. to xxviii. 8.

estimable value; and for this reason we find Moses, in magnifying the divine bounty to the children of Israel, among other parts of the inventory, reckoning up, not only (s) *great and goodly cities which they built not, but wells likewise digged which they digged not.*

(t) Nor was it only for the benefit of the water that these wells were held in so high esteem, but for the memory of the events and transactions likewise which were known to have happened near them. For at these wells angels had appeared, miracles had been wrought, religious assemblies held, treaties transacted, marriages celebrated, and towns and cities built; and therefore no wonder that the ancients, looking upon them as sacred, as well as profitable places, should be so ready to contest their right to them, or that frequent notice should be taken of them in so compendious an history as that of the patriarchs.

The truth is, these, and perhaps some other occurrences in the life of this patriarch (tho' to us they may seem strange and incongruous) do not argue any want or poverty, but are exactly agreeable to that temperance and simplicity of living, which, in his days, were in vogue. He who was in a manner sole heir of His father Abraham, (who was \* a king in the opinion of some, but in all accounts a person of great affluence of fortune), and who himself had made additions to it, enough to be envied even by neighbouring princes, could not possibly want any necessary accomodation of life, nor would he concern himself with things of a trifling consideration. But what we call trifles, might, in those times, be matters of the last importance; and what we account indications of poverty, might proceed from no other cause but that of frugality and parsimony, \* which, in the primitive ages, were in high repute,

(s) Deut. vi. 1 f. (t) Shuckford's Connection, vol. 2. l. 7.

\* The words of Nicholas Damascenus (as they are quoted by Josephus) are these—" Abraham reigned in Damascus, being a stranger, who came out of the land of Chaldaea, beyond Babylon. His name is at this day famous about the country of Damascus, and they shew us the town, which from him is called *Abraham's Dwelling*;" Grotius de verit. l. 1. sect. 16.

\* The manner of living in the early ages of the world seems to be very well expressed by the Roman satyrist.

Credo pudicitiam, Saturno rege, moratam  
In terris, visamque diu; cum frigida parvas

Præberet

repute, before they came to be discountenanced by the pre-  
 sent schemes of expence and studied luxury. And there-  
 fore, when we find, (*u*) in ancient history, the Arcadians  
 feeding upon acorns; the Argives upon apples; the A-  
 thenians upon figs, &c.; when we find \* a set of the most  
 renowned heroes in the Grecian army, even in the great A-  
 chilles's tent, dining upon a loin of mutton, and an hock  
 of bacon; and the godlike man Patroclus lighting the fire  
 while the master of the feast was spitting the meat; our  
 wonder may cease, if, in ages before this, we meet with  
 such an homely dish as lentil-pottage in a patriarch's house,  
 and the two sons of the family condescending to cook their  
 own victuals. This we must own is not the practice among  
 us; but it is a much more consistent and credible account  
 of things than if Moses had represented Isaac's tent like a  
 royal palace, and every thing served up there in the same  
 splendid manner as when the king and his family dine in  
 public.

Præberet spelunca domus, ignemque, laremque,  
 Et Pecus, et dominos, communi clauderet umbra.  
 Sylvestrem montana torum cum sterneret uxor  
 Frondibus, et culmo, vicinarumque ferarum  
 Pellibus.

Et sæpe horridior glandem ructante marito. *Juven. sat. 6.*

(*n*) Ælian De varia historia, l. 3.

\* When the Grecians sent an embassy to Achilles, desiring  
 him to be reconciled to Agamemnon, and to return to the camp  
 the deputies appointed for this purpose were Phœnix, Ajax, and  
 Ulysses; and the entertainment which Achilles upon this occasion  
 gave them, is thus described, and in this manner said to have  
 been dressed, by the poet. Of which we have given Mr.  
 Pope's translation.

——— Patroclus o'er the blazing fire  
 Heaps in a brazen vase three chines entire:  
 The brazen vase Automedon sustains,  
 Which flesh of porket, sheep, and goat contains;  
 Achilles at the genial feast perfides,  
 The parts transfixes, and with skill divides.  
 Mean while Patroclus sweats, the fire to raise;  
 The rent is brighten'd with the rising blaze.

*Pope's Homer's Iliad, ix. 271.*

A. M.  
2143, &c.  
Ant. Chris.  
1856, &c.  
from Gen.  
xxv. 20. to  
xxviii. 8.

## DISSERTATION II.

*Of Isaac's Blessing to Jacob.*

## The HISTORY.

The first  
institution  
of these  
kind of  
blessings.

FROM the time that God made the covenant with Abraham, and promised blessings extraordinary to his seed, it was customary for the father of each family, some time before he died, to call together his children, and to inform them, according to the knowledge which it pleased God then to give him, how, and in what manner the blessing of Abraham was to descend among them. Whence this custom had its original, whether from the immediate appointment of God, or from some secret impulse, where-  
by the patriarchs, upon the approach of their departure found themselves affected, the silence of Scripture will not suffer us to determine; but this we may safely infer, (x) that this benediction was different from those private blessings which the patriarchs gave their children upon sundry occasions, and different likewise from those public blessings which the priests and others in authority were wont to distribute among the people. It proceeded from an extraordinary illumination, and had the prospect of futurity (so far as was necessary for its purpose) submitted to its inspection. The person upon whom it came had for that time the spirit of divination, and what they uttered under its influence was deemed a prophetic oracle, denoting infallible events, and extending to the utmost period of time.

Why Isaac  
desired to  
eat before  
he pro-  
nounced his  
blessing.

The Jews indeed have a proverbial saying, That the spirit of prophecy does not fall upon the melancholic; and thence they suppose, that as good eating and drinking are known to exhilarate the spirits, the patriarch, by sending his son to take venison, was minded to make use of that expedient, that he might be the better disposed to receive the divine inspiration, and to pronounce the prophetic benediction with cheerfulness, and with a warmth and emotion sufficient to excite that attention which the prophecy he was about to deliver did require.

(y) But as no one in his senses can imagine, that a person, when perfectly sober, is not as capable of the spirit of prophecy as he that has plentifully dined; others, from the

(x) Heidegger's hist. patriarch. vol. 2. exercit. 7.  
(y) Le Clerc's Commentary.

phrase



phrase, *that I may bless thee before the Lord*, suppose (z) that Isaac's eating, in order to receive the spirit of benediction, was by him designed to be sacramental, and accompanied with some religious rites and solemn invocations, though they happen not to be here mentioned. But this supposition being as precarious as the other, the safest way is to resolve the whole matter into the providence of God, (a) who put Isaac into the head of sending out Esau for venison, neither to refresh his spirits by eating, nor to perform any religious act, but merely, by his absence, to give Jacob an advantageous opportunity of appropriating the blessing to himself.

Isaac indeed meant not this, neither was it in his heart to bless Jacob; and therefore, if we suppose that Rebekah had acquainted him with the prophecy which directed him to transfer the blessing upon Jacob, we must suppose withal, (b) that he had now forgot it, or never rightly understood it, or apprehended that it was to be accomplished, not in the persons of Esau and Jacob, but in their posterity (c); for it is much better to charge the patriarch with want of attention or understanding, than with disobedience and prevarication.

However this be, the blessing which he pronounces over Jacob by mistake, is conceived in these words: *God give thee of the dew of heaven*, (because, in hot countries, where showers were less frequent, the morning and evening dews were a great refreshment to the earth, and productive of much plenty), *and the fatness of the earth*, (because Canaan, the lot of his inheritance, was a fruitful, and therefore (d) by the prophet called a *fat land*), *and plenty of corn and wine*, (abundance of every product of the earth.) *Let people serve thee*, (i.e. the Idumæans, who shall descend from thy brother Esau, as they did in the days of David), *and nations bow down unto thee*, (the kingdoms of Arabia and Syria, who are sprung from Hagar and Keturah): *Be Lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's son bow down unto thee*, (have thou the dominion and prerogative in thine own family). *Cursed be every one that curseth thee, and blessed be every one that bleisseth thee*; for God shall so far interest himself in thy cause, as to esteem those his friends or foes, who shall behave themselves as such to thee. So

(z) Bibliotheca Bib. (a) Pool's Annotations. (b) Ibid.  
(c) Saurin's Dissertations. (d) Neh. ix. 25.

A. M. that the blessing consists properly of three branches: In  
 2143. &c. the first is contained worldly plenty and prosperity: In the  
 Ant. Christ. 2d, dominion and empire: And in the 3d, family pre-  
 1356, &c. eminence, as well as the divine protection: But then the  
 from Gen. question is, in what sense all this is to be understood, and to  
 xxv. 20. to what branch the peculiar blessing of Abraham, (which is  
 xxviii. 8. doubtless comprised herein), may be supposed to belong?

If we look back, (e) to the call of Abraham, and the pro-  
 mises which attended it, there we shall find, (f) that after  
 enumerating the temporal blessings which were to descend  
 from Abraham to his posterity, one blessing is added, in  
 which all the world has an interest, and which was convey-  
 ed to them through Abraham and his seed. *In thee, says  
 God, shall all the families of the earth be blessed.*

That there  
 is a spiritual  
 sense and  
 meaning  
 in it,

If we proceed to the blessing which he was pleased to  
 give to his son Isaac, we shall find a recital of the same  
 kinds of temporal prosperity; a numerous progeny pro-  
 mised; the grant of the land of Canaan renewed; the oath  
 given unto Abraham confirmed; and then follows the great  
 and distinguishing promise (g), *in thy seed shall all the na-  
 tions of the earth be blessed.* And in like manner we can-  
 not but imagine, that in this great and solemn blessing  
 which Isaac is giving his son Jacob, there must be some-  
 thing of a spiritual nature comprised, though couched un-  
 der terms which seem to denote worldly felicity only.

The author to the Hebrews tells us, that (h) *by faith  
 Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come;*  
 and what we are to understand by faith, he instructs us in  
 the conclusion of his discourse; *and these all* (meaning  
 the patriarchs he had mentioned before) *having obtained a  
 good report through faith, received not the promise, God having  
 provided some better thing for us, that they, without us,  
 should not be made perfect.* So that this faith did chiefly re-  
 late to the blessed seed which was promised in the begin-  
 ning, and from continued tradition, and divine revelation,  
 in every succeeding age, embraced by the faithful; and  
 therefore we can hardly suppose, but that, in this great  
 prophetic benediction, there must be something concern-  
 ing this seed implied at least, if not expressed.

Whoever takes but a cursory view of some of the  
 chief passages of Jacob's life, will soon perceive, that had  
 his father's blessing consisted of worldly advantages only,

(e) Gen. xii. (f) Bishop Sherlock's Use and intent of  
 prophecy. (g) Gen. xvi. 4. (h) Heb. xi. 20.

it

it was in a manner quite lost upon him, since few men enjoyed a less share of that than he, who was forced from his home, into a far country, for fear of his brother; deceived and oppressed by his uncle; and (i) after a servitude of above twenty years, compelled to flee from him; while, at the same time, he was in imminent danger, either of being pursued and brought back by Laban, or fallen upon, and murdered by Esau. These fears were no sooner over, but the baseness of his eldest son, in defiling his couch; the treachery and cruelty of the two next, in relation to the Shechemites; the loss of his beloved wife, and the supposed untimely death of his son Joseph; to say nothing of his being compelled by famine to go down into Egypt, and there die: These, and many more instances, are proofs sufficient, that his father's blessing was of a different nature. For supposing it to relate to temporal prosperity and dominion only, wherein can we say that Jacob had the preeminence above his brother? (k) If Jacob was *blessed with the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth*; Esau's blessing (at least according to our translation) in this respect is not inferior: *Thy dwelling, says his father, shall be the fatness of the earth, and of the dew of heaven from above. If nations were to bow down to Jacob; Esau likewise was to live and prevail by his sword. If Jacob's brethren were to bow down to him; yet the time would come, when Esau should have dominion, and break even this yoke from off his neck.* Thus, if we interpret the whole blessing of temporal prosperity only, the two brothers seem to stand upon an equality; and yet it is evident, from the whole story, that the chief blessing which their father had to bestow, was fallen upon Jacob; and therefore he tells Esau, when he pressed him for a blessing upon himself likewise, *Behold I have made him thy Lord, and all his brethren have I given unto him for servants, and with corn and wine have I sustained him, and what shall I do now unto thee, my son?* And when Esau still urges his father, and his father thereupon blesses him, we may observe, that of corn and wine, and temporal power, he gives him a full and an equal share; but then there is this limitation in the blessing, *Thou shalt serve thy brother*: So that whatever was peculiarly given to Jacob, was contained in the grant of *being lord*

A. M.  
2148, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1856, &c.  
from Gen.  
xxv. 20. to  
xxviii. 8.

(i) Universal History, l. i. c. 7.      (k) Bishop Sherlock's  
Use and intent of prophecy, disc. c.

A. M. 2148, &c. Ant. Chris. 1856, &c. from Gen. xxv. 20. to xxviii. 8.

over his brethren: And yet the history of the two brothers will not allow us to expound it of any temporal dominion; for if we should, see how the case will stand. (l) *Jacob is to rule over Esau*; and yet no sooner is the blessing given, but he flies his country for fear of Esau; he lives abroad

for many years, and when he returns, the fear and dread of his brother returns with him, so that his only refuge, in this his distress, was to God: (m) *Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau*. When he sends a message to him, he styles himself, (n) *Thy servant Jacob*: When he meets him, (o) *he bows himself to the ground seven times; until he comes near to Esau*; when he speaks to him, he calls him *Lord*; and when he is kindly received by him, he says, (p) *I have seen thy face, as though I had seen the face of God, and thou wert pleased with me*. What is there in all this that shows any rule and dominion given to Jacob over his brother Esau?

And in like manner, if we imagine the prophecy relates to temporal dominion only, and yet was fulfilled in the posterity of these two brothers, the question will be, how the case upon this supposition stands? (q) The family of Esau was settled in power and dominion many years before Jacob's family had any certain dwelling-place. The dukes and kings of Esau's house are reckoned up; and the historian tells us, that (r) *these are the kings who reigned in the land of Edom, before there reigned any king over the children of Israel*. When the appointed time was come for establishing the house of Israel, and giving them the land and possessions of their enemies, the family of Esau were, by a particular decree exempted from the dominion of Israel: For so the Lord commanded Moses, (s) *Ye are to pass through the coast of your brethren, the children of Esau.—Take ye good heed unto yourselves therefore; meddle not with them; for I will not give you of their land; no not so much as a foot-breadth*. In the time of David indeed, (t) *they of Edom became his servants*; but in the days of Jehoram, they recovered again, (u) *and made a king over themselves*; and in the time of Ahaz, they revenged the affront, (x) *by smiting Judah, and lead-*

(l) Ibid. (m) Gen. xxxii. 11. (n) Ver. 20. (o) Chap. xxxiii. 3. (p) Ver. 10. (q) Bishop Sherlock's Use and intent of prophecy, disc. 5. (r) Gen. xxxvi. 31. (s) Deut. ii. 4, 5. (t) 2 Sam. xviii. 14. (u) 2 Kings viii. 20. (x) 2 Chron. xxviii. 17.

*ing them away captives.* So that this variety of fortune, between the children of Jacob and Esau, could never be the thing intended, or meant to be described, when the promise was given to Jacob, *that his mother's children should bow down unto him.*

A. M.  
2148, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1856, &c.  
from Gen.  
xxv. 20. to  
xxviii. 8.

What then is the hidden purpose of the words, and in what sense are they to be taken? Why, it seems pretty evident, that the blessing given to Jacob, and expressed in words implying *a rule over his brethren*, was a conveyance of his birth-right to him, in the family of Abraham; that the birth right in Abraham's family, (besides the promise of the land of Canaan), respected the special blessing given unto Abraham by God, and that this special blessing denoted no other, than that person, in whom all families of the earth were to be blessed, and that is Christ. For (y) that the regard of all nations to the seed, in which they were all to be blessed, should be expressed by their *bowing down to him*, is no hard figure of speech; and that the superiority of Jacob's family should one day be broken (as the promise to Esau sets forth) when Jews and Gentiles should equally become the people of God, and all nations be equally blessed, is no more than what the original covenant contains. Upon the whole then we may observe, that this prediction had its full accomplishment, neither in the person of Jacob, nor in his posterity in general, but only in one, who, as to his human nature, in the fullness of time, descended from him, and (z) *who, being in the form of God*, (as the apostle acquaints us with both his natures), *and thinking it no robbery to be equal with God, made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name, which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in the earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

What that meaning is?

Since this part of the blessing then, which Isaac bestowed upon Jacob, was of such high import, as to refer ultimately to the person of our blessed Saviour, and his ex-

Why it was not revoked.

- (y) Bishop Sherlock's Use and intent of prophecy, dis. 5.  
(z) Phil. ii. 6, &c.

A. M. 2148, &c. Ant. Christ. 1856, &c. from Gen. xxv. 20. to xxviii. 8.

altation into glory ; this may suggest a reason to us, why, though it was certainly obtained by guile, it was not afterwards revoked, but ratified rather and confirmed, even when his father came to understand the imposture. For if (a) *prophecy came not, of old times, by the will of man, but holy men of God spake, as they were moved by the Holy Ghost*, (b) then is Isaac, in this action, to be considered only as the instrumental, and God as the principal cause ; the efficacy of the blessing therefore must be supposed to depend, not on his will and intention, but on God's ordination and appointment ; and consequently Isaac could have no right or authority to disannul the blessing, had he been minded so to do. (c) But it is much more likely, that the remembrance of the prophecy concerning the two children, which Rebekah had vouchsafed her, before they were born, might at this time come to strike him ; and seeing he had in his blessing (though not designedly) confirmed the same, he might very well impute it to an over-ruling providence, and so be concluded by the divine determination ; in which sense that passage relating to Esau, in the epistle to the Hebrews, is most proper to be applied : (d) *We know, how that afterward, when he would have inherited a blessing, he was rejected : for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears. But how was Esau rejected from inheriting a blessing, when we find, that upon his importunity with his father, he obtained one ? He obtained a blessing indeed, but not that which, by hereditary right, belonged to the first born, and abounded with blessings, both spiritual and temporal. This his brother Jacob had supplanted him of ; and yet he could not prevail with his father to revoke it. He could not bring him to change his mind, (as it is in the margin), and repent of the blessing he had given to Jacob, (for (e) it is Isaac's repentance, not Esau's, that is here under consideration), although he sought it with tears ; and the reason is, — because his father knew, both by the conduct of providence in this whole affair, and by a particular inspiration at that time, that the peculiar blessings promised to Abraham and his seed, did not belong to him, but by the divine appointment, were now consigned to his brother,*

(a) 2 Pet. i. 21. (b) Heidegger's Hist. patriarch. vol. 2. exercit. 14. (c) Le Clerc's Commentary. (d) Heb. xii. 17. (e) Heidegger's Hist. patriarch. vol. 2. exercit. 14.

and his posterity; and therefore, to silence all farther clamour, he tells him, with a more than ordinary emphasis and inflexibility, (f) *I have blessed him, yea, and he shall be blessed.*

(f) Gen. xxvii. 33.

A. M.  
2149, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1855, &c.  
from Gen.  
xxviii. 10.  
to xxxvii.

## CHAP. III.

*Of the Life of Jacob, from his going into Mesopotamia, to his return.*

### THE HISTORY.

AS soon as Jacob had received his father's charge and blessing, he departed privately from Beersheba, and \* made the best of his way to Haran; but after his first day's journey †, happening to be benighted, he was forced to

\* The Jews tell of several miracles, which they suppose to have been wrought on the very day that Jacob set out from Beersheba; but one more especially, viz. that God shortened the hours, by causing the sun to go down before its time; and yet we are told, that from Beersheba to Luz, where he lodged the first night, were about 48 English miles, which was no inconsiderable day's journey. If there be any meaning therefore in this fiction of theirs, it must consist in this,—That Jacob was sent away with his father's blessing, and, in virtue of that, was filled with a certain divine power, which supported and carried him on with pleasure, so that the day might thence seem shorter to him; and though his father sent no friend or domestic along with him, yet there is no doubt to be made, but that there was a companion and guardian of a far nobler order assigned him, who led him by the hand, as it were, and kept him in all his ways; *Bibliotheca Bibl. in locum.*

† The place where Jacob took up his lodging, was near Luz, which signifies *an almond*, and might very likely have its name from the many groves of almond-trees which were thereabouts; and under some of which, it is not unlikely that Jacob might take up his lodging, because the largeness of their leaves, in that country, would afford no incommodious shelter from the weather. Jacob, upon account of the vision which he had in this place, called it *Bethel*; and the Israelites, when they conquered Canaan,

A. M.  
2149, &c.  
Ant. Chri.  
1855, &c.  
from Gen.  
xxviii. to  
xxxvii.

to take up his lodging in the open air, with the spangled sky to be his canopy, and an hard stone his pillow. However, while he slept, he thought he saw a ladder fixed upon the earth, and reaching up to heaven, with angels ascending and descending on it; and from the top of this ladder, he heard God speaking unto him, and promising him (even as he had done his forefathers) the land of Canaan for his inheritance; a large and numerous posterity; the Messias to descend from his family; a safe return to his native country; and the divine protection and preservation every where to attend him.

This, in all probability, was the first vouchsafement of this kind which Jacob ever had; and his dream had made such impression upon him, that as soon as he awaked, he paid an awful reverence to the place, and after a short contemplation of what had passed, broke out into this rapture of wonder and admiration: "How venerable is this place, over which are vertically the palace of God, and the gate of heaven, through which the holy angels are continually issuing out, to execute the divine commands!" And when he arose, he erected the stone whereon he slept, and (as the custom of those times was) † poured oil upon it, and then, in pious commemoration of the heavenly vision, called the place (which before was called *Luz*) by the name of *Bethel*; i. e. *the house of God*. But, before he went from thence, he made a † solemn

naam, in remembrance of the same, continued the name. It lay to the west of Hai, about eight miles to the north of Jerusalem, in the confines of the tribes of Ephraim and Benjamin. So that, upon the revolt of the ten tribes, it belonged to the kingdom of Israel, and was therefore one of the cities where Jeroboam set up his golden calves: Whence the prophet Hosea, (ch. iv. 15.) alluding to the name given it by Jacob, calls it *Beth-aven*, instead of *Bethel*, i. e. *the house of vanity or idols*, instead of *the house of God*; Patrick's Commentary; and Well's Geography of the Old Testament, vol. 1.

† Hence it seems evident, that Jacob did not leave his father's house, without being first provided for his journey; for it cannot be thought, that if he wanted other necessaries, he would have carried oil along with him, and that in such plenty, as to pour it out, in such a seemingly profuse manner, upon an inanimate subject; *Bibliotheca Bibl.*

† Several annotators have observed, that this is the first vow that we read of in Scripture; but this is no reason for our supposing



lemn vow to God, " That if he would protect and prof-  
 " per him in his journey, provide him with † common  
 " necessaries in his absence, and grant him an happy re-  
 " turn to his father's house ; to him alone would he direct  
 " his religious worship ; in that very place where the  
 " pillar stood, upon his return, would he make his devout

A. M.  
 2149, &c.  
 Ant. Christ.  
 1855, &c.  
 from Gen.  
 xxviii. 10.  
 to xxxvii.

posing that Jacob was the first who worshipped in this manner,  
 but rather that in this he did no more than what his fathers,  
 Abraham and Isaac, had done before him, and as they had in-  
 structed him both by example and precept. As for Abraham,  
 though there be no mention made expressly of a vow, yet very  
 certain it is, that in effect he did the same thing. For when  
 the Lord is said to have made a covenant with him, Abraham,  
 on his part, must be supposed to express his consent and accep-  
 tation of it ; and not only so, but to vow and promise to per-  
 form the conditions, in order to attain the benefit of it. And in  
 like manner, when Isaac is said to have intreated the Lord for  
 his wife, it is highly probable, that he vowed a vow to God,  
 that upon his performance of the promise of multiplying his  
 seed, &c. he would, on his part, as an acknowledgment of it,  
 make some or other suitable return ; for the word which we ren-  
 der *intreat*, in its original, has a much stronger signification, and  
 denotes a soliciting of favours, whether from God or man, by  
 gifts, vows, or promises. So that we may justly conclude, that  
 his son did not do this of his own head, or upon an immediate  
 revelation commanding him so to do, but that he was before  
 taught and instructed by his father in this solemnity, as a part of  
 both natural and positive religion ; *Bibliotheca Bibl.*

† Jacob's words upon this occasion are, *If God will give me  
 bread to eat, and raiment to put on*, which two articlss comprise  
 all the necessaries of life, and therefore we find them, in the wri-  
 tings of the philosophers, always put together. For these are the  
 bounds (says Seneca) [Ep. 4.] which nature has set us, that we  
 should not hunger, nor thirst, nor be cold : For our diet and dress  
 (says Tully) should contribute to our health and strength, not to  
 luxury or pleasure, [De offic. l. 1. c. 13.] We may observe,  
 however, farther, that by the patriarch's covenanting here with  
 God only for food and raiment, does appear the gross mistake of  
 those who pretend that he supplanted his brother for covetous  
 ends, as if his father's estate, and the possession of a rich country  
 for himself and his heirs, were the things which he had only in  
 view ; *Le Clerc's Commentary ; and Bibliotheca Bib. in locum.*

" acknow-

A. M. 2149, &c. Ant. Christ. 1855, &c. from Gen. xxviii. 10. to xxxvii. "acknowledgments, and offer unto him the † tenth of " whatever he should gain in the land of Mesopotamia."

Having thus performed his devotions, he || proceeded in his journey, and, after some weeks, arrived at Haran. As he came near the town, he saw some shepherds with their flocks, not far from a well which was covered with a large stone; and while he was inquiring of them concerning Laban and his family, he was given to understand, that they were all well, and that it would not be long before

His arrival  
at Haran  
and inter-  
view with  
Rachel,

† This is the second mention of tithes or tenths, and the first dedication of them to God; and from this place we may fairly conclude, that Jacob, the grandchild of Abraham, vowing the tenth of all, (as Abraham had given the tenth of the spoil), was induced to do it by the custom which then prevailed among religious people. How they came to pitch upon this portion, rather than a fifth, a sixth, or any other quantity, is not so easy to be resolved; but they seem to speak with much reason, who observe, that in this number *ten*, all nations in a manner do end their account, and then begin again with compound numbers, or (as others phrase it) that this is the end of less numbers, and the beginning of the greater, for which reason it was looked on as the most perfect of all other, and accordingly had in great regard: But after all, it seems most likely, that they had some divine precept and direction for it. At this time it is certain that the order of priesthood was not instituted; and therefore the only purposes to which Jacob could appropriate the tithes he gave, were either for the maintenance of burnt-sacrifices, and other pious uses, or perhaps for the relief of the poor. But how, and when he actually performed his vow, does no where appear in Scripture, unless it was upon his return from Padan-Aram, [Gen. xxxv. 7, 14.], *when he built an altar at El-Bethel, and set up a pillar in the place where God had talked with him, and poured a drink-offering and oil thereon*; Patrick's Commentary.

|| The words in the text are, *And came into the land of the people of the east*, Gen. xxix. 1.; which makes some imagine that he travelled eastward. But this is a mistake, because Mesopotamia, and particularly Haran, lay northward from Bethel. Babylon however lay eastward from both places; and therefore Mesopotamia being part of the Babylonish dominions, the Babylonians might well be called *the people of the east*, and Jacob is only said to have gone into a country of which they were lords and masters; *Bedford's Scripture-chronology*. l. 3. c. 4.

his daughter † Rachel would be there with her flock. Nor had this discourse long passed before she came; whereupon Jacob, having very obligingly rolled away the stone, and watered her sheep for her, took occasion to let her know who he was; and as he proceeded to salute his cousin, was in a manner ready to weep for joy; while she made what haste she could home, in order to inform her father of what had passed. He immediately came to meet his nephew, and received him with all the kindness, and all the tenderness imaginable, whilst he related to him † the occasion of his leaving his father's family, and what adventures he had met with in the way.

A. M.  
2149, &c.  
Ant. Chris.  
1855, &c.  
from Gen.  
xxviii. 10.  
to xxxvii.

† *Rachel*, in the Hebrew tongue, signifies a *sheep*: Nor need we wonder at her being called so, since it was a common thing among the ancients to give names, not only to particular persons, but even to considerable families, [as the words *Porcius*, *Ovilius*, *Caprius*, *Equitius*, &c. mentioned by Varro, De re rustica l. 2. c. 1. sufficiently shews], from cattle, both great and small. Much less reason have we to wonder, that we find her keeping her father's sheep, since the employment, in those early days, was accounted very honourable, as from Homer and other ancient writings is sufficiently evident. We need not suppose, however, that the whole drudgery of the work lay upon her; she had those under her who took this off her hands, and her business was only, as the chief shepherdes, to inspect over them; *Patrick's Commentary*.

† The things which Jacob informed his uncle Laban of at this time, may be supposed to be such as related to the occasion of his journey; as particularly, all that had passed between his brother and him as to the right of primogeniture; the purchase which he had made of it, and what ensued; their two different manners of living; the design of his father with respect to them; the management of the mother, to procure him the blessing; the resentment of his brother at his disappointment; the prudent dismissal of himself thereupon, both by father and mother; the displeasure they had conceived at his brother's matching himself into strange families, and the strict orders they had therefore given him to take a wife out of his own kindred, and of the house of his mother's father, which was the reason of his coming thither; and, lastly, the wonderful occurrences he had met with on his journey, more especially, as to the whole affair of Bethel, and the happy meeting of his daughter at the well, to his great and surprising satisfaction; *Bibliotheca Bibl.*

A. M. 2149, &c. Ant. Chris. 1855, &c. from Gen xxviii. 10. to xxxvii. Marries both her and her sister Leah.

Jacob had not been long in his uncle's house, before he applied himself to business; and having now served him for the space of a month in the capacity of a shepherd, his uncle one day took an occasion to discourse him, and to let him know, that he neither expected, nor thought it reasonable, to have his labour for nothing, and therefore desired him to name what wages he would have. The lovely shepherdes had already captivated Jacob's heart; and therefore he names her for the reward † of his seven years service, which her father readily consented to, and he as readily entered upon, because the love which he had to his Rachel made him account the longest time short.

Laban, we must know, had another daughter, named *Leah*, older than Rachel, but not so beautiful, having some blemish or foreness in her eyes; and when the time of Jacob's servitude was expired, and he demanded his wife, his father-in-law seemed to solemnize the nuptials with great magnificence, but in the evening he put an unfair trick upon him. For, instead of the beauteous Rachel, he † brought the blear-eyed Leah to his bed; which when Jacob perceived next morning, and thereupon made just remonstrances, the father had his answer ready, and, in a magisterial tone, told him, "That it was an unprecedented thing in that country (and would have been deemed an injury to her sister) to marry the younger before the elder; but (continued he, in a mild tone) if you will

† It was a custom which had prevailed almost in all ages, that in contracting marriages, as the wife brought a portion to the husband, so the husband should likewise be obliged to give her or her parents money or presents, (which sometimes in Scripture are called *the dowry*), in lieu of this portion. But Jacob being, destitute of money, offers his uncle seven years service, which must needs have been equivalent to a large sum; and being so it is more to be wondered at, that he did not send over to his parents for a supply upon this occasion, rather than bind himself a servant for so long a term. But, from the custom and use among us, there is no judgment to be made what the custom and practice was then; *Bibliotheca Bibl. and Le Clerc's Comment.*

† The modesty of those times made them bring the bride to her husband's bed veiled, and without lights, which gave Laban an opportunity to impose upon Jacob, and made it a thing almost impossible for him to discern the deception until next morning; *Howell's History; and Patrick's Commentary.*

“ fulfil

“ † fulfil the nupial week with your wife, and consent to  
 “ serve another seven years for her sister. I am content to  
 “ take your word for it, and to give Rachel to you as soon  
 “ as the seven days are ended.” Jacob could not but be  
 troubled at such unfair procedure, but he loved Rachel too  
 well not to obtain her at any price ; and therefore he con-  
 sented to these hard conditions, and, at the week's end,  
 was married to Rachel likewise.

A. M.  
 2149, &c.  
 Ant. Christi.  
 1855, &c.  
 from Gen.  
 xxviii. 10.  
 to xxxvii.

But though he preferred Rachel much before Leah, yet  
 God put quite another difference between them, by making  
 the latter the mother of four sons, Reuben, Simeon, Levi,  
 and Judah, before her sister had one. This was so great a  
 trouble to Rachel, that she came one day, in a fit of me-  
 lancholy, and told her husband, that unless he gave her  
 children also, she should certainly die with grief. Which  
 speech seeming to lay the blame of her sterility upon him,  
 so provoked him, that he sharply rebuked, and told her,  
 “ That it was not in his power to work miracles ; that

The chil-  
 dren he had  
 by them.

† Some are of opinion, that by *her week* (as it is in the text)  
 we are to understand *a week of years*, or seven years, and conse-  
 quently, that to *fulfil her week* was as much as to say, that Ja-  
 cob was to serve other seven years for Rachel, before he was to  
 marry her. Some old English versions render it thus : But the  
 order of the story seems to gainsay it. For though Jacob lived  
 with Laban twenty years, it is plain, that at the end of the  
 fourteenth year, he proposed to part, and return home ; and  
 yet we may observe, that Rachel (though she had been a good  
 while barren) had born Joseph before that time, which could not  
 have been, had not she been married before the end of his second  
 seven years service. Since Laban then (as we read Gen. xxix. 22)  
 had invited a great deal of company, and the custom in those  
 days was to devote a whole week to the nuptial solemnities, the  
 plain sense of his words to Jacob (according to Selden's short  
 comment on them, *De jure nat. l. 5. c. 5.*) is this, — “ Since  
 “ marriages are to be celebrated, according to custom, by a  
 “ seven days feast, compleat this marriage thou hast begun with  
 “ Leah, and then, upon condition of another seven years ser-  
 “ vice, thou shalt marry Rachel also, and keep her wedding-  
 “ feast seven days.” And the reason why Laban was so desirous  
 of this, was, that a week's cohabitation with Leah might be a  
 means, either to knit Jacob's affection to her, or at least to con-  
 firm the marriage so, that it should not be in his power to dis-  
 annul it ; *Le Clerc's Commentary ; Howell's History ; and Pool's*  
*Annotations.*

A. M. 2149, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1855, &c.  
from Gen. xxviii. 10.  
to xxxvii.

“ God, who had shut up her womb, was alone able to open it ; but that such uneasy and discontented behaviour was the way to prevent, rather than obtain such a favour.” This mortifying answer made her bethink herself of supplying the defect of nature by her grandmother Sarah’s expedient, and therefore she desired her husband to take her handmaid Bilhah for a concubinary wife, and by that means to try to make her a mother ; which he consenting to, had by her a son, whom Rachel named *Dan*, and, in a proper space of time, another, whom she called *Naphtali*. After which Leah, supposing herself to have left off child-bearing, and willing to imitate her sister’s policy, gave her maid Zilpah to her husband, by whom she had likewise two sons, Gad and Ashur.

About this time it so fell out, that Reuben, Jacob’s eldest son, going into the fields about the time of wheat harvest, chanced to meet with some mandrakes, which he gathered, and carried to his mother Leah. Rachel no sooner saw them, but desiring to have some of them, received from Leah a forbidding answer ; “ That having robbed her of her husband’s affections, she could not expect to have any part in her son’s present.” It was † Rachel’s turn that night to have her husband’s company ; and therefore to compromise the matter, she tells her sister, that in case she would oblige her with some of her son’s mandrakes, she would wave her pretensions, and consign the right of his bed to her. Upon Jacob’s coming home, Leah calls upon him to confirm the bargain, which, accordingly he did, and the consequence was, that she conceived again, and had a fifth son, whom she called *Issachar* ; after him another named *Zebulun* ; and last of all, a daughter, whose name was *Dinah*, the feminine of *Dan*.

Rachel had hitherto no issue of her own body ; but now it pleased God to remember her, and to bless her with a son, whom she called † *Joseph*. And it was not long

† The custom of those countries, where polygamy was allowed, was to the husband to take his wives by turns. The kings of Persia (if we believe Herodotus) were not exempt from that rule : which makes it more probable that Rachel sold her turn to her sister for that night, than that she directed her husband which of the four he should lie with ; *Universal History*, l. 1. c. 7.

† *Joseph* signifies *increase* ; and the reason why Rachel named him so, is said to be, because *God had taken away her reproach* ; for

long after his birth, and his father Jacob, having now served out his last seven years, began to entertain thoughts of returning into his own country, and accordingly desired of his uncle to dismiss him and his family. But Laban, who had found by experience no small advantage by having such a servant, begged him to stay with him a little longer, and promised him, upon that condition, to give him whatever wages he should think fit. Hereupon Jacob took an occasion of reminding him how much his substance had increased since it was put under his care, but that it was now high time for him to make some provision for his own family, and that therefore he was resolved to return to Canaan, unless he could show him some way of improving his fortune in Mesopotamia. Laban could not bear the thoughts of parting; and therefore he pressed him to stay, and offered him his own terms, which at last were resolved into this agreement,—That in the whole flock, both of sheep and goats, a separation should be made between the speckled and the white; that the spotted cattle should be given to Laban's sons to keep, and that Jacob should have the care of the white; and that whatever † spotted or brown sheep or goats should, from that time forward, be produced out of the white flock, (which he was to keep), should be accounted his hire. Laban was very well satisfied with these conditions. Accordingly the flocks were parted; the spotted cattle were delivered to Laban's sons; the remainder that were white were given to Jacob; and, that there might be no possibility of intermixing, they were sent three days journey apart.

for to be barren was formerly reckoned a disgrace, for these three reasons. 1. Because fruitfulness proceeded from the blessing of God, who said, *increase and multiply*. 2. Because barren people seem to be excluded from the promises of God made to Abraham concerning the vast multiplication of his seed. And, 3. Because the Messias could not proceed from them; *Pool's Annotations*.

† The sacred historian makes use of four different words to denote the cattle which should properly belong to Jacob. The first is *nakod*, which we translate *speckled*; for the word signifies *little points* or *pricks*, which the Greeks call *σιγυαλα*. The second is *talv*, which signifies such *broader and larger spots* as we frequently see in cattle. The next is *akod*, which signifies *spotted with divers colours*, or rather with rings or circles about the feet or legs. And the last is *barud*, which signifies *whitish spots like hail*; which seems to take in all the kinds of variegation; *Patrick's Commentary*.

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2149. &c.  
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1855, &c.  
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xxviii. 10.  
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Whether it was from his own observation of the power of fancy in the time of conception, or (what seems more likely) from some private suggestion of the divine wisdom, that the project proceeded; but so it was, that by Jacob's taking twigs of green wood, peeling off the rinds in slips, and so laying them in the watering places, when the flocks came to drink † about coupling-time, these speckled twigs struck the eyes of the females, and so made them conceive and bring forth the party-coloured young ones. But it was not to all the flock that Jacob did this, only to such as were the ablest and strongest; for those that were weak and languid he left to their natural course, that his artifice might be the less suspected, when it appeared that the number of his father-in-law's cattle was not too much diminished.

He returns  
to Canaan.

His father-in-law, however, envying his prosperity, repented of his bargain, and several times altered the agreement, which God, as many times, turned to Jacob's advantage; till at length, observing in his carriage a coldness and indifference, and over-hearing, at a certain time, his sons grudging and complaining, that he had raised himself an estate out of their fortunes, he began to form a resolution of retiring into his own country, with his family and effects, which God in a vision confirmed him in; but, before he put it in execution, he thought it proper to advise with his two principal wives, and to endeavour to gain their consent. To this purpose he sent for them into the field, that he might have an opportunity of discoursing the matter with more freedom and privacy; and then told them, that for some time he had observed that their father's carriage had been altered, but for what reason he could not devise. He appealed to them concerning his fidelity and diligence, and their father's unworthy requital of

† Several ancient commentators are of opinion, that Jacob laid these streaked rods before the cattle only in spring-time, when the sun was ascending, and the cattle lusty and vigorous, but let them alone when the cattle came to couple in September, or the decline of the year. But as there is no certainty in this, our moderns have thought it more reasonable to suppose, that he laid the rods only before the young and lusty sheep and goats, but left the old and weak to take their chance, by which means the best lambs and kinds came to his share, and the worst to Laban's: *Universal history*. l. i. c. 7.; and *Patrick's Commentary*.

him;



him; reminded them of God's goodness in defeating his || contrivances against him, and converting them to his great advantage and increase; acquainted them, that the same God, who had thus blessed him, had appeared to him (as he did at Bethel, in his passage from Canaan thither) and commanded him to return to his native country, which command he was resolved to obey. They heard him with a willing mind, declared their opinion concerning their father, in the same manner as he had done, and professed themselves ready to attend him, when he pleased to set out. Jacob therefore preparing all things for the journey, mounting his wives and children upon camels, and taking the advantage of his father-in-law's absence, (which gave Rachel an opportunity likewise of stealing away his gods), himself went along with the cattle, and all the other substance which he had acquired at Haran: He had now passed † the Euphrates, and gained † the mountains of Gilead, (as they

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2149, &c.  
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|| In the complaint which Jacob makes to his wives, there is one particular article against their father, *viz.* that he *had changed his wages ten times*, Gen. xxxi. 7. and yet he lived in contract with him only six years. But, to solve this difficulty, we are to observe, that the cattle in Mesopotamia bred twice every year; and therefore supposing that for the first year Laban stood to his bargain, but seeing his son-in-law thrive exceedingly, altered the form of it the next, and so continued to do every half year, till the sixth year came about, when Jacob thought proper to leave him, the several times wherein he changed his wages, will be exactly ten; though there is no necessity for this exact calculation, when it is so common a figure of speech, to put a certain for an uncertain number; *Le Clerc's* and *Patrick's Commentary*.

† Though the text does not say what river he passed, yet it is plain, it could be no other than the Euphrates, which the Scripture sometimes calls the river *Perah*, sometimes the *great river*, and sometimes emphatically *the river*; either because that and the Nile were the only two considerable ones that the Israelites knew; or because it was one of the four rivers of paradise; or, lastly, because it was the boundary of the promised land; *Universal History*, l. i. c. 7.

† The heap of stones, which Laban and Jacob raised in memory of their agreement and covenant, was called *Gilead*, i. e. *an heap of witnesses*; and in after-ages, gave the name to the whole country thereabout, which lies on the east of the sea of Galilee, being part of that ridge of mountains which ran from  
mount

A. M. they were afterwards called) before Laban had intelligence of his flight, and was able to overtake him. Laban, no doubt, at his first setting out after Jacob, pursued him with a mind whetted with revenge; but God, who appeared to him that night in a dream, was pleased to avert it, by threatening him severely, if he committed any hostility or violence against him: So that the next morning, when he and the relations he had with him came to speak with Jacob, he only expostulated with him, that he had stolen away, without giving him an opportunity to take his leave of his children, and grandchildren, or to send them home with an equipage suitable to their rank, or with the usual ceremonies of music and dancing. Jacob, on the other hand, was not without his complaints. The cheat which Laban had put upon him, in making him serve so long for a woman he did not love; the changing his salary so many times, and his late strange behaviour towards him and his family; all these, and many more, he answered him, were but ill requitals for his care and diligence, as well as the blessings which God had heaped upon him for his sake. Laban had yet another thing to lay to his charge, namely, the stealing of his gods: But Jacob, who knew nothing of Rachel's theft, desired him to make the most diligent search for them throughout his family; assuring him withal, that the person, on whom they were found, should immediately be put to death. Hereupon Laban went and searched every place; but as he entered into Rachel's tent, (who had hid them under the camel's furniture, and set herself down upon them), she kept her sitting, and alledged in excuse, that the condition she was in, allowed her sex to be excused from the usual ceremonies. Laban not suspecting the fallacy which his daughter had put upon him, in point of modesty, desisted from any farther search, and so went and acquainted his son-in-law with his bad success; whereupon Jacob, appealing to his very friends, sharply upbraided him with his unjust suspicion; and then, recounting the long servitude he had held him in, and the many hardships he had made him undergo both day and night, together with the cruel and unequal terms he had all along put upon him, he concluded with these words *Except the God of my father had been with me, surely thou hadst sent me away empty.*

mount Lebanon southward on the east of the Holy Land, and included the mountainous region, called in the New Testament, *Trachonitis*; Well's Geography, vol. 1. ch. 13.

This

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Is overtaken by his father-in-law, and expostulates with him.

This charge of Jacob's was so just, that Laban could make no defence for himself; and therefore he thought best to let fall the debate, and to enter upon a more agreeable subject, which was to make an alliance between them, and to erect a † monument as a standing witness of it to all future ages. At the same time, they took mutual oaths, that neither of them should, at any time, invade the other, and Jacob in particular, that he would use his wives and children with all becoming tenderness and affection.

When this ceremony was over, and a sacrifice in confirmation of it offered, Jacob feasted the whole company for the rest of the day; and, in the morning, Laban having embraced, and blessed the whole family, returned home to Padan-Aram.

Jacob had no sooner parted with his father-in-law, but the remembrance of his brother's ancient grudge against him began to give him fresh uneasiness; but the vision of a great † number of angels, (sent from heaven to protect

† This monument Jacob seems to have erected after the same manner, as he did that at Bethel. It must not be supposed to have been a heap of loose stones; for then it could not have continued long in the same position, nor given a name to the country around it. It was doubtless a regular and permanent building; but then, what the form and figure of it was, it is not so easy to determine. Had it been only for a memorial to posterity, and not for some present transaction also, the figure either of a column or pyramid, would have been very proper: But we find that the present use of it was, to eat and sacrifice upon, and therefore we may imagine, that it was made in the figure of a table, and have some authority to think of a round table, because the name which Jacob calls it by, is taken from a verb, which signifies *to turn round*, as the word *Gilal* is properly the circumference of a circle; *Bibliotheca Bibl.*

† Interpreters are generally of opinion, that these were two hosts, or armies of angels, whereof one was that of the guardian angel of Mesopotamia, who, with his company, conducted Jacob safely to the confines of Canaan, where the guardian angel of Canaan, with his company, received him into their care; and this is inferred from the necessity of such protection, by Jacob's being exposed to the treachery of Laban, and the cruelty of Esau, which made Providence more particularly careful of him, to whom the promises were made. But it is sufficient to the purpose of giving the patriarch comfort and encouragement under his uneasy apprehensions, that besides his own family, (which was pitched here in order like a camp), a certain number

A. M.  
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Ant. Christ.  
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protect him), which he had in his way to Canaan (at a place which he therefore called † *Mahanaim*, i. e. *two camps*, viz. one of angels; and the other of his own retinue) did dissipate his anxiety for a while. As he approached to his brother's country, however, his fears and uneasiness returned upon him: And therefore he thought it adviseable, before he advanced any farther, to send him a submissive message, in order to discover at least how he stood affected to him. Esau, when Jacob was gone to Haran, understanding how strictly his father had charged his brother not to marry a Canaanitish woman, began to be dissatisfied with his own marriages; and therefore went to Ishmael, and having married one of his daughters, settled in mount † Seir, in the land of Edom. Hither it was that Jacob sent some of his † chief servants, with instructions to acquaint his

bar of angels were represented to him, as drawn up like another army, ready and prepared for his defence; *Patrick's* and *Le Clerc's Commentaries*.

† This place was situated between mount Gilead, and the river Jabbok, not far from the banks of the latter, and very near the confines of Gad, and half tribe of Manasseh, which was on the east of Jordan. It became in time a city of great strength, and for this reason was made choice of by Abner for the seat-royal of Ishbosheth, the son of Saul, when he made war against David, and for a retiring place by David himself, during the rebellion of his son Absalom; *Well's Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. 1. c. 13.

† The mountains of Seir lay on the east and south of the Dead-sea, and the country extended itself from thence to the Arabian gulf. It is certain from Gen. xxxvi. 21, 22. that in Abraham's days, the Horites, who were the descendants of Seir, had the possession of this region; and therefore we may suppose, that after the departure of Jacob, Esau, who (according to the prediction concerning him) was to *live by his sword*, expelled the old inhabitants, and made himself prince thereof, before his brother returned from Mesopotamia. From Gen. xxxii. 13. xxxiii. 4. xxxvi. 8. 9. and Deut. ii. 12. we may learn, that Esau made war with these people with great success, though we have of it no particulars in the writings of Moses; *Calmét's Dictionary* under the word *Seir*.

† Several commentators have taken notice of Jacob's great wisdom and prudence, in the order and disposition of this his embassy to his brother. He sent his servants and not his sons, tho' that would have been doing him a great deal more honour; but

his brother, that after a stay of twenty years in Mesopotamia, and the acquisition of all manner of wealth there, he was now upon his return to his native country; but that he could not pass over Jordan, without notifying his arrival to him, and imploring his favour and friendship.

A. M.  
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Ant. Christ.  
1855, &c.  
from Gen.  
xxviii. 10.  
to xxxvii.

The messengers went, and soon returned again, but with this melancholy news, that his brother was coming to meet him at the head of four hundred men; which made him to conclude, that this must be with an hostile intent, and in order to destroy both him and all that belonged to him. In this situation what could he do? To fight he was not able, and to fly, his retinue was too cumbersome. At length he came to this resolution, to divide his company into two bands, that if Esau should fall upon one, he might have a possibility of escaping with the other. And having done this, he addressed himself to God in a very humble and submissive prayer; acknowledging "his great mercies to him, and his own unworthiness of them; imploring "his future protection against his brother's sword; and "that he would be so gracious as to fulfil all his former "promises to him."

Jacob had acquainted his brother how God had enriched him: That therefore, that his first message might not look like an empty piece of formality, he ordered a present of the choice of his flocks and herds to be sent before, in several droves, and charged the drivers, that whenever they met his brother, they should tell him, that they were presents sent by Jacob to his lord Esau, in hopes of obtaining his favour and good-will; and after this he sent his wives and children, and all his substance, over the brook

but then it would have been running too great a risk. In the present which he sent, he put a space between drove and drove, that the more time was taken up in their passing by Esau, his passion might still grow cooler and cooler; that the present itself might make so much the greater appearance; and that if the droves which went first were not well accepted by him, those who came later might be at distance enough to hasten back to their master, and give him intelligence of what he was to expect. In the form of address, he ordered them all to make use of the same words; 1st, that the repetition of them might strike the deeper, and make the stronger impression upon Esau; 2dly, That they might not spoil the compliment, or not speak so properly, if left to their own expression; and, 3dly, That Esau might know, by the very turn and elegance of them, that the words of the

A. M.  
2149, &c.  
Ant. Chris.  
1855, &c.  
from Gen.  
xxviii. 10.  
to xxx.

Wrestles  
with an  
angel.

brook † Jabbok, early next morning, before it was day, whilst himself, all alone, † tarried behind for some time. And here it was that an angel, in the shape of a man, appeared to him, and began to wrestle with him. The contest was certainly unequal; but so it was, that the angel did not overcome him; but to show how easily he might have done it, at one touch he put his thigh out of joint. He then told him the symbolical intent of his wrestling with him; and after he had blessed him, gave him the † additional name of *Israel*, which signifies *a man that has prevailed with God*. And this occasioned Jacob to call the place where this transaction happened *Peniel*, or *the face of God*, because he concluded that it was God, or some of his angels, who had had this conflict with him.

As

message came from Jacob: *Musculus, Ainsworth, Patrick, &c.* The appellation he gives his brother of being his Lord, and himself his servant, we shall take notice of hereafter.

† This is a small river, which is by all agreed to flow from the adjacent mountains of Gilead; but some make it to run into the sea of Galilee, others into the river Jordan, below, or south of that sea; *Wells's Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. 1, c. 1.

† Though the reason which made the patriarch, after he had forded the river, to try if it was passable for his family, return back again, and not go along with them, be not expressed by Moses; yet it is very natural to suppose, that he stayed some time behind his family in this place of vision, which he afterwards called *Peniel*, to recommend himself and them in prayer (as the danger approached nearer and nearer) to the protection of Almighty God; *Musc. Patrick, and Bibliotheca Bib.*

† The words in the text, according to our translation are, — *Thy name shall be no more called Jacob, but Israel*; and yet it is certain, that this patriarch was very frequently, nay, in the very next verse but one, is called *Jacob*; and therefore this seeming contradiction may be amended, by rendering the words, instead of *no more*; *not only*; or, *not so much Jacob as Israel*; because it is certain, that in his posterity at least (who were called *Israelites*, but never *Jacobites*) the latter name abolished the former. *Israel* is certainly derived from the word *Sar*, which (as St. Jerom observes) signifies *a prince*, with the jod, which is the common note of a proper name; but then there is some obscurity in our translation, as to the latter part of the verse, *as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed*; which should rather be translated, *Thou hast been a prevailer with God, and with men thou shalt also powerfully prevail*. This is the literal version of the words; is consonant to the vulgar Latin, Onkelos, and the Septuagint; and very justly expresses the true

As soon as the angel was gone, Jacob, though lame, made what haste he could to join his company; and it was not long before he saw his brother afar off, coming towards him with a large retinue, which made him betray some fresh tokens of distrust: And therefore, to prepare for the worst, he divided his family into three companies, and placed them at equal distances; the two maids, and their sons, went first; Leah and her children next; and Rachel and Joseph, (who was then about six years old), as farthest from danger, were the last; whilst himself marched in the front of all, and, as he approached his brother, bowed himself to the ground seven times.

A. M.  
2149, &c.  
Ant. Chris.  
1855, &c.  
from Gen.  
xxviii. 10.  
to xxxvii.

Whatever apprehensions Jacob might conceive of Esau's resentments, he had the happiness to meet him in a much better temper than he expected. At first sight, he ran to meet him; he embraced him with the greatest tenderness; he wept over him with tears of joy; and, seeing his wives and children prostrate themselves before him one after another, and in the same order wherein Jacob had disposed them, he returned their civilities with the same tenderness that he had his brother's. The presents indeed which Jacob had sent him he kindly acknowledged, but desired to be excused from accepting of them, because they were superfluous to him, who had enough of every thing; but Jacob pressed him so earnestly, that at length he prevailed: And therefore, to make him a recompence, Esau invited him to Seir, and proffered his service to accompany and conduct him thither. Jacob however had no design to accept of the invitation, and yet was afraid directly to refuse it. And therefore he represented the tenderness of his children and flocks, and that they could not travel with expedition. He begged that they might not confine him to their slow movements, but that he would return home his own pace; and promised withal, that they would follow as fast as they could conveniently. Esau then offered to leave him a sufficient number of his men, that might guard and conduct him into his territories; but this compliment likewise Jacob, in an handsome manner, evaded, and so they † parted; Esau went to

And is  
kindly re-  
ceived by  
his brother  
Esau.

true sense of the place; *Patrick's Commentary; and Shuckford's Connection, vol. 2. lib. 7. cap. 7.*

† After this, Moses gives us no farther account of Esau and his family, only that he was assisting at his father's funeral,

A. M.  
2149, &c.  
Ant. Chriſt.  
1855, &c.  
from Gen.  
xxviii. 10.  
to xxxvii.

to Seir, and expected his brother to follow him; but his brother turned another way, and, by easy journeys, came to

and had three wives, whereof it is proper to take notice, that when he barely mentions these wives, [as in Gen. xxvi. 34.; and Gen. xxviii. 9.], he gives them quite other names than what he does when he comes to speak of the posterity which Esau had by them, chap. 36.; which may lead an unwary reader to think that he had more than three, especially when the fathers of the two first are likewise called by different names. Thus his first wife Judith, the daughter of Beeri, is afterwards called *Adah*, the daughter of *Elon the Hittite*; the second, *viz.* Bathshema, the daughter of *Elon*, is again called *Aholi Bamah*, the daughter of *Ana*, the daughter of *Zibeon*, the *Hivite*; and the last, called in one place *Mahalab*, is now called *Bathshemah*, but what shews that these two latter names mean the same person, and that the same thing may be supposed of the other two, is, that in both places she is called *the daughter of Ishmael, the sister of Nabajoth*. All the account that can therefore be given of this difference, is, that they had two names, and that it was usual to call them, sometimes by one, and sometimes by another; in the like manner, as we find the mother of Abijam, king of Judah, in one place called *Maacab*, the daughter of Abithalon, [1 Kings xv. 2.] and in another, *Michaiah*, the daughter of Uriel of Gibeah, [2 Chron. xiii. 2.], with many more instances of the like nature. After having taken this notice of Esau's wives, Moses enumerates his children, and some of their descendants, the princes of the tribes of the Edomites; the kings that succeeded them; and the chiefs, who governed after the kings; but as to the order of succession, wherein they are to be placed, there is some dispute among the learned. One remark more that we shall make before we part with Esau, is, that, all things considered, he was not that very bad man which some would make him. His generous and open temper appears in his affectionate deportment towards his brother, and his speedy and utter oblivion of the flights and perfidies he had received from him; and though St. Paul calls him a profane person, and says, that he was hated by God, yet all that he means by the word *hatred*, is no more than a bare postponing. For the Apostle's purpose is to shew, that God had all along bestowed the favours which lead to the Messiah on whom he pleased; on Abraham, not on Lot; on Jacob, not on Esau; on the Gentiles, not on the Jews. And he therefore calls him *profane*, not because he was more wicked than other men of his age, but because he seems not

to



to Succoth, (which in Hebrew signifies *booths*), and there, intending to settle for some time, he built an house for his family, and proper conveniencies for the reception of his cattle. But in a short time he removed from hence, and || safely arrived at Shechem, where having purchased a piece of ground of Hamor, the father of Shechem, for an hundred † pieces of money, he pitched his tents in the

A. M.  
2149, &c.  
Ant. Chris.  
1855, &c.  
from Gen.  
xxviii. 10.  
to xxxvii.

to have been so mindful of the promises made to his family, as Jacob was, and consequently was not so fit to be the heir of the mercies peculiar to it; *Universal history*, l. 1. c. 4. and *Shuckford's Connection*, vol. 2. c. 7.

|| The words in our translation are, that *Jacob came to Shalem, a city of Shechem*: But besides that there was no such place as Shalem in the confines of Shechem, (which seems itself, at this time, to have been but a small town, without any dependent villages), since the word *Shalem* is so frequently taken adjectively, to denote any thing *safe and sound*, as we call it, and as Onkelos, and some of the best Jewish interpreters have it, it may very properly be rendered so here. And this soundness, as some imagine, may have reference to Jacob's halting, which was perfectly cured before he reached Shechem; as his safety has respect, either to his having escaped all danger, at his interview with his brother, or rather to his having met with no evil accident of any sort, since he left Laban: and this observation Moses might the rather be induced to make, because he was just going to relate a sad disaster, that not long after his arrival at Shechem, befel his family. Shechem, (by the by) otherwise called *Sichar*, was a city of Samaria, situate among the mountains belonging to the tribe of Benjamin, ten miles from Shiloh, forty from Jerusalem, and fifty-two from Jericho, near which was Jacob's well or fountain, where our blessed Saviour entered into conversation with the Samaritan woman, John iv. 7.; *Le Clerc's* and *Patrick's Commentary*; *Calmet's Dictionary*; and *Well's Geography of the Old Testament*.

† The word *Kesbitah*, which is here rendered *a piece of money*, signifies likewise *a lamb*; from whence the Septuagint, Vulgate, Olearius, and others, have translated it *an hundred lambs*; but since, long before this, money was in use, and made the instrument of traffick, (Gen. xxiii. 16.) which must of course destroy the method of exchanging one commodity for another, it is much more probable, that it was some sort of coin (though of what value it is uncertain) which had a lamb stamped upon it, and was called by that name, as we do call an angel, from the stamp it bears of one; *Universal history*, l. 1. c. 7.; and *Patrick's Commentary in locum*.

A. M.  
2149, &c.  
Ant. Chris.  
1855, &c.  
from Gen.  
xxviii. 20.  
to xxxvii.

Dinah's  
rape, and  
her bro-  
thers cru-  
elty.

place, and there built an altar to the Lord, whom he called *El Elohe-Israel*, or *the mighty God of Israel*.

Here Jacob might have lived peaceably and happily, being beloved by all the people, had not \* Dinah's curiosity of visiting the women of the city proved the cause of much mischief, and obliged her father to withdraw. Shechem, the son of Hamor the Hivite, who was prince of that country, saw her, fell in love with her, and having gained a secure opportunity, ravished her. But notwithstanding this dishonourable act, his soul was so enamoured with her charms, that he desired nothing more earnestly, than to marry her; and to this purpose, prevailed with his father to enter upon a treaty with her friends. Jacob soon heard of the rape committed upon his daughter, but concealed the matter until his sons were come home; and when he had made them acquainted with it, their resentment grew to such an height, that they vowed severely to revenge the dishonour done unto their family. In the mean time, Shechem having prevailed with his father to obtain him the damsel, they both went together to make the proposal to her father; promising to give her as large a \* dowry, and her relations as costly presents, as he

\* At what time this misfortune happened to Dinah, the Scripture gives us no account: It is presumed, however, from the bold exploit of her two brothers to avenge her dishonour, (which implies that they were men grown), that she could not be less than fifteen or sixteen years of age; and the occasion of her running herself into this preminure, Josephus tells us, was a great festival then held at Shechem, which she, desirous to see the fine sights and fashions of the place, adventured to go to; *Antiq. l. I. c. 21.*

\* This shews more fully, that the custom of those times was (as we noted before) for men to give money for their wives, and to give it generally to their parents. The money, or presents so given, were by the Greeks called *νύδα*; for so we find Vulcan, when he had caught his wife Venus in an act of incontinency, telling her, and her paramour, that he would not let them go.

Ἔισοκε μοι μάλα πάντα μητὴρ ἀποδάνει. νύδα,  
Ὅσα οἱ ἐγγυάλισα κυνυπίδος εἵνεκα κερῆς.

HOM. Odyss. 8.

But there was a greater reason for a dowry now, and a large one too, that he might make compensation for the wrong he had done. There is to be observed however, a natural equity

he should desire; and alledging withal, that if his family were to intermarry with the Shechemites, it would prove the most effectual means to make them both live together in perfect harmony and friendship. This was a fair offer; but the treacherous sons of Jacob, who meditated nothing but the most bloody revenge, made them this reply: "That it was not lawful for them to contract an affinity with any uncircumcised nation, but that, if he and his people would consent to be circumcised as they were, they would then come into his proposal."

A. M.  
2149, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1855, &c.  
from Gen.  
xxviii. 10.  
to xxxvii.

Hamor and Shechem agreed very readily to this condition; and when they returned to the city, and had convened the inhabitants, "They commended the Israelites highly for a peaceable and good-natured people, from whom they might reap many great advantages, and in process of time make all their substance (which was very considerable) their own; if they were to intermarry with them; but that this would not be done without a general consent to be circumcised." How averse soever the people might be to such an operation at first, yet the thirst of gain, joined with the powerful interest which Shechem had among them, soon won their consent, insomuch, that, on that very day, every male of them was circumcised. But \* three days after this, when their wounds had made them incapable of making any resistance, Simeon and Levi entered the city, and having put all the men to the sword, made search in Shechem's house, where they found their sister Dinah, and brought her away. After which they re-entered the town, plundered the houses, took both women and children captives, and carried away all the cattle that they found in the neighbouring places.

in the subsequent laws of Moses (Exod. xxii. 16. and Deut. xxii. 28.) by which a man was bound to make satisfaction to the father, if, either by inticement or violence, he had abused his daughter; *Le Clerc's* and *Patrick's Commentary*.

\* The third day, as physicians take notice, was the time when fevers generally attended circumcision, occasioned by the inflammation of the wound, which was generally more painful then (as the Hebrews observe) than at any time else; and for this reason, the sons of Jacob took the opportunity of falling upon the Shechemites, when they were least of all in a condition to defend themselves; *Howell's History*,

A. M.  
2149, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1855, &c.  
from Gen.  
xxviii. 10.  
to xxxvii.

Jacob's re-  
moval to  
Bethel.

Jacob was much concerned at the furious proceedings of his sons, for which he justly reprov'd them. He was apprehensive indeed, that the inhabitants of the land would unite against him, and destroy his family, for this violent outrage : but Simeon and Levi, who were the chief actors in the tragedy, were so warmed with the thoughts of the dishonour done to their sister and family, that they did not think they had carried their resentment in the least too far for so base an injury. Jacob however thought it adviseable, for his own security, to tarry no longer there, but to shift into some other part of the country. And accordingly, having received particular directions from God to remove to Bethel, and there to build an altar, (whereon to perform the vow which he made when he fled from his brother Esau), he set his resolution to go thither : but before he did that, being willing to carry nothing that might be offensive to God to so sacred a place, he found it necessary to make a reformation in his family. To this purpose he commanded all that proposed to go along with him, to bring out their idols ; which they not only did, but gave up their \* ear-rings likewise, which they were used

\* It was a custom, in several countries, for the men as well as the women, and for the meaner as well as the better sort, to wear ear-rings ; and therefore we find Plautus in his play, called *Pœnulum*, act 5. taking this notice of some Carthaginian slaves — *That their hands should be without fingers, one would think, because they wore their rings in their ears.* But besides the rings designed for ornament, it was a common thing for idolatrous nations to wear others for superstitious uses. These (as some say) were made in form of a semicircle, and reached over the forehead from ear to ear. They had astronomical characters and signatures engraven upon them, and to them they imputed a thousand supernatural virtues. They were always dedicated to some false deity ; and therefore St. Austin, in several places, exerts himself, with a becoming zeal, against such impious fooleries, and tells his countrymen, the Africans, (among whom this custom had got some footing), that in this execrable superstition, as he calls it, they did not *design to dress themselves out to please men, so much as to serve and please devils.* And therefore Jacob was highly to be commended for destroying these relics of idolatry, which his haste to be gone, both according to God's command, and his own apprehensions of danger, made him bury under ground, rather than stay to melt them down ;

used to wear, as spells are amulets against sickness, and other misfortunes. These he took and buried privately in a deep hole, which he caused to be dug under an oak near Shechem; and so having purified \* themselves, even to the washing and changing of their garments, they set forward to Bethel, and arrived there safe, and without any disturbance, because God had struck such a terror into the cities round about them, that notwithstanding the late provocation in the matter of Shechem, no body offered to molest or pursue them.

A. M.  
2149, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1855, &c.  
from Gen.  
xxviii. 10.  
to xxxvii.

*Le Clerc's and Patrick's Commentary; Heidegger's Hist. patriarchar. vol. 2. exercit. 13.; and Calmet's Dictionary under the word Rings.*

\* The manner wherein Jacob required of his domestics to purify themselves, was by washing their whole bodies, and putting on clean and fresh apparel: and that this was a custom among other nations, as well as the Jews, when they set about any solemn and religious office; is plain from that passage in Euripides, where Alcestis, being to perform some holy rites in behalf of her children,

----- ὄδασι ποταμίῳις λευκὸν χροῶ  
ἔλῃσάτ', ἐκ δ' ἔλῃσα κεδρίων δάμων  
ἔσθῃτα, κόσμοντ', εὐπρεπῶς ἡσκήσαίῳ.  
καὶ εἴσῃ ἀρόσθην ἐσίῃς κατήνυζαίῳ.

Alcestis, Act I.

But of all other nations, the Egyptians, (as Herodotus tells us, 1. 1. c. 37.), and more especially their priests, were most remarkable for this sort of cleanness. " They shaved their bodies all over every third day: they bathed themselves in cold water twice a day, and twice a-night; and wore constantly nothing but linen vestments, and shoes made of papyrus; for this reason, I suppose, because they were the most proper to be washed." Not that we are to suppose, that God respects a worshipper for his spruce appearance, so long as his conscience is polluted within. In sordidness indeed there is something distasteful, and it is an unseemly thing to appear before a great man in dirty apparel: but the principal design of God's appointing this outward cleanliness, was to be a sign and memorandum to the person approaching his presence, what the inward temper and complexion of his mind should be; and therefore we find the Royal Psalmist, in allusion to this very custom, declaring his pious purpose, *I will wash my hands in innocency, and so will I go to thy altar*; Psal. xxvi. 6.; *Le Clerc's and Patrick's Commentary.*

A. M.  
2149, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1855, &c.  
from Gen.  
xxviii. 10.  
to xxxvii.

As soon as Jacob came to Bethel (where || Deborah his mother's nurse happened to die) he erected an altar, as God had commanded him, whereupon he performed his vow; and not long after, God appeared to him again, confirming the change of his name, and giving him fresh assurances of his design to multiply his posterity, and to give him the inheritance of the land of Canaan; which

|| In Gen. xxiv. 59. we read, that Deborah went along with her mistress Rebekah, when Isaac's steward was sent to conduct her out of Mesopotamia; how is it then, that we find her here in Jacob's retinue so long afterwards, and when he was returning from the same place? The Jewish doctors tell us, that Rebekah, having promised her son at his departure, that she would send for him again, as soon as she found him out of danger, did now send Deborah to fetch him back. But, besides that a younger messenger would have been much more proper, we do not find that Jacob was sent for, but that he left the country, by God's appointment, and upon the bad usage of his father-in-law. Some Christian commentators are therefore of opinion, that after she had brought her mistress Rebekah to her marriage, and seen her well settled in her family, she went back to Haran again, and there dwelt in Laban's house, till, upon Jacob's returning home, she having a desire to see her old mistress once more, put herself under his convoy. Others again suppose that Jacob had been at his father's house before this time; or that, after Rebekah's death, Deborah hearing of his return into Canaan, might be desirous to spend the remainder of her life with his wives, who were her countrywomen. Any of these conjectures may be sufficient to solve the difficulty of her being found in Jacob's family; and the reason why Moses takes notice of her death, is not so much because it was a circumstance of moment enough to be preserved in history, as that it was of use to assign the reason why the oak, near which she was buried, and which perhaps was still standing in his days, came by its name. But what will in some measure serve, both to vindicate the sacred historian, and to shew, at the same time, how much these nurses and women, who had the care and education of persons of birth and quality, were honoured and esteemed in those early days, is a passage, upon the like occasion, in the poet Virgil.

Tu quoque litoribus nostris, Æneia nutrix,  
Eternam moriens famam, Caieta, dedisti.  
Et nunc servat honos sedem tuus, ossaque nomen  
Hesperia in magna (si qua est ea gloria) signat, Æneid l. 7.

induced

induced him to erect a pillar of stone (whereon he poured a drink-offering and oil) as a lasting monument of his gratitude and devotion.

The desire which Jacob had to visit his aged father, made his stay in Bethel not long : and therefore removing from thence, he intended to have reached † Ephrah (which was not far distant) that night, but was prevented by Rachel's falling in labour of her second and last child, for of him she died as soon as she was delivered, and had just time to name him *Benoni*, i. e. *the son of sorrow* ; but his father, unwilling to perpetuate the remembrance of so melancholy a subject, called him † *Benjamin*, which signifies *the son of my right hand*, or *my strength*. She was buried in the way to Ephrah, where her husband built \* a monument of stone over her grave, which the

A. M.  
2149, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1855, &c.  
from Gen.  
xxviii. 10.  
to xxxvii.  
Rachel's  
death and  
burial.

† This place was afterwards called *Bethlehem*, a city about two leagues distant from Jerusalem, famous for the birth of David, King of Israel, but infinitely more so for the birth of Christ, the son of God, and Saviour of the world, *Calmet's Dictionary*.

† From the different names which the father and mother gave this son of theirs, some have observed, that names are, oftentimes, strangely adapted to things, and the presages of parents have anciently been observed to be fulfilled.

— — — Heu nunquam vana parentum  
Auguria.

Which was certainly no where more than in the fate of Benjamin's posterity, since no tribe in Israel was more valorous and yet none more subject to disasters, than his ; since it was always quite extirpated in the time of the judges, ch. xx.; and yet, before the conclusion of that age, became so powerful, as to have the first king of Israel chosen out of it ; *Patrick's Commentary*.

\* The learned Bochart is of opinion, that this monument of Rachel's (which is the first that we read of in Scripture) was a pyramid, curiously wrought and raised upon a basis of twelve large stones, whereby Jacob intended to intimate the number of his sons. It was certainly standing in the time when Moses wrote, ver. 20. and just before Saul was anointed king, there is some mention made of it, 1. Sam. x. 2. But that the present monument cannot be the same which Jacob erected, is very manifest from its being a modern and Turkish structure, Mr. Le Brun, who was at the place, and took a draught of it, says, That the tomb is cut into the cavity of a rock, and covered

A. M.  
2149, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1855, &c.  
from Gen.  
xxviii. 10.  
to xxxvii.

sacred historian tells us was extant in his days. But this was not the only misfortune which attended Jacob in this place; his eldest son Reuben, having taken a liking to Bilhah, the concubinary wife which Rachel had given him, made no scruple to commit incest with her, which thing grieved his father so, that, though he forebore taking any present notice of it, yet he could not but (a) resent it at his dying hour. Soon after this Jacob left this melancholy place, and came at length to Mamre, the place of his father's abode, who was doubtless not a little overjoyed at the return of his son, after so long an absence.

### The OBJECTION.

“IT cannot be denied indeed, but that Laban dealt very treacherously with his son-in law, (after he had undergone so long a servitude for his mistress), in palming one daughter upon him instead of another; but still it must not be confessed, that Jacob was more than even with him in the manner of enriching himself, by supplanting his father-in-law of the best of his cattle. Laban, to be sure, understood the bargain in the most obvious and natural sense of the words. By these Jacob was to give up to him all the lambs and kids that were white, and to reserve to himself those that were party-coloured. There was no suspicion of using any art in this case: he meant no more than a bare casual production, and Jacob, to make him believe he intended the same, lays his hand on his heart, as it were, and hopes that *his righteousness would answer for him in the time to come*: But notwithstanding all this air of honesty, we find him betake himself to an artifice, which he knew would do the work; though it badly became an honest man to study how to outwit another, who dealt upon the square, and had no suspicion of any fraudulent reserves in the bargain.

with a dome, supported by four pillars, on fragments of a wall which open to the sepulchre. The work is rude enough, and without any ornament; but the whole is as entire, as if it had been but just made, which makes it hard to imagine that it had subsisted ever since Jacob's time; *Maundrell's Travels*, and *Calmét's Dictionary*.

(a) Gen. xlix. 4.

‘ But



" But well might he be deemed perfidious to man, when A. M. 2149, &c. Ant. Christ. 1855, &c. from Gen. xxviii. 10. to xxxviii.  
 " we find him making a vow to God, conceived in terms  
 " that seem mercenary enough, and as if he were insisting  
 " upon conditions with the Almighty, and yet neglecting  
 " for many years to perform it, though God had abundantly  
 " made good the covenant on his part, and brought  
 " him in triumph, as it were; into the country, and within  
 " the very confines of the place where the vow was  
 " made; when, notwithstanding all these blessings from  
 " the divine bounty, we find him tamely permitting idolatry,  
 " and strange gods, to continue in his family, and  
 " never once thinking of a reformation, until he was summoned  
 " to appear before God; when we find him betraying the rights of primogeniture (which cost him some  
 " perfidy to attain) in the abject messages and speeches he  
 " made to his brother; violating the laws of chastity in  
 " the incestuous marriage of two sisters at once, and (what  
 " looks very odd, as well as presumptuous) in daring to  
 " wrestle and contend with his maker.

" There is something so gross in the notion of a man's  
 " wrestling with God, something so incongruous, so incompatible,  
 " that we should rather think it possible for his  
 " two sons, Simeon and Levi, to attack a whole city,  
 " massacre the men, plunder the country, and take the  
 " women and children captives, and all this with two pair  
 " of hands, than for their father Jacob to encounter,  
 " were it but a created angel, and yet prevail.

" Jacob, however, in the main, might be a very good  
 " man; but we cannot but think, that his example was,  
 " in a great measure, lost in his family; when we find his  
 " eldest son violating his father's bed, (a fact which Moses  
 " might as well have omitted, if but for the honour of  
 " the Jewish nation), and the two next imbruing their  
 " hands in innocent blood, and even prostituting the credit  
 " of a sacrament to accomplish their vindictive ends.

" Shechem, we allow, might have suffered, and others  
 " that were accessory in injuring the young lady, and putting  
 " a slur upon the family; but what account can we  
 " give for their murdering those, who had no hand in the  
 " rape, and for making free booty of the women, who  
 " (had they known it) would have probably prevented it,  
 " and of the little children, who had no notion wherein  
 " they had offended, and could give no reason why they  
 " were enslaved?

" What

A. M. 2149, &c. Ant. Christ. 1855, &c. from Gen. xxviii. 10. to xxxvii.

“ What account indeed can be given for several other actions in this period of history ; particularly for Rachel’s coveting of Reuben’s mandrakes, and purchasing them of his mother at so odd a rate ? Women that are pregnant, we know, have oftentimes the cravings of their appetites very unaccountable ; but this was not Rachel’s case ; and therefore one would think she should not so passionately have desired a fruit (if it was a fruit) which is known to be disagreeable to the smell, and confessedly of so vile a taste, that the meanest peasant would refuse it.

“ What account can be given for her stealing away her father’s gods, (such gods as no man can inform us what they were), and at the expence of a lie, hiding them from his search ? Great care did poor Rebekah take to secure her darling son from marrying into an idolatrous family ; and yet she seems not to have mended the matter much, when she sent him into her own, wherein the very damsels were found to be such bigots.

“ To name but one more : What account can be given for that eager desire which these patriarchal matrons expressed, to give their handmaids to her husbands, that by them they might have children, rather than none at all ? It is a thing somewhat extraordinary, for a woman to encourage her husband’s adultery ; nor can we conceive how a child born of the maid’s body, can become the right and property of the mistress, any other way than by adoption, be it never so much (*b*) *born up on her knees.*”

Answered, by shewing that Jacob was not culpable in getting the best of Laban’s cattle to himself,

The worst accusation against our patriarch is that of his pourloining (as some may call it) or appropriating to himself a considerable part of Laban’s substance, and shaming light on him who pretends to apologize for this, in order to give countenance to any trick or collusion in matters of commerce. The Scripture only relates the fact, without either censure or approbation : and we read it to wrong purpose, if, because we find a thing recorded of a patriarch, and yet not censured by the holy penman, we therefore immediately conclude it to be right (*c*). Men will be men, full of imperfections, and governed by their passions, so long as they live in this world ; nor are the examples propounded in Scripture to beget in us humility and watch-

(*b*) Gen. xxx. 3.

(*c*) Scripture vindicated.

fulness

fulness upon every remembrance of human frailty, but the laws contained therein, which are true and righteous altogether, to be the rule and measure of our conduct. We readily grant therefore, that this action of Jacob's, considered in itself, and according to the rules of strict justice, can hardly be vindicated; but then we are to remember, that there was a much superior agent, even the great proprietor of the world, and who has an undoubted right to transfer possessions where he pleases, by whose direction it was done.

A. M.  
2149, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1855, &c.  
from Gen.  
xxviii. 16.  
to xxxvii.

For suppose we allow (what some great men, both physicians and philosophers, are wont to maintain) that the fancy of the dam, in the time of conception, is of power sufficient to influence the form, and shape, and colour of the young, and to produce the effect which it had upon Laban's cattle; yet we cannot imagine that Jacob knew any thing of this secret. Men had not as yet inquired into the powers of nature, and observations of this kind were not much regarded. (d) Religion, and the worship of God, was, in these days, the wisdom of the world; and a simplicity of life, and integrity of manners, more studied, than any curious and philosophical speculations. If study and philosophy had helped men to this knowledge, how came Laban and his sons to be utter strangers to it? And yet, had they not been strangers, they could not but apprehend, that Jacob might by art variegate the cattle, as he pleased, and would not therefore have made so weak a bargain with him. They certainly therefore had no notion that any such thing could be done; neither had Jacob any intelligence of it, when he made the contract with Laban; but being resolved to be contented with what the divine providence should allot him, he made choice of the speckled cattle, merely to put an end to all cavils about wages, as not doubting but that God would so order matters, that in the event he should have enough: and therefore his words, *So shall my righteousness answer for me in the time to come*, are just as if he had said; (e) "I may be thought to have acted imprudently in naming this hire, as if it were impossible for cattle, that are all white, to bring forth any but such as are like themselves; but in the result, it will appear, that God had respect to my just dealing, and this you will plainly see, when you come to pay me my wages."

(d) Shuckford's Connection, vol. 2. l. 7. (e) Bibliotheca Bib. vol. 1.

A. M.  
2149, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1855, &c.  
from Gen.  
xxviii. 10.  
to xxxvii.

But though Jacob at first might be ignorant of the secret, yet we cannot deny, but that, after the bargain was made, God might give him some intimation of it, and perhaps might injoin him to put it in execution; and yet, after all, he might not apprehend any natural efficacy in the thing. Instances there are more than enough in Scripture of God's requiring persons to perform such actions as might testify their faith, and reliance on his promises, in order to receive such blessings as he intended for them. Thus Naaman the Syrian, when he came to beg of God a cure of his leprosy, was directed (*f*) *to wash seven times in Jordan*. Washing in Jordan was to be an evidence of his believing that God would heal him, and upon his giving this evidence, he was cured; which was the case of Jacob here before us. God had told him that (*g*) *he had seen all that Laban had done unto him*, but that he would take care that *he should not hurt him*; that all Laban's contrivances to defraud him of his wages he would turn so much to his advantage, as that they should tend to the increase of his prosperity; and then very probably (as a token of his belief and dependence on him) he commanded him to take peeled rods, and use them as he directed. Jacob believed, and did as he was commanded: but all this while he might no more think, that the peeling of rods of green boughs, and laying them in the watering places where the flocks were to drink, was a natural way to cause them to bring forth spotted and speckled young ones, than Naaman did, that washing in a river was a cure for a leprosy. But even suppose the case, that Jacob had the notion that party-coloured rods might be a natural means to produce party-coloured cattle; yet, if he used them in obedience to the divine command, and not merely as a means to enrich himself at the expence of another, we cannot perceive wherein he was culpable. God Almighty determined to punish Laban for his injustice, and to reward Jacob for his fidelity. He revealed to Jacob the manner in which he designed to bless him, and ordered him to do an action as a token of his reliance on him, for the performance of his promise. Jacob faithfully observed the orders that were given him, and the event proved accordingly.

Here was no trick, no circumvention in the matter; though it must be allowed, that had it been lawful for any private person to make reprisals, the injurious treatment

(*f*) 2 Kings v. 10.

(*g*) Gen. xxxi. 12.

he had received from Laban, both in imposing a wife upon him, and prolonging his servitude without wages, was enough to give Jacob both the provocation and privilege so to do. God Almighty however was pleased to take the determination of the whole matter into his own hands; and therefore the true conclusion is, what Jacob himself expresses in his speech to his two wives, *Ye know, that with all my power I have served your father, and your father hath deceived me, and changed my wages ten times; but God suffered him not to hurt me. If he said thus, The speckled shall be thy wages, then all the cattle bare speckled; and if he said thus, The ring-streaked shall be thine hire then bare all the cattle ring streaked. Thus God hath taken away the cattle of your father, and hath given them to me.*

A man so highly favoured by God, and so sensible of his peculiar goodness, can scarce be supposed capable of making any vow with a mercenary view, or of neglecting to perform it, when made. The vow which the patriarch made upon his journey into Mesopotamia, is conceived in these terms. *(h) If God will be with me, and keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace, then shall the Lord be my God, i. e. I will religiously worship and serve him: but it is an unfair construction to say, that unless God did bring him home in peace, he would not worship him. The right which God has to the service and homage of his creatures, is absolute and alienable: his dominion, his power, his goodness, covenant, and promises, do all require this of us; and therefore the words must mean, either that besides God's natural property in him, he should have also a farther demand of duty upon him, in consequence of this vow; or (i) that he would perform some signal service to him, and worship him with a more than ordinary devotion, consecrating (as it follows) the place where he then stood to his honour; offering him sacrifices, and giving him the tenth of all he had, to maintain this worship.*

Such is the sense of the vow; and the conditions relating to it seem to denote the secret wish and desire of his soul, and not any express stipulation with God. Man certainly cannot insist on terms with his Maker, but he may desire, and humbly hope for a supply of his wants. More than this the patriarch does not expect; and less than this

(h) Gen. xxviii. 20, &c.

(i) Patrick's Commentary.

A. M.  
2149, &c.  
Ant. Chrif.  
1855, &c.  
from Gen  
xxviii. 10.  
to xxxvii.

God never intended to give. *Our heavenly Father knows that we have need of food to eat, and raiment to put on,* and it is a renunciation of our dependence upon his providential goodness not to ask them. To serve God for no consideration, but that of his own glory, is a notion that may well enough comport with our future exalted state, when we shall *hunger no more, neither thirst any more*, and where our service will always be attended with vision; but while we are invested with these weak and frail bodies, they and their concerns will tenderly affect us, and God, who considers whereof we are made, expects no other than that they should.

Considering then the circumstances that Jacob was in, leaving now his own, and going into a strange country, we need not much wonder that we find him solicitous for his daily bread. With his staff he passed over Jordan; and when he returned with a great retinue, the grateful acknowledgment which he makes upon that occasion, he expresses in these words; *(k) I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast shewed unto thy servant*; and a temper like this would never have neglected to pay its vows unto the Most High, had not the patriarch either met with obstructions, that made it not safe for him to go, or waited till God (who had all along conducted him hitherto) should direct him to go to the place appointed for such oblation.

The reformation in his family what.

Before he came to that place indeed, we are told that he *(l) commanded his household, and all that were with him, to put away the strange gods that were among them*. And from hence it may be presumed, that there were several of his family (and possibly Rachel herself) addicted to idolatry, which he might connive at; but this is a mistake, which arises purely from the faultiness of our translation. There the word *strange* is supposed to refer to *gods*, and to be another name for *idols*: whereas the words (*Elohei han-necar*) do properly signify *the gods of the stranger that was among them*, i. e. the gods of the Shechemites, whom they had taken captive, and brought into Jacob's family. This alters the sense of the words quite, and throws the charge of idolatry, not upon Jacob's household, but upon the strangers that were in it. The captives of Shechem, which his sons had taken, were now to be incorporated into his family, and put under new re-

(k) Gen. xxxii. 10.

(l) Chap. xxxv. 2.

strictions.

strictions. Whatever singularities were in their dress or ornaments, or in the rites and usages of religion they had been accustomed to, these he intended to abrogate, and to reduce them all to the same purity of worship, and simplicity of life and manners, which he designed to keep up among them. And this is so far from being a stain upon his conduct, (as if he were a tame conniver at impiety), that we find him undertake the reformation even of strangers, as soon as they were come under his roof, with a spirit and resolution not unlike that of holy David : (m) *Mine eyes look unto such as are faithful in the land, that they may dwell with me, and whose leadeth a godly life, he shall be my servant.*

Some writers have made it a question, how Jacob, upon his return home, should know where his brother Esau dwelt, and why he should send him so humble and submissive a message : but (n) we can hardly imagine that Jacob should be so imprudent as to carry his wives, children, and substance into Canaan, without knowing whether he might safely venture thither. It is presumable, therefore, that while he rested at Gilead, he sent messengers to inquire, whether his father was alive ; what condition he was in ; how the people of the land were affected to him ; and whether he might come and live with security near him. From these messengers he might learn the place of his brother's habitation : and when he found that he should meet with no obstruction, if he could but reconcile Esau to him, he very prudently sent to him likewise, with an intent (if he found him inexorable) to bend his course another way. And indeed, if we consider what had passed between Esau and Jacob, before the latter went from home, we shall soon find reason enough why Jacob should send to him, before he adventured to come, and sit down with his substance near his father. Esau still expected to be his father's heir, especially as to his temporalities ; and therefore, if Jacob had returned home without Esau's knowledge, this, at their father's death, would have laid the foundation of a greater misunderstanding than ever : for Esau would then have thought, that his brother had been inveigling his father, and drawing a great part of his substance from him. He could never have imagined, that any person, in a state of servitude, could have acquired so large a fortune ; and therefore, when he came to see all that

A. M.  
 2149, &c.  
 Ant. Christ.  
 1855, &c.  
 from Gen.  
 xxviii. 10.  
 to xxxvii.

His sending  
 to Esau, a  
 thing highly  
 necessary.

(m) Psal. ci, 8, 9. (n) Shuckford's Connection, vol. 2. l. 8.

A. M.  
2149, &c.  
Ant. Chriſt.  
1855, &c.  
from Gen.  
xxviii 10.  
to xxxvii.

wealth, (which he knew nothing of before), he muſt have concluded that he had defrauded him.

It was not from pride or vanity, therefore, or to gratify an oſtentatious humour, that Jacob ſent his brother an account of his prosperous circumſtances, but partly to recognize the goodneſs of providence, which had ſo prospered him, and partly to let him know, that he was not come to raiſe any contributions. either upon him, or the family; that he had brought his ſubſtance with him from Haran, and was not going into Canaan to do him any wrong.

No abject-  
neſs in his  
addreſs.

The whole deſign of this interview with Eſau was to procure a firm reconciliation with him; and therefore it is no wonder that Jacob ſhould make uſe of ſuch terms as were moſt likely to ingratiate. He knew his brother's rugged and haughty temper, and conſidered him as a perſon, who, by his valour and conduct, had raiſed himſelf to a principality and dominion, whiſt himſelf, for twenty years together, had lived in no better capacity than that of a ſervant; and therefore he might juſtly think, that this difference of appellations did not miſbecome their different conditions of life.

By the divine direction indeed, he was conſtituted Eſau's Lord; nor did he forego that prerogative by calling himſelf Eſau's ſervant. Lord and ſervant were no more then than (what they are now) certain modes of civility, which paſſed between perſons of good breeding, without ever adhering to their ſtrict acceptation; and therefore Jacob might make his addreſſes to Eſau in this manner, without any derogation to his ſpiritual preeminence, and conſining himſelf to the bounds of nature, might reverence him as his elder brother.

But how jealous ſoever we may be of Jacob's honour, it is certain, that the Almighty approved of his conduct, by himſelf interpoſing to bring about the deſired reconciliation. Before this interview with his brother, and while he lay under terrible apprehenſions of his diſpleaſure, (o) *the angels*, we are told, *met him*. *They met him*, i. e. they ſhewed themſelves to him, to aſſure him of their cuſtody; and by and by we ſee what followed: (p) his brother Eſau, contrary to his natural roughneſs and avowed revenge, comes and treats him in a moſt friendly manner; which ſudden change in Eſau, we may reaſonably ſuppoſe, was occaſioned by one of thoſe angels who appeared; and who, working

(o) Gen. xxxii, 1. (p) Young's Sermons, vol. 2. ſermon 6.



upon his humours and fancy, sweetened him into a particular benignity of temper, so that Jacob, by his humble and submissive behaviour gained his end.

There is this peculiar hardship upon Jacob, that in the matter of Leah, he was perfectly imposed upon; that he had no design of having any communion with her; was contracted to her sister; and, in all probability, had he enjoyed her first, would never have had concern with any other. But the misfortune was, that, in the other's nuptial night, he had carnal knowledge of her, and thereupon was induced to think, that he could not honestly leave her. Her sister Rachel was all this while (bating consummation) his lawful wife, to whom he was contracted, to whom he was solemnly married; and therefore he could not in justice relinquish her neither. In this dilemma he was in a manner under a necessity of adhering to both; and as polygamy was not at that time interdicted, he thought he might do it without any violation of the laws of God. The only question is, whether he did not incur the sin of incest in so doing? And to this some Jewish doctors answer, That the prohibition of marriages, within such degrees of consanguinity, was restrained to the land of Canaan only; and that therefore it was not unlawful for Jacob in Haran to take two sisters, nor for Amram in Egypt to take his father's sister; and to this purpose they observe farther, that in the Mosaic law itself, and particularly in the 20th chapter of Leviticus, where the sentence of excision is pronounced against incestuous marriages, there is no punishment assigned to him who shall marry two sisters; which, as they will have it, was, for the honour of Jacob, omitted. However this be, it is certain, that there is no such toleration under the Christian dispensation; and therefore he who pretends to pronounce any thing upon a case so singular as this of our patriarch's is, should consider the different state of things, before the promulgation of the law, during the obligation of it, and since the commencement of the gospel; which undoubtedly prohibits both a plurality in wives, and consanguinity in marriages, and requires of its votaries the strictest chastity, from a consideration and motive which neither the law of nature, nor the law of Moses, knew any thing of: (q) *Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.*

(q) 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20.

Of

A. M. Of all the adventures which happened to Jacob, that of  
 2149, &c. his wrestling is deservedly reckoned one of the strangest,  
 Ant. Christ. and has therefore been made a matter of doubt, whether it  
 1855, &c. was a real event, or a vision only. (r) Maimonides, and  
 from Gen. some other Hebrew, as well as Christian interpreters, are  
 xxviii. 10. of opinion, that all this was transacted only in Jacob's ima-  
 to xxxvii. gination. They suppose, that the patriarch, being strong-  
 His wrest- ly possessed with the sense of the danger he was going to  
 ling ac- encounter, saw, in a vision, a man coming to him, and  
 counted for. who, after some altercations, began to wrestle with him ;  
 that the conflict between them continued till break of day,  
 when his antagonist, not able to get the better, desired to  
 be gone, &c. ; and that, as a proof that this vision was more  
 than an ordinary dream, it seemed to him, that the angel  
 touched his thigh ; and in effect, as soon as he awoke, he  
 found himself lame, probably by the force of his imagina-  
 tion.

If this explication be admitted, the whole difficulty is at an end. It is natural, perhaps, for a man, under the apprehensions of a dreadful foe, to dream of fighting ; and to dream, at the same time, that he comes off victorious, might be accounted an happy omen. But it must be confessed, that the analogy of the story, and more especially Jacob's lameness, which was consequent upon his conflict, will not suffer us to think that all this was only in a dream. The more general therefore, and indeed the more rational opinion is, that this wrestling was real, and that Jacob was actually awake, when engaged in it : but then the question is, who the person was that did encounter him ?

Origen, I think, is a little singular, and no ways to be justified in his conceit, when he tells us, That the person with whom Jacob wrestled, was an evil angel, in allusion to which he thinks that the apostle grounds his exhortation: (s) *Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might, for we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.* But that Jacob, who at this time was so immediately under the divine protection, should be submitted to the assault of a wicked angel ; that he should merit the name of Israel, i. e. conqueror of God, for overcoming such an one, or call the place of combat *Peniel*, i. e. the

(r) *Vid.* Heidegger's Hist. patriarch. vol. 2. exercit. 17. ; and Le Clerc's Commentary, and Calmet's Dict. (s) Eph. vi. 10, 12.

face of God, in commemoration of his conflict with such an one, is very absurd, if not an impious suggestion. Those who espouse this opinion, may possibly be led into it from a thought, that the person here contending with Jacob, was an enemy, and come with a malevolent intent against him; whereas nothing can be more evident, (especially by his blessing him before they parted), that he came with a quite contrary design. (t) Among the people of the east, from whence the Grecians came, and brought along with them several of their customs, wrestling was an exercise in great vogue, as highly conducive to the health and strength; and a common thing it was for two friends, when they met together, to amuse and recreate themselves in this way. The Jewish doctors therefore seem to be much in the right, when they maintain, that the person who contended with Jacob was a good angel; and as their settled notion is, that those heavenly spirits sing every morning the praises of God, at the approach of day; so the request which his antagonist makes, (u) *Let me go, for the day breaketh*, shews him to be one of the angelic host, who had stayed his prefixed time, and was now in haste to be gone, in order to join the heavenly choir: for the prophet Hosea, I think, has determined the matter very plainly, when, speaking of Jacob, he tells, that (x) *he took his brother by the heel in the womb, and by his strength he had power with God, yea he had power over the angel, and prevailed*.

How Jacob, who was an hundred years old, could be enabled to do all this, must be imputed to some invisible power that assisted him. (y) An angel is here, in an extraordinary manner sent to encounter him, and he, in an extraordinary manner, is enabled to withstand him. The whole scene is contrived to cure him of his uneasy fears; and a proper medium to do this was to let him see, that an old man might contest it even with an angel, and yet not be foiled; and the power, he might reasonably conclude, which assisted him in this (if the matter were to come to blows with his brother Esau) would so invigorate his little army of domestics, as to make them prevail, and become victorious.

It was a common custom among eastern nations (as appears from several passages in Scripture) to convey the

(t) Le Clerc's Commentary in locum. (u) Gen. xxxii. 26.  
(x) Hos. xii. 3, 4. (y) Le Clerc's Commentary.

A. M. knowledge of things by actions, as well as words. To this  
 2149, &c. purpose we find Zedekiah (z) *making him horns of iron*,  
 Ant. Chris. thereby to portend victory to Ahab; and Elias, ordering  
 1855, &c. Joash (a) *to strike the ground with arrows*, thence to presig-  
 from Gen. nify his triumph over the Syrians. Nay, even Hannibal  
 xxviii. 10. himself, (as the historian (b) tells us), perceiving that his  
 to xxxvii. soldiers were not to be encouraged with words, made a pub-  
 lic show for them, not so much to entertain their sight, as  
 to give them an image and representation of their own con-  
 dition. In like manner, we may suppose, that God made  
 use of this expedient to cure Jacob of his dejection; and  
 though Moses (who cannot be supposed to insert every thing)  
 says nothing of the angel's giving him this intimation, yet  
 we find it (c) in Josephus, that no sooner was the wrestling  
 ended, but a voice called out to him; and said, "Comfort  
 thyself in what thou hast done; for it is not a common  
 adversary that thou hast foiled, but an angel of the Lord:  
 take it for a presage therefore, that thy posterity shall never  
 fail, and that thou thyself shalt never be overcome."

The slaugh- O Lord God of my father Simeon, to whom thou gavest  
 ter of the a sword to take vengeance of the strangers; who loosened the  
 Sheche- girdle of a maid to defile her, and polluted her virginity to  
 mites by her reproach: wherefore thou gavest their rulers to be slain,  
 Jacob's two so that they dyed their bed in blood, being deceived. Thou  
 sons cen- gavest their wives for a prey, and their daughters to be  
 sured, and captives, and all their spoils to be divided among thy dear  
 in what children, who were moved with thy zeal, and abhorred the  
 sense it was pollution of their blood, and called upon thee for aid (d).  
 probable. This is the preface to the prayer which Judith makes to  
 God, in the apocryphal book that goes under her name.  
 And indeed were there no other arguments to prove this  
 book spurious, this one passage is enough, where we find the  
 most abominable massacre called a divine work, and per-  
 fidy, murder, and rapine, gilded over with the specious  
 names of zeal for God, and indignation against vice. The  
 abhorrence which Jacob expressed of the cruelty of his  
 sons, the sharpness of the reproaches uttered against them,  
 the remembrance of it even to the end of his life, and  
 the care he took to recapitulate it upon his death-bed, give  
 us a much juster idea of it, than the writings of some (e)  
 Rabbins, who have undertaken not only to excuse, but even

(z) 1 Kings xxii. 11. (a) 2 Kings xiii. 18. (b) Livy;  
 lib. 21. (c) Antiq. lib. 1. c. 20. (d) Judith ix. 2. &c.  
 (e) Selden De jur. Nat. l. 7. c. 5.

to command it. As to the probability of the fact, however, we are not to suppose, that because Simeon and Levi are only mentioned, they therefore were the only persons who had any hand in this wicked exploit. They indeed are only mentioned, because, being own brothers to Dinah both by father and mother, and consequently more concerned to resent the injury done to her honour, they are made the chief contrivers and conductors of it; but it is reasonable to think, that the rest of Jacob's sons, who were old enough to bear arms, as well as the greatest part of his domestics, were engaged in the execution of it: Because it is scarcely conceivable, how two men alone should be able to master a whole city, to slay all the men in it, and take all the women captives, who, upon this occasion, may be supposed more than sufficient to have overpowered them.

A. M.  
2149, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1855, &c.  
from Gen.  
xxviii. 10.  
to xxxvii.

Nothing is more known, and common in history, than to ascribe an action (especially in military affairs) to the chief commanders in it, how many under-agents soever they may think proper to employ: And we should deny Moses the common privilege of an historian, if we should account that a fault and omission in him, which in other writers of the like nature (especially where they study brevity) is reputed a great beauty and perfection. Moses however is far from pleading his privilege in this respect; for having made mention of Simeon and Levi, as the principal leaders in the action, he then proceeds and tells us, that *(f) the sons of Jacob*, meaning the rest of his sons who were of competent age, (and with them very reasonably their attendants) *came upon the slain, and spoiled the city, because they had defiled their sister.*

It is very remarkable of the Jewish historian Josephus, that he gives us no manner of account of Reuben's incest. for fear that, his recording so vile an action might leave some blot of infamy upon that patriarch, and his posterity. But Moses has given us a better proof of his truth and integrity, in that he not only mentions this abomination once, but even in the benediction which his father gives Reuben, makes a remembrance and recital of it. And this he did, that he might give us a true account, why the right of inheritance, which was originally in him, came to be conferred on Joseph; and the kingdom, or right of dominion, which was forfeited by his transgression, came to be translated to the tribe of Judah. This he did, that he might furnish his countrymen with matter sufficient for their humiliation,

Where Moses  
takes notice  
of Reuben's  
incest.

(f) Gen. xxxiv. 27.

A. M.  
2149, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1855, &c.  
from Gen.  
xxviii. 10.  
to xxxvii.

who by this, and many more instances of the like nature, are given to understand, that it was not their merit, but purely God's mercy, which advanced them to the honour of being his peculiar people; and this he did, that he might acquaint us all, how God was pleased to make these great, these elect heads and fathers, instances of human frailty and sin, in order to shew, that there is nothing, even nothing in man, unless God by grace be with him; that (*g*) *of ourselves* (as the apostle words it) *we are not sufficient to do any thing, as of ourselves, but all our sufficiency is from God.*

For the same reason, we may imagine it was, that Moses makes mention of Rachel's stealing away her frather's gods, as a probable intimation, that she was not entirely cured of the idolatrous superstition of the country from whence she came.

Why Rachel stole away her father's idols, and what they were.

The Jewish doctors are generally agreed, that the word *teraphim*, which we render *gods*, is not of Hebrew extraction. The Septuagint translates it sometimes *an oracle*, and sometimes *vain idols*; and several commentators will have it to be a word borrowed from the Egyptians, and to import the very same with their *serapis*. (*h*) The Jews indeed pretend that this idol was the head of a first-born son, plucked off from the neck, and embalmed; under the tongue of which was fastened a golden plate, with the name of some false deity engraven upon it, which, being placed in a nitch, with lighted candles before it, gave vocal answers to such as came to consult it: But others rather think, that it was the same with what the Persians call *telephim*, more generally known by the name of *talismans*, i. e. images in human form, of different sizes, and different metals, cast under certain constellations, with the figures of some planets, and magical characters, engraven upon them; whereas others again are of opinion, that the *teraphim* which Rachel stole, were the *dii penates*, or *household-gods* of her father Laban, viz. the images of Noah, the restorer of mankind, and of Shem, the head of his family; and therefore they observe, that Laban, by way of distinction, calls them *his gods*, i. e. the gods of his family. That these *teraphim* were statues, or images of an human shape and figure, is manifest from (*i*) Michal's putting one of them into her

(*g*) 2 Cor. iii. 5. (*h*) Calmet's Dictionary and Commentary; et Jurieu, Histoire des cultes et des dogmes. (*i*) 1 Sam. xix. 13. husband's

husband's bed, when she favoured his escape : That at their first institution, their intent was innocent, to be emblems or representations only of some renowned ancestor, whose memory the family was desirous to perpetuate ; but that, in process of time, they came to be looked upon as the *lares*, or *dii tutelares* of the house, were made object of religious adoration, and at length perverted to all the vile purposes of necromancy, a learned author, (k) who has examined this matter to the full, has proved beyond exception.

A. M.  
2149, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1855, &c.  
from Gen.  
xxviii. 10.  
to xxxvii.

But, whatever men or fictitious deities these figures were made to represent, it is certain, that the use they were chiefly applied to, was to foretell future events, and discover what was hid or lost ; and for this purpose were consulted and prayed to as oracles, at certain times, and under some particular aspects of the planets. Among other reasons, therefore, for Rachel's stealing away her father's tephim, this is generally supposed to be one.—That he might not, by inquiring of them, gain intelligence which way it was that Jacob had taken his flight.

The truth is, there seems to have been in Laban an odd mixture of religion. In his conversation with Abraham's steward, when he came to negotiate a match for Isaac, he seems to express a very devout sense of the being and providence of God ; and yet, at his first coming up with Jacob, he seems to be chiefly solicitous for the loss of his *gods*, (as he calls them), which were but dumb and senseless idols. In the treaty which he makes with Jacob, he invokes the God of Abraham, which is allowed to be the great God of heaven and earth ; and yet we can hardly forbear thinking, that he must have believed a plurality of gods in subordination to the supreme, by reason of his anxious concern for these images. Jacob, no doubt, during his abode with him, used all the interest he had in the family, to rectify his notions, and convince him of his error ; but he was not able to prevail ; and therefore some imagine, that Rachel stole away his idols, that she might remove the occasion of his superstitious worship, and hinder him from going on in his impiety.

These idols, we may presume, were made of gold, or some very valuable substance ; and therefore it may be sup-

(k) Jurieu, Histoire des cultes et des dogmes.

A. M. 2149, &c.  
 Apt. Christ.  
 1855, &c.  
 from Gen.  
 xxviii. 10.  
 to xxxvii.

posed that she took them along with her, not only to destroy them, but to make herself a reparation likewise for the wrongs she had received from him; and whereof we find both the sisters making this complaint; (1) *Is there yet any portion or inheritance for us in our father's house? Are we not counted of him strangers? for he hath sold us, and hath quite devoured also our money.*

But even supposing the worst of the case, that Rachel did take with her these idols, because she still retained an hankering after the religion of her ancestors; yet Jacob is not to be discommended for marrying one of his own family, who adhered to the true worship of God, though mixed with some superstitious customs, which he might easily reclaim in time, rather than any of the Canaanitish line, which was every day sinking more and more into idolatry; and for that idolatry, and other flagitious practices, were, in process of time, to undergo an utter extinction: Especially considering, that when he came into the land of Canaan, where he had full liberty of acting as he pleased, he made a thorough reformation in his family, and had all these little emblems of her former superstition taken from her, and destroyed.

What Reason's mandrakes were, and why Rachel coveted them.

The word *Dudaim*, which we render \* *mandrakes*, is one of those terms, whose true signification the Jews, at this

(1) Gen. xxxi. 14, 15.

\* Calmet, in his Dictionary, gives us a description of this plant, as it is found in the French King's gardens.—Its root is white, and somewhat rough; is two or three times as big again as its stem, and always grows taper. Generally, at some distance from its upper part, it divides into two branches, which is the reason that this root has something of the figure of a man, whose two thighs are represented by the two branches. From the sides of the root proceed a great number of small fibres, in several places, which serve to imbibe the juice of the earth, for the nourishment of the plant. From the root there arises a round and smooth stem, of a pretty deep red; and at the top of the stem grow four branches, which spread at equal distances from each other. Every branch has five leaves, which are indented, of a dark green, and terminate in a point. From the centre of these branches proceeds another very strait and smooth stem, at the extremity of which grows a knob of about twenty-four fruits, round, and of a beautiful red; and within this fruit is a kind of nut, much of the figure with a lentil. This nut includes in it the



this time, pretend not to understand. There is but one place more in Scripture, wherein it occurs, and that is in the 7th chapter of Canticles, wherein the bridegroom invites his spouse to go with him into the fields: *Come, my Beloved, let us get up early to the vineyard, let us see if the vine flourish, whether the tender grapes appear, and the pomegranates bud forth. The mandrakes gives a smell; and at our gates are all manner of fruits, which I have laid up for thee, O my Beloved.* Here we find it placed among the most delicious and pleasant fruits, the grape, the pomegranate, &c. and represented as very fragrant and odoriferous in its smell; but the mandrake, say some, is a stinking and ill-scented fruit, of a bad taste, and a cold narcotic quality; and therefore they have rendered the word *fine and lovely flowers*; and some of them will have it to be the *violet* or *jeffamin*, (which suit very well with the season of the year here mentioned); whilst others contend very strongly for the *lily*, which, in Syria, grew in the fields, and was of a most agreeable beauty and smell.

That passage in Solomon's Song, however, will not suffer us to doubt, but that it was a fruit (of some kind or other), and Ludolff, (m) in his History of Ethiopia, will needs have it to be what the Syrians call *Mauz*, a fruit much about as big as a small cucumber, that hangs in clusters, sometimes to the number of forty upon the same stalk, and is in figure and taste not unlike the Indian fig.

the seed of the plant, which dies and grows again every year, and has nothing valuable in it but the root, whose virtues are wonderful. Of this plant (as Dioscorides informs us) there are two sorts: One is black, and called the *female mandrake*, having leaves not unlike lettuce, tho' less, and narrower, which spread upon the ground, and are of a very disagreeable scent. It bears something like servises, which are pale, and of a strong smell; with kernels within, like those of a pea. It has two or three very large roots, twisted together, black without, but white within, and covered with a thick rind. The other sort, or the male mandrake, produces berries as big again as those of the female, of a good scent, and a colour not much unlike saffron. Its leaves are large, white, broad, and smooth, like the leaves of a beech tree, and its root resembles that of the female, but is much thicker and bigger, and the quality of them both is to stupify and make sleepy those that take them; l. 6. c. 61.

(m) Lib. 1. cap. 17.

A. M.  
2149, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1855, &c.  
from Gen.  
xxviii. 10.  
to xxxvii.

It is not to be doubted indeed, but that the mandrake in Palestine is of a different kind to what we have in these climates. St. Austin, who thought it a great curiosity to see one, tells us, that it was very beautiful to the eye, and of a fragrant smell, but utterly insipid ; so that he wonders what should make Rachel set so high a value upon it, unless it were its scarceness, and rich scent. In the province of Pekin, in China, we are informed, that there is a kind of mandrake so valuable, and, when mixed in any liquor makes so rich a cordial, that a pound of its root (for in the root lies all the virtue) is worth thrice its weight in silver.

It was a general opinion among the ancients, that there was a certain quality in the juice of mandrakes to excite amorous inclinations; and therefore they called them *the apples of love*, as the Hebrew word *Dod* (from whence comes *Dudaim*) is frequently set to signify *love*. Thus whether we consider this fruit as pleasant to the eye, smell, or taste, or as a restorative to nature, and helpful to conception, any of these reasons are sufficient why Rachel should take such a fancy to them; And, why she purchased them at so strange a rate, was chiefly occasioned by Leah's fullen reply, that she had *taken away her husband's affections from her*, which provoked the other, who (according to the established order of succeeding to his bed) had certainly the property in him that night, to resign him to her.

Moses however only mentions this circumstance, to let his reader know, upon what occasion it was that Leah, after she had done child-bearing, (as she thought), came to conceive again. (n) It had been below the dignity of such a sacred history, as his is, to take notice of such trivial matters, had there not been something of great consideration in them; and what could that be, but chiefly the birth of the *blessed seed*, which was the object of the hopes of all pious people in those days? It is evident from the conduct both of Rachel and her sister, that it was children they desired, and not merely the company of their husband; nor would their husband have ever been determined by their blind bargains, had it not been matter of pure indifference to him, whether of their embraces he went to, so long as his family was but increased and multiplied.

(n) Patrick's Commentary.

That

That it was a very ancient custom, not only among the Hebrews, but with many other nations, and particularly the Greeks and Romans, in the marriages both of their sons and daughters, and especially of the latter, for the parents to give with the bride and bridegroom, as part of the portion or dowry, a servant, to abide in their power and property, is a matter so plain. \* from sundry examples, that it needs no contesting. The great difficulty is — For what reason it was, that these matrons of old were so very desirous, that their husbands should have commerce with these their dotal maids, in case they had no children of their own : And for the solution of this we must observe, that, according to the principles of the oldest philosophy, SPIRIT is the universal efficient cause in Nature, but especially in generation, and in human generation most of all ; so that a spiritual conception must of necessity precede, and direct every bodily one, insomuch that there can be no corporeal conception without a spiritual one ; but a spiritual there may be, without a corporeal one ; *i. e.* when the matter, or medium, is not adapted to that purpose. Now this position being laid down, it may be observed farther, that these matrons very probably were not ignorant, that the mother contributes nothing, of herself, towards the formation of the fœtus, and much less to its inspiration with life, but merely the bearing it in

A. M.  
2149. &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1855. &c.  
from Gen.  
xxviii. 10.  
to xxxvii.  
Why the  
patriarchal  
wives de-  
sired chil-  
dren by  
their maids.

\* In the tragedy of Euripides, which is called Iphigenia in Aulis, Clytemnestra is brought in, as preparing and hastening all things for the nuptials of her daughter, who, unknown to her, was devoted for a sacrifice, and addressing herself in this manner ;

Πάρεμι νυμφαγωγὸς ἀλλ' ὀχημάτων  
Ἐγὼ πορεύε' ὡς φέρω φερνὰς κόρη  
καὶ πέμπεις εἰς μέλαθρον εὐλαβούμεναι.

Act. 3.

Old Demænetus, in the *Asinaria* of Plautus, is told by his slave, Dotalem servum Sauream uxor tua

Adduxit, cui plus in manu sit quam tibi. Act 1.

These servants among the Greeks were called *φέρναι*, (from whence is derived the Latin *verna*) ; and, by the Romans *dota-les*, *receptitii*, or *receptitiæ*. They had likewise the name of *λάτρες* given them, and their service was expressed by the word *λάτρεια* which signifies the service due from man to Almighty God ; which is wont to be distinguished from any other sort of service, and denotes, that such persons were entirely at their mistresses devotion ; *Bibliotheca Bipl. vol. 1. annot. 22.*

the

A. M.  
2149, &c.  
Ant. Chris.  
1855, &c.  
from Gen.  
xxviii. 10.  
to xxxvii.

the womb ; and hence they might infer, that the bearing it in the womb was not sufficient of itself to confer a right to the fruit of it, which came thither they knew not how, which they had no hand in the fashioning of, and which they were no more able to quicken, than they were to enliven a dead body. It being therefore no strange thing, in these days, for one man to raise up seed for another, or to propagate by another ; by parity of reason, they might conclude, that one woman might as well do the same for another, or bear in her stead, under such and such circumstances, by the union and co-operation of their wills, and strong attraction of the imagination in two consociating into one. And this was the consideration which moved them to press this matter so very earnestly as they did ; When finding, that, after they had spiritually conceived of their husbands, by taking them into an ideal image for elaboration, there was wanting strength in them to bear, and to work out what they had received ; they could afterwards have no greater pleasure, than to appoint one who should faithfully supply that part, (wherein they themselves were defective), and thereby be able not only to remedy the reproach of their barrenness, but to establish a stronger interest in the family for themselves, and for all that they could call their own.

(c) *The bearing upon the knees* therefore, (as the expression is in Moses) must certainly denote something more than that Rachel designed to make herself a nurse to her maid, or set a child upon her knees, as her own, in which she had no part or portion ; but that her servant should conceive, and become with child through her, as in her presence, and as it were *upon her knees*, to the end that her mistress might be made a mother, by her instrumentality, and might have children, whom she could call her own, though not born of her body. And accordingly we may observe, that Rachel herself had this notion of the matter ; for upon the birth of her first son, born to her by her substitute, she expressly declares that God had given her a son, and (as the custom for mothers then was) herself imposed on him a name, as a mark of her thinking him really to be her's.

Several of  
these facts  
confirmed  
by Heathen  
writers.

Thus have we endeavoured to silence some of those cavils, which may be made against particular passages in

(o) Bibliotheca Bibl. vol. I. occas. annot. 33.

the

the Mosaic history, during this period of time; and, for the farther confirmation of its truth and authority, we might produce the testimony of several Heathen writers, (p) such as Sanchoniatho, Berofus, Hecatæus, Eupolemus, and others as they are quoted by Eusebius in his *Præparatio Evangelica*. The fiction of Jupiter's chain in Homer, reaching from heaven to earth, as it relates to the divine providence, had its original from Jacob's ladder. The memory of his wrestling with an angel has been preserved, ever since, by a whole nation's abstaining from a particular part of the thigh, which, without that supposition, cannot be accounted for. Jacob's living with his uncle Laban in the capacity of a servant, gave rise to the story of Apollo's being reduced (when expelled from his father's house) to the necessity of turning Admetus's shepherd. The fable of the Bethleans, which (q) Eusebius takes out of Philo Biblius, came undoubtedly from the altar of Bethel; and, to name no more, the whole business of Jacob's arrival at Shechem upon his return from Mesopotamia, of his daughter Dinah's rape by the prince of the country, and of the terrible revenge which her brothers took for that indignity, is related by Alexander Polyhistor, as he is quoted by the same father, much in the same order, and with the very same circumstances, that we find it recorded in the works of Moses.

### DISSERTATION III.

#### *Of Jacob's ladder and pillar.*

TO judge of the occasion of Jacob's vision, wherein this emblematical ladder was represented to him, we must imagine that we saw the heir of a powerful family taken his leave of his aged parents, and for fear of an angry brother, departing from his father's house; beginning a journey of 450 miles, into a strange country, all alone on foot, and without any servant to attend him; travelling all the day with a pensive heart, and forced at night to take up his lodging in the open air, and with nothing better than an hard stone to be his pillow: If we suppose Jacob in this condition, I say, we shall soon perceive the reason, why God thought it convenient, at this time, to give him comfort and consolation in the way of a dream.

(p) Vid. Grot. De verit. l. 1. (q) Præp. Evan. l. 9. c. 21.  
Vol. II. A a That

A. M.  
2149, &c.  
Anc. Christ.  
1855, &c.  
from Gen.  
x. viii 10.  
to xxxvii.

A. M. That dreams, or nocturnal visions, were a common way of God's revealing himself to mankind of old, is evident from instances almost innumerable; and the reason of his making choice of this method might be, either (r) to convince them of his omnipresence, that *he was about their bed, and about their paths, and spied out all their ways*; or to convince them of his constant care, and that he was not unmindful of them, even when they little thought of him, and were most absent from themselves; or to convince them of his unlimited power over their souls, when even sleep itself could not hinder his access to them; or because that the mind, in the dead and silence of the night, was fitter to receive divine impressions, when nature was hush, and the passions asleep, and no variety of thoughts to distract its attention.

2149, &c.  
Ant. Chriſt.  
1855, &c.  
from Gen.  
xxviii. 10.  
to xxxvii.

But whatever God's reasons might be for conveying things by dreams, it is certain, that the vision of the ladder, and the comfortable words which he spoke from the top of it, made such a lively impression upon Jacob, that he proceeded in his journey with cheerfulness and alacrity: (s) *Behold I am with thee, and I will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of*: These are the verbal assurances which God gives Jacob; and therefore we may presume that the representation of the ladder had something analogous in it.

'The meaning of it.

The ladder (according to the sense of the (t) best interpreters) is an emblem of the divine providence, which governs all things. Its being *set upon the earth* denotes the steadiness of providence, which nothing is able to unsettle; its *reaching up to heaven* signifies its universality, or that it extends to all things; the *several steps of the ladder* are the motions and actions of providence, the angels *going up and down* shew, that they are the great ministers of providence, never idle, but always employed in the preservation of the just; *their ascending* means their going up to receive the divine orders and commands; and *their descending*, their coming down upon earth to put them in execution. So that, in this hieroglyphic, God signified to Jacob, now full of care and uneasy apprehensions, that the man who was under the custody and protection of

(r) Watsii Miscell. sacra de somniis, vol. I. xxviii. 15.

(t) Maimonides more Nevoc.

(s) Gen.

divine

divine providence, wanted not company in a wilderness; wanted not security in the midst of dangers; wanted not direction in the most difficult undertakings; since there were so many ministering spirits holding correspondence between earth and heaven, and daily and hourly (u) sent forth from God's presence, to minister unto them, who shall be heirs of salvation.

A. M.  
2149, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1855, &c.  
from Gen.  
xxviii. 10.  
to xxxvii.

Other interpretations there are in great numbers, but too \* full of fancies and conceits to be there taken notice of. One however seems a little more solid, and may not undeserve our observation. (x) The promise (we may remember) which God is introduced as making to Jacob from the top of the ladder, does chiefly relate to his covenant with Abraham, which was principally founded in Christ, that chosen seed, in whom all the families of the earth were to be blessed: And the analogy of the thing may induce us to believe, that this ladder was designed for a type and emblem of the covenant of grace, which was in force from the time of man's first apostacy, but began to be put in execution at the incarnation of our Saviour Christ, that only Mediator, who opened an intercourse between earth and heaven; by whose intercession plenty of all spiritual

(u) Heb. i. 14.

\* The Rabbins, having given us long chimerical descriptions of this ladder, will have it represent almost every thing that comes into their fancies. Some pretend, that the ascending angels were those who had the care of Jacob in his going: The descending, those whose business it was to secure him in his returning from Mesopotamia. Another, [Jarchi on Gen. xxviii. 12.] is of opinion, that God designed hereby to point out the place where he would have the temple built one day; and to reconcile this opinion to geography, he affirms that God, at this time, transported to Luz the hill of Sion, upon which the temple at Jerusalem was afterwards built. Philo, who certainly believed a *Metempsychosis*, tells us, that the angels which Jacob saw, are emblems of souls, whereof some descend to animate bodies, whilst others ascend, having quitted the bodies which they once animated. St. Austin will have this ladder to represent the cross of Christ; and some of the mystical divines, making it an emblem of a contemplative life, do maintain, that the angels ascending the ladder, are those believers whom they call perfect, as having the faculty of causing their affections to soar up to the highest heavens, and that the descending represented those mean and abject souls, whose centre is the earth, and whose delight consists in fleshly things; *Saurin's Dissertations*.

(x) Heidegger's Hist. patriarch. vol. 2. exercit. 16.

A. M.  
2149, &c.  
Ant. Chris.  
1855, &c.  
from Gen.  
xxviii. 10.  
to xxxvii.

blessings descend to us, and by whose merits and doctrines our natures are sanctified, and so become meet to be *partakers with the saints in light*, or to ascend into heaven.

And to this mystical meaning of the ladder, our Saviour himself may be thought to allude, when he tells us, that (y) *Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man*; which (z) a learned commentator has, in this manner, paraphrased. “Ye have heard, no doubt, of those of old, “that several things relating to the Messiah have been represented by Jacob’s ladder; and ye are to know, that “they are all now to be accomplished in me, and shall “every day be more and more accomplished, until the “time of my assumption into heaven. Ye shall know, “that heaven, which by the sin and corruption of mankind was shut in Adam, shall, by my dispensation and “doctrine, be opened again; and that God, being reconciled to the world by me, shall continue in covenant “with them for ever. Ye shall know, that I am that ladder and way to heaven, by which ye may gain admittance to the father; for I am he that unites heaven and “earth together, so that from henceforward the angels “shall continually be passing from the one to the other. “In short, ye shall know, that I am the Lord not only of “the visible creation, but the prince likewise of angels, “and all invisible spirits, even the true God. This I say “ye shall henceforth more fully know by my doctrine, “my miracles, my death, my glorious resurrection, and “triumphant ascension into heaven.”

Thus, according to the declaration which God makes from the top of the ladder, it seems reasonable to imagine, that he might have a twofold design in making this representation to Jacob, *viz.* by a proper type, to prefigure the incarnation of his Son, which, like this ladder, joined heaven and earth, the divine and human natures, together; and, by a proper emblem of the angels ascending and descending upon it, to give him an evidence of the watchful providence of God that attended him. The former of these designs might perhaps be a little too abstruse for Jacob’s comprehension at present, but the latter he immediately understood; and therefore we find him, as soon as he arose, (out of a grateful sense of the divine goodness in sending him a vision so full of consolation) erecting, and consecrat-

(y) John i. 51. (z) Bullinger’s Commentary.

ing



ing a pillar, in order to perpetuate the memory of so momentous an event.

It is the opinion of some commentators indeed, that to preserve the memory of this heavenly vision, Jacob took the stone whereon his head lay, and wherein they discern nothing extraordinary, and set it up for a monument or pillar upon the top of some other stones, which he had gathered and heaped together: But besides that the fancy of an heap of stones seems unworthy of the Holy Scriptures, and betrays us into a low and trifling idea of this great affair, there is not the least ground from the text itself, nor from this symbolical way of transmitting facts to future generations, to suppose, that there was any more than one single stone.

The word *matzebah*, which our interpreters render a pillar, is, by the Septuagint, translated *στήλη*, by the vulgar Latin, *titulus*; and from hence several, both ancients and moderns, have supposed, that there was an inscription upon this pillar. The manner of consecrating this pillar was by pouring oil upon it, which Jacob might have by him, without a miracle, (considering how common the use of oil was in these hot countries to refresh the limbs when weary with travelling), and how necessary upon that account it was, to carry some with him in his journey: Nor is there any reason to suppose, that Jacob made use of this form of consecration, in compliance with the custom of the country where he then was. It is uncertain whether this custom was established in Jacob's time; but if it was, it is hardly credible, that a pious man, as he is represented, would have adopted a superstitious ceremony into the worship of the true God. (a) The much more probable opinion therefore is, that as the rites of sacrificing and circumcision were instituted before the promulgation of the law; so this manner of consecrating things, by way of unction or libation, was at first enjoined the patriarchs Abraham and Isaac by God, and either by precept or tradition from them, came afterwards to be practised by Jacob. Nor is it unlikely, but that Jacob's practice in this particular, and the great veneration which was afterwards paid to his monumental pillar, might give occasion \* to the worshipping such

A. M.  
2149, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1855, &c.  
from Gen.  
xxviii. 10.  
to xxxvii.  
The form  
and end of  
Jacob's  
pillar.

(a) Heidegger's Hist. patriar.

\* From Jacob's pouring oil upon the stone of Bethel did arise the superstition of the ancients for their *betuli*, which were stones anointed and consecrated to the memory of great men after

A. M. such erected stones in future ages, and (upon such abuse) of God's so strictly prohibiting any to be set up: (b) *Ye shall not make ye any idols or graven image, neither shall ye rear up any matzebah (statue or pillar) to bow down unto it, for I am the Lord your God.*

2149, &c.  
Ant. Chris.  
1855, &c.  
from Gen.  
xxviii. 10.  
to xxxvii.

In the religious sense of the word then, *matzebah* may properly signify a large consecrated stone, erected pillar-wise, before which prostrations and adorations were made, and upon which oblations and libations, but not any bloody sacrifices, were presented: But then the question is, how Jacob could think to secure this monument from being thrown down by the natives or passengers; or how he could impose a new name upon it, and establish that name in future ages, when the place had a name before, and no person was present to bear testimony of what he did. This indeed the Scripture gives us no manner of account of; and therefore (if we do it but modestly) we are left at liberty to make our own conjectures.

What it  
was.

According to the ancient versions of the Word, we may suppose, that there was upon this stone some legible and intelligible title or inscription; nor is it improbable, that the title should be, what the patriarch in a sort of extasy called it, *Bethel*, or *the the house of God*. How Jacob might be provided with an iron pen, or style, for the purpose of engraving this title, can be no difficult thing to imagine, if we do but consider, that the style was the common instrument of writing in those days, which every scholar used to carry about with him, and which Jacob \*, having led a studious

after their death. Sanchoniatho, or rather Porphyry, the author of the fragment which Eusebius has preserved under the name of *Sanchoniatho*, attributes the invention of these *betuli* to Saturn; but the best account that can be given of this absurd practice is from hence; and a sufficient demonstration it is, how the best and noblest acts of piety may be perverted, and degenerate into mere stupidity, by a fond superstitious imitation; *Calmet's Dictionary under the word Bethel; and Bibliotheca Bibl. vol. 1. occas. annot. 30.*

(b) Lev. xxvi. 1.

\* That Jacob was a man of learning, and of an extraordinary genius, is not only a general tradition of the Jews, but supported likewise by some lines in the character which the pen of Moses gives us of him. He had certainly great advantages under his father and grandfather, who justly deserved a name among the oldest oriental philosophers; and therefore he is described, in  
the

studious and contemplative life under his father and grandfather, and (as some suppose) under Melchisedeck likewise, was not unqualified to make use of; and that the very ancient, if not universal custom of erecting, anointing, and consecrating such like stones, with an inscription, either literal or hieroglyphical, and sometimes both, could hardly have any other foundation than this practice of his.

But besides the bare inscription of the name and title of the stone, there might probably be yet something more to attract the eyes of the traveller, and to raise a veneration for the place. And therefore, admitting the stone to be square, we find that there were two oaths, as it were, taken upon it, by the covenanting parties, *i. e.* the oath of God to Jacob, repeating the substance of what he had sworn to his fathers, and limiting it to him and his seed; and the oath of Jacob to God, obliging himself and his posterity to such a constant homage as is therein specified; and hereupon we may infer, that for the better preservation of the memory of this great league, there might be written, on one side, the obligation of God, exactly in the terms of the 13th, 14th, and 15th verses; and on the opposite, the obligation of Jacob, as expressed by him in the three last verses of the 28th chapter of Genesis. And because it was necessary, that the name of the person who erected and consecrated the stone should be preserved, we may farther suppose, that as God's signing this covenant on his part might be in this form, ANI JEHOVAH, ELOHE ABRAHAM, ELOHE ISAAC, *I the Lord, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac*; by parity of reason, Jacob's signing might run thus, ANI JACOB, BEN ISAAC, BEN ABRAHAM, *I Jacob, the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham*.

On the vacant sides of the stone, we may suppose again, that the other awful sentences which Jacob upon this occasion pronounced, (*c*) *How dreadful is this place! This is the gate of heaven, and verily the Lord is in this place!* were engraven. And because a very early custom of crowning such public pillars with garlands might very likely take its

the eastern style, as a man dwelling in tents, as much as to say, one who leads a philosophical and contemplative life, or a minister or student of the house of learning, as the Targums truly interpret the phrase; *Bibliotheca Bibl. vol. 1. occas. annot. 35.*

(c) Gen. xxviii. 16, 17.

A. M. rise from Jacob's practice at this time, we may therefore be  
 2149, &c. allowed to make one conjecture more, viz. that as Luz,  
 Ant. Christ. near which this transaction happened, had its name from  
 1855, &c. a grove of almond-trees, not far distant from it; so Jacob  
 xxviii. 10. might think it very decent, in memory of the divine favours  
 to xxxvii. there received, to crown and adorn the top of this titular  
 stone, with a garland of almond-branches taken from  
 thence. All this, we allow, is no more than supposition  
 and conjecture: But, without some such contrivance as  
 this, how could this stone have been an instrument to per-  
 petuate the memory of any event? How a means of Jacob's  
 imposing a new name upon a place that was entirely in the  
 possession of others? Well might the natives or proprietors  
 ask, By what authority this was done? And since Jacob was  
 not there to give them an answer, his only way could be to  
 leave the history and occasion of it engraven upon the very  
 stone.

And indeed, without some such supposition, why should  
 this stone, even by different nations, be accounted such a  
 valuable piece of antiquity? Why should the Jews be so  
 fond to have it thought, that they had it in the sanctuary  
 of their second temple, and that upon it the ark of the co-  
 venant was placed? Since the destruction of their temple,  
 why should it be their custom, one day in a year, with great  
 lamentation, to go and anoint this stone, in remembrance  
 of their father Jacob, and the covenant made with him?  
 And why should the Mahometans pretend, that they  
 have this stone (though, by mistake of one patriarch for  
 another, they call it *the stone of Abraham*) set up at their  
 temple at Mecca, which they make their common Kibla, or  
 point of worship, and before which the pilgrims pay their  
 solemn devotions?

These, we allow, may be no more than false pretences;  
 but still they are an evidence, that this pillar was once held  
 in high veneration, which it could hardly have been, but  
 must very soon have been buried in oblivion and rubbish,  
 had it been no more than a large ragged stone, without  
 any thing to distinguish it, *i. e.* without any sculpture or  
 inscription on it. And therefore (notwithstanding the  
 silence of Scripture) we have sufficient reason to conclude,  
 that this pillar was erected in order to preserve the remem-  
 brance of the heavenly vision which God in this place  
 vouchsafed Jacob; that to this purpose it was engraven with  
 such inscriptions as might give posterity sufficient intelli-  
 gence upon what occasion it was erected; that by means

of such inscriptions, it came to be recognized as Jacob's pillar, and held in great esteem in future generations; that this pillar thus engraved (as it was the first of its kind that we have upon record) gave probably the origin to the invention of stelography, or the ancient manner of writing upon stone, ever after; and that the consecration of this stone, and the imposition of a new name upon the place where it stood, is enough to justify the practice of sanctifying places appointed for religious worship, by some solemn form of separation; of calling them *the house of God*, and imputing to them a relative holiness; in Christian countries, of dedicating them to the memory of departed saints and martyrs; and every where, of observing that wholesome and devout advice of the preacher: (d) *Keep thy foot when thou goest into the house of God, and be more ready to hear than to give the sacrifice of fools. Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God, for he is in heaven, and thou upon earth; therefore let thy words be few.*

A. M.  
2149, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1855, &c.  
from Gen.  
xxviii. 10.  
to xxxvii.

(d) Ecclef. v. 1, 2.

## CHAP. IV.

*Of the Life of Joseph \*, which includes the rest of Jacob's.*

### The HISTORY.

Jacob had not been long with his father before there befel him another sad disaster. Joseph was his beloved

A. M.  
2276, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1728, &c.  
from Gen.  
xxxvii. to  
the end.

\* Two reasons are generally assigned, why Moses is more prolix in relating the adventures of Joseph than of any other of Jacob's children: both because his life is a bright example of piety, chastity, meekness and prudence; and because it was by the means of Joseph that Jacob went down into Egypt: and as his going down gave occasion to the wonderful departure of the children of Israel from thence, so the history of the Jews would have been sadly imperfect, and indeed altogether unintelligible, without a longer account than ordinary of Joseph's life and transactions there; *Heidegger's hist. patriar. vol. 2. exercit. 20.*

Joseph is  
hated by his  
brethren.  
and why.

A. M. 2276, &c. *Ann. Christ.* 1728, &c. from Gen. xxxvii. to the end.

child, as being the son of his dear departed Rachel, and † a youth of a very promising and extraordinary genius. As a mark of his peculiar love, the fond father gave him cloathes richer than he did the rest, and among others †, one coat more especially, which was made of a changeable or party-coloured stuff. This made his other brothers envy him not a little; and what gained him no good-will among them, was their looking upon him as a spy, because he had told his father some things wherein the sons of Bil-

† Most versions, as well as otrs, have made Jacob to love Joseph, because he was the son of his old age: whereas had this been the cause of his affection, he must have loved Zebulun as much as Joseph, because he was of the same age, and Benjamin much more, because he was above fifteen years younger. It seems, therefore, as if they had confounded the words *Ben-Zekenim*, the son of senators, or elders, (as he is called here), with *Ben Ziknah*, the son of old age; whereas the former has a signification quite different. According to the Hebrew idiom, it signifies the son, or disciple of senators, i. e. one endued with an extraordinary wisdom and prudence; accordingly the Samaritan, Arabic, and Persian versions have rendered it, *because he was a wise and prudent son*, though even this comes short of the energy of the idiom, and might more properly be rendered, *because he was as wise and prudent as a senator*. And this justifies the reason of Jacob's extraordinary love to Joseph, because it is natural for parents, especially for fathers, to admire those children who shew any degree of wisdom above their years; whereas, to be fond of a child, begotten in one's old age, and for no other reason, is no more than a piece of dotage, which Moses would hardly have thought worth recording; *Universal history*, l. i. c. 7.; and *Howell's history*, l. 1.

† The coat whereby Jacob distinguished his son Joseph from the rest of his brothers, is generally thought to signify a garment that was wrought with threads of divers colours, or made up of pieces of silk or stuff, which had much variety in them; but the word *passim*, which is here made use of, according to some learned annotators, does properly signify a long garment, down to the heels or ancles, with long sleeves down to the wrists, which had a border at the bottom, and a facing (as we call it) at the hands, of a colour different from the garment, which was accounted noble as well as beautiful, in ancient times; *Patrick's Commentary*.

hah and Zilpah († with whom he was chiefly conversant), † had grossly misbehaved, which made them treat him so very surlily, that whenever he spake to them, they would scarce give him a civil answer. But that which completed their envy and resentment, or rather turned them into an irreconcilable hatred, was his innocently telling them some of his dreams, which seemed to portend his advancement in the world above them.

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He told them, that one night he dreamt, that as he and they were binding sheaves together in the field, his sheaf stood upright, while theirs fell prostrate before it, as if they had been doing obeisance; and that, at another time, he fancied himself mounted on high, and the sun, moon, and eleven stars, doing him the like homage. This raised the indignation of the rest, as thinking it a disparagement to have a younger brother their superior: which

their

† He chose the sons of his father's concubines, rather than those of his wife Leah, to be his companions, on purpose, perhaps, to avoid the ill consequences of the latter's envy and emulation against him. For it is not unlikely that Leah's sons, considering the excessive love which their father had for him, might be ready to suspect, that he designed to bequeath the right of primogeniture to him, which each of them thinking they had a better title to, might thereupon be tempted to malign, and maltreat him: whereas, among the sons descended from concubines, (as having not the like ambition), he might find better quarter, and to their company the rather resort, out of a principle of humility and condescension, and to discountenance the haughty behaviour of the sons of Leah towards the sons of the concubines; *Patrick's Commentary; and Bibliotheca Bibl. in locum.*

† The Hebrew, and the Alexandrian LXX have it, *they brought unto their father an evil report, or grievous complaints against Joseph*: i. e. they begun their base and barbarous treatment of him with lies and calumnies. However, Aquila, Symmachus, and the Syriac, make Joseph the accuser; but of what crime it was, that he accused them to his father, and whether it consisted in deeds or words only, is a subject that has occasioned a great variety of conjectures among critics and commentators. Some will have it, that Joseph told of their unkindness and asperity to him; others, of their quarrelling and contentious way of living. Some, of their committing sodomy or bestiality; while those who confine it to words only, suppose it to be passionate and undutiful reflections they might make upon their father, for loving Joseph more than themselves. But, whatever it was, it may be gathered from their propense malice to him, that it was no small crime, because that for his telling it, (and which he might do with

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their father perceiving, (in hopes of mitigating their resentment \*), thought fit to discountenance him in the interpretation of his dreams, by telling him, that they were vain and chimerical, and what could never come to pass; tho' in himself he could not but think, that there was something extraordinary and ominous in them. His brothers, however, instead of abating their hatred, grew every day more and more exasperated; so that they resolved at last to cut him off, and only waited for a convenient opportunity.

It happened, at this time, that Joseph's ten brethren (for Benjamin was as yet too young for any business) were keeping their flocks not far from Shechem, when their father, not having heard from them for some time, and † being not a little anxious for their welfare, sent Joseph to find them out, and know how they did. As he drew near to Shechem, he was informed by a person whom he met with by accident, that they had removed from thence, and were gone about twenty miles farther north, to a

no other intent, but only that his father's rebukes and admonitions might reform them), they hated him even unto death; *Bibliotheca Bibl. and Howell's History.*

\* St. Chrysostom, in his homily upon the place, has given us this farther reason.—“ Besides,” says he, “ he might think it convenient to give this calm check to a spirit so much elated, as this young man must be, by those great and certain expectations which God was pleased, in so extraordinary a manner, to set before him. The foreknowledge of all that greatness and glory, which was one day infallibly to be his portion, might have put him upon a wrong bias of behaviour; might have tempted him to antedate his superiority; and fail, or waver, more or less in his duty to his elder brethren, if not to his father himself: and this seems to be the meaning of Jacob's mentioning his mother, who was dead, and did not so well comport with his dream. But at the same time, that in prudence he was willing to prevent any vain aspiring conceits, or tumours in his son, in faith he was persuaded, that the fact would prove such as it was foretold.”

† The reason of Jacob's uneasiness, and of sending his son Joseph upon this errand, will be very obvious, if it be remembered, that the sons of Jacob, had so incensed the neighbouring places by the massacre of the Shechemites, that Jacob was obliged immediately to quit the country, for fear of a general insurrection upon him, as we read Gen. xxxiv. 30.



place called † *Dotban*. Thither Joseph went after them; and no sooner did they see him approaching, but their old malice revived, and immediately they resolved to make away with this master-dreamer, (as they called him), and so persuade their father that some wild beast had devoured him.

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This resolution, barbarous as it was, had certainly been put in execution, † had not Reuben, who was the eldest, interposed, and, dissuading them from imbruing their hands in his blood, advised rather to throw him into the next pit, with a design himself to draw him out privately, and convey him safe home to his father. Reuben's advice was liked: and therefore, as soon as Joseph came up to them, they immediately seized him, pulled off his fine coat, and threw him into a pit, which, at that time,

† It was a town about twelve miles to the north of the city of Samaria, as Eusebius informs us; *Well's Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. 1.

† He either thought himself most concerned to save his brother, as being the first-born, and therefore like to be the first in the blame; or he might hope, by thus piously and compassionately preserving the favourite Joseph, to recover that place in his father's affection, which he had lost by his incest with Bilhah, his concubinary wife. The speech which Josephus introduces him as making upon this occasion, is very moving, and very rhetorical. "It were an abominable wickedness," says he, "to take away the life, even of a stranger, but to destroy a kinsman and a brother, and, in that brother, a father and a mother too, with grief for the loss of so good, and so hopeful a son, — Bethink yourselves, if any thing can be more diabolical. Consider that there is an all-seeing God, who will be the avenger, as well as witness of this horrid murder. Bethink yourselves, I say, and repent of your barbarous purpose. You must never expect to commit this flagitious villany, and the divine vengeance not overtake you; for God's providence is every where in the wilderness, as well as in the city, and the horrors of a guilty conscience will pursue you wherever you go. — But, put your case your brother had done you some wrong; yet is it not our duty to pass over the slips of our friends? When the simplicity of his youth may justly plead his excuse, his brothers certainly, of all men living, should be his friends and guardians, rather than his murderers; especially when the ground of all your quarrel is this, — That God loves your brother, and your brother loves God;" *Josephus*, l. 2. c. 3.

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the end.  
Is sold into  
Egypt.

chanced to be dry ; whereupon Reuben withdrew, to contrive some means for rescuing his brother, whilst the others (as if they had done some glorious act) sat down to eat and drink, and regale themselves.

In the mean time || a caravan of Ishmaelites, who were travelling from Mount Gilead into Egypt with spices and other merchandize, appeared in sight, which put Judah in the thought of taking their brother out of the pit, and selling him to these merchants, which would every whit answer their purpose as well, or better. The proposal was no sooner made, than it was approved : Joseph was taken out of the pit, was sold to the merchants, and the merchants sold him again to Potiphar, one of the King's chief officers, and captain of his guards. Reuben being absent while this was done, came to the pit not long after, in order to rescue his brother ; but finding him not there, he began to bewail and lament himself to such a degree, that his brethren, to pacify his grief, were forced to tell him in what manner they had disposed of him ; whereupon Reuben, finding it impossible now to recover him, joined with them in contriving how to manage the matter with their father, so as to take off from themselves all manner of suspicion.

To this purpose they killed a kid, and dipping Joseph's coat in the blood of it, † sent it to their father, as if they

|| Though we name the Ishmaelites only, yet here seem to be two, if not three sorts of merchants mentioned in this passage, the Ishmaelites, the Midianites, and Medanites, (as they are called in the Hebrew, Gen. xxxvii. 36.), who were a distinct people from the Midianites, as descended from Medan, one of Abraham's sons by Keturah, and brother to Midian, Gen. xxv. 2. But as they and the Midianites lived near together in Arabia, not far from the Ishmaelites, they all joined together in this caravan, and one society of merchants, as it is the custom even to this day, in those eastern countries, for merchants and others to travel through the deserts in large companies, for fear of wild beasts or robbers ; *Patrick's Commentary* ; and *Pool's Annotations*.

† In one and the same verse it is said, that *they sent the coat of many colours, and they brought it to their father* : But this seeming solecism is easily resolved, only by saying, that *they sent it* by the hands of persons who *brought it to their father* ; or that they *sent it* by a messenger, as being afraid to be present at the first gust of their father's passion, and afterwards

they had found it in the field, and were fearful that it was their brother. Their father soon perceived whose coat it was; and supposing that some wild beast or other had slain his son, † he rent his cloaths, and put on sackcloth, and began to mourn for his death. In vain did the rest of his children endeavour to comfort him; his grief would admit of no remedy; his resolution was to lament his loss to the hour of his death: nor did he ever cease this disconsolate way of life, until he was told the surprising news of Joseph's advancement in Egypt.

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From the time that Joseph had admission into Potiphar's family, he shewed such diligence and fidelity, and proved so successful in every thing he undertook, that his

wards *brought* or *produced* it, when one of them (as Judah is supposed to have been their spokesman) related the tale which follows, by which artifice they seemed to give themselves an air of compassion, since it was no uncommon thing afterwards (as in the case of Julius Cæsar, and Julia, his daughter, the wife of Pompey), on mournful occasions, to produce such affecting relics, and remains; *Bibliotheca Bibl.*

† Renting the cloaths was an eastern way of expressing either grief for calamity, or horror for sin. Reuben was the first we read of, who, to denote, his exceeding sorrow, rent his cloaths; and as Jacob we find does the like, we may well suppose that it was an usual manner of expressing all grief and uneasiness of mind in those days; and, by putting on sackcloth, (which Jacob is here the first precedent of doing, but was afterwards commonly used upon all mournful occasions), he seemed to signify, that since he had lost his beloved son, he looked upon himself as reduced to the meanest and lowest condition of life; *Bibliotheca Bibl.* and *Howell's History*.

† Jacob expresses his sorrow in these words, — *I will go down unto the grave unto my son*. But if by the grave we are here to understand a place of sepulture, how could Jacob say, that he would go down thither to his son, when he presumes here, that he was not buried, but torn to pieces by wild beasts. to solve this difficulty, some imagine, that the particle *El* should not, in this place, be rendered *to*, but (as it sometimes means *for*, or *in the stead of*); and so the sense is, *I will go down to the grave, INSTEAD OF my son*, who (unhappy child as he was) had no burial: But since the word *Scholab*, in Greek *σκολαβ*, in Latin *infernum*, signifies very frequently *the state of the dead in general*, the much clearer sense of the words will be, — *I will not cease mourning until I die; and be laid in my grave*; *Le Clerc's Commentary*.

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Is tempted  
and accus-  
ed by Po-  
tiphar's  
wife.

master soon took notice of him, and, in some time, having made him his steward, † put all his affairs, under his management.

In this condition Joseph might have lived very happy; had it not been for an adventure of a nature somewhat singular. He was now in the † bloom of his youth, and of a beauty and comeliness so extraordinary, that his master's wife could not forbear conceiving an irregular passion for him. Upon several occasions, she had given him indications enough of her ardent desire to draw him into a wanton familiarity with her, but he was blind to her signs, and deaf to her soft speeches; so that she was at last resolved to break through the rules of her sex, and court him in plain terms. But how great was her sur-

† The words in the text are, *he knew not aught he had, save the bread which he did eat*; which is one of the highest expressions of confidence that we can imagine: For it signifies, that he was utterly careless about any thing that concerned his estate, not minding what his expence or receipts were; by taking his ease, left all to Joseph's honesty. In short, he thought of nothing, but only to enjoy what he had, without care or trouble; *Patrick's Commentary*.

† Joseph, at this time, was about seven and twenty years old. For he was seventeen when he was sold to Potiphar, Gen. xxxvii. 1. and he was committed to prison immediately upon his non-compliance with his mistress's temptation; where, (as far as it appears), he had not been long, before he interpreted the dreams of the two disgraced courtiers; and two years after that, he was released and promoted, viz. when he was thirty years old: So that we may reasonably conclude, that his temptation beset him about three years before his releasement, i. e. in the twenty-seventh year of his age. At this time, it is supposable, that he was a comely person enough, and the saying is, that *bonesta forma muta commendatio est*; but the stories relating to his excessive beauty, as they are recorded by the Talmudists, are ridiculous, and not much better than what Mahomet, in his history of the patriarch, tells us, viz. That his mistress having invited the ladies of the town to a splendid entertainment, ordered Joseph to be called for, but that, as soon as he appeared, they were amazed at his beauty, and so confounded, that they knew not what they did, but instead of eating their meat, they eat their fingets, and said among themselves, *This is not a man, but an angel*; *Bibliotheca Bibl. in locum*; and *Alchoran, chap. of Joseph*.

prise,

prize, when, instead of a ready compliance, as she probably expected, she found herself not only denied, but severely reprimanded likewise for her disloyal passion! Being willing however to hope that another opportunity would prove more favourable, after several fruitless attempts, she, at last, laid hold on one, when all the family was abroad, and \* accosted him in so violent and passionate a manner, that she would not hear any farther denial. In vain it was for him \* to expostulate the heinousness

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\* Josephus tells us, that Potiphar's wife took the opportunity of a certain festival, when all the people were gone a merrymaking, to tempt Joseph; that feigning herself sick, she decoyed him, by that means, into her apartment, and then addressed herself to him in words to this effect. "It had been much better for you," says she, "had you complied with my first request; if for no other consideration, in regard at least to the dignity of the person who is become your petitioner, and to the excess of my passion. Besides it would have saved me the shame of condescending to some words and expressions, which I am still out of countenance, when I think of — You might perhaps make some doubt before, whether I was in earnest; but this is to satisfy you, that I mean no ill by my persisting in the same mind. Take therefore your choice now, whether you will improve this opportunity of present satisfaction, in the embraces of a creature that loves you dearly, and from whom you may expect still greater things, or stand the shock of my hatred and revenge, if you will presume to value yourself upon the vain conceit of your chastity, more than my favour," &c.; *Antiq. l. 2. c. 4.*

\* Josephus, however, brings in his name-fake expostulating the matter with his mistress, and reminding her of her duty to herself, and her husband, to piety, and common fame. "What signifies," says he, "a momentary pleasure, with a certain repentance immediately to ensue; and heaviness of heart for a thing once done, and an utter impossibility of recalling and undoing it, together with perpetual fears of discovery and disgrace? What does all this signify, I say, in balance of the most substantial comforts, and the most necessary duties of human life? Whereas in a conjugal state, the same delights are all free, safe, innocent, and warrantable, both before God and man. Consider again how it would lessen your authority, to make your servant your equal by a shameful participation in one common crime; and pray is it not better to trust to a good conscience, that fears no

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nousness of the crime: Her appetite was eager, and impatient; and therefore she caught him by the cloak, and pressed him to lie with her; and he having no other way to escape, left his cloak in her hand, and fled.

Whether it was that she feared, by his manner and behaviour, that he might accuse her to her husband, or that she was enraged at the slight put upon her proffered love; but so it was, that she resolved his immediate ruin: And accordingly she began with \* setting up a most horrid outcry, which immediately brought in all that were within hearing, and then shewing them Joseph's cloak, (which she pretended he put off in order to lie with her), she told them, that he had made so furious an attempt upon her virtue, that nothing but her loud cries could have saved her.

By the time that her husband came home, \* she had dressed up her story so well, and expressed the pretended indignity

“light, than to commit wickedness in the dark, and then  
“live all your days in a restless dread of being detected?” &c.  
*Antiq. ibid.*

\* There is something not unlike this revengeful artifice in Potiphar's wife, in the representation which the poet makes of Phædra, when, in an affair of the like nature, she finds herself rejected by her son in-law Hyppolitus.

*Regeramus ipsæ crimen, atque ultro impiam*

*Venerem arguamus, &c.*

*Adeste, Athenæ, fida famulorum manus,*

*Fer opem, &c.*

————— *En præceps abiit,  
Ensemque trepida liquit attonitus fuga,  
Pignus tenemus sceleris, &c.*

*Senec. Hip.*

\* Upon Potiphar's coming home, Josephus makes his wife break out into these words. “You'll never deserve to live, husband, unless you make an example of that perfidious wretch, your man. He has forgotten what he was, when you took him into your house, how kindly and respectfully he has been treated here, to a degree beyond his very hope, as well as his desert. The charge of your whole family is committed to him, the command of the rest of your servants, and the trust of all you have. What will you think of this fellow now, who, in requital of all your bounty, and good offices, could have the impudence to attempt the violation of your bed, and to take the opportunity of this festival day, when you were out of the way, to break in upon my privacy,

indignity put upon her with such an air of resentment, that her credulous husband, little suspecting his wife's treachery, was so prepossessed with the circumstance of the cloak, that, without any farther inquiry, † he hurried poor Joseph away, and clapped him up in the King's prison : Where we shall leave him for a while, to take a view of what passed in his father's family.

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Thamar's  
stratagem  
against her  
father-in-  
law, Judah.

† Before the time that Joseph was sold into Egypt  
Judah,

“ vacy, and press the enjoyment of his beastly ends. You have  
“ made him, in effect, master of all things under your roof;  
“ and would nothing serve him, but he must have your wife  
“ likewise? Here's the ungrateful villain's cloak, which, in  
“ his fright, he left behind him, when I cried out, as he was  
“ going to force me.” *Antiq. l. 2 c. 4.*

† It is somewhat wonderful, that if Potiphar believed his wife's story, he did not immediately put him to death; but there is one thing which might check the violence of his passion, and that was, the great opinion he had, for some time, been confirmed in, of Joseph's virtue and integrity: Joseph, he saw, was young and beautiful, and therefore he might think it a thing not impossible for a lady of distinction to be in love with him, and upon a disappointment to be exasperated: As therefore he would not inflict any capital or corporeal punishment on him, so he thought it prudent to hurry him away to prison unheard, lest, being allowed to speak in his own vindication, he might clear himself, and thereby bring discredit upon his family. It must not be denied however, (what St. Chrysostom has observed), that here again was a special, and, as it were, a miraculous intervention of the divine power, which preserved his life, as it did before, when he was cast into the pit. The superior influence which softened the heart of Reuben, restrained the hand of Potiphar, in order to make our patriarch a more glorious example, and to complete these events in the course of his life, which God had predetermined and foretold; *Chryf. Hom. in locum.*

† Though the latter part of Judah's story, relating to the incest with his daughter Thamar, was acted after Joseph was sold, and while he was in Egypt; yet the former part of it, relating to his marriage, and the birth of his three sons, must needs fall out before Joseph was sold. For since there were but two and twenty years between Joseph's being sold into Egypt, and Jacob's going down thither, it could no ways be, that in so short a space of time, Judah could marry a wife, have three sons at three several times by her; marry two of her sons successively to one woman; defer the marriage of the third son to

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Judah, his father's son by Leah, had married a † Canaanish woman named *Shuah*, by whom he had three sons, Er, Onan, and Shelah. Er being cut off for his wickedness, before he had any children by his wife Tamar, Judah ordered his second son Onan, (according to the custom of the country) to marry her, † and to raise a posterity to his brother. Onan seemingly obeyed his father, but not brooking the thought that any of his children should inherit his brother's name who was dead, he took such a wicked and unnatural way to prevent having any, that God was provoked to punish him with sudden death likewise. His third son Shelah was not yet

the same woman, beyond the due time; afterwards himself have sons by the same woman his daughter-in-law; and one of these sons, Pharez, beget two sons, Hezron and Hamul, Gen. xlv. 12. It can no ways be, I say, that all these transactions should be comprised in so short a time. And therefore we must suppose, that the business of his being married, and having children, was prior to Joseph's being sold; but that Moses, not willing to intermingle the story of the two brothers too much, brings all he had to say concerning Judah into the compass of one chapter, and so concludes his adventures, before he proceeds to those of Joseph; *Howell's History*, l. 1.; *Universal History*, l. 1. c. 7.; and *Bibliotheca Bib. in locum*.

† It was not so bad for a man circumcised to marry the daughter of one uncircumcised, as it was for an Israelite to give a daughter in marriage to an uncircumcised husband, Gen. xxxiv. 14. For an uncircumcised man was accounted unclean, though he had renounced idolatry; but a woman, born of uncircumcised parents, if she embraced the worship of the true God, was not so accounted. And such an one we may suppose Judah's wife to have been; otherwise he had offended his father, as much as Esau did Isaac, by marrying the daughter of Heth; *Patrick's Commentary*.

† This is the first mention we have of this custom, which nevertheless seems to have been a very common one, and well understood even by young Onan; for he knew that the first-born child was not to be accounted his, but his deceased brother's, was to be called by his name, and inherit his estate. For this, say the Hebrew doctors, was an ancient custom in force before the law of Moses, that when a man died without issue, his brother should marry his wife, and that the first son upon such marriage, was to be reputed her deceased husband's heir; *Patrick's*, and *Le Clerc's Commentary*.



fit for marriage; and therefore Judah desired his daughter-in-law to retire to her father's house, and there live a widow, until he became adult, and then he would make him her husband. Thamar did so, and waited till Shelah was come to man's estate; but finding no performance of Judah's promise, (as indeed he never heartily intended any), she was resolved to make herself amends some other way, which she did by the following stratagem.

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the end.

Judah had lately buried his wife; and as soon as the usual days of mourning were over, he took a particular friend with him, and went to Timnah, to divert himself a little at the shearing-feast. Thamar had intelligence of this; and therefore, putting off her widow's weed, and dressing herself like a courtesan, she threw a veil over her face, and planted herself between two ways, where she knew her father-in-law, in his way to Timnah, was obliged to pass.

Judah no sooner saw her, but taking her to be what she appeared, he began to make his addresses to her. What she insisted on was only a reward for her compliance, which he readily agreed to, and promised to send her a kid: But she having a farther design upon him, demanded a pledge for the performance of his promise, which was his signet, his bracelet, and his staff; and so being agreed, they went together, had their enjoyment, and she proved with child.

Judah, according to his promise, sent by his friend Hirah (for that was his name) a kid to redeem his pledge; but when Hirah came to the place, the woman was gone. nor could he find, upon his best inquiry, that any such person, as he described, had ever been there: so that Judah, when he told him his ill success, thought it the wisest way to let her go off with the pledges, rather than run the hazard of his reputation, by making any farther search.

About three months after this, word was brought him, that his daughter-in-law had played the harlot, and was certainly with child. Judah, though glad perhaps at the news, because her death would free him from the promise of giving his son Shelah to her, pretended, however, to be highly enraged at her incontinency, and ordering her to be brought forth, † condemned her to be burnt, according to

† Among eastern nations, as well as elsewhere, women, who were guilty of adultery, were more severely punished than the

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the end.

to the laws of the country. Tamar, instead of being surprised at this dreadful sentence pronounced against her, only sent the pledges to Judah, with this message, That the owner of these things was the person by whom she was with child : whereupon, struck with confusion, and reflecting on the injury he had done her, in with-holding his son, he acknowledged her † less culpable in the whole

the men: whether it was, that the injury done the husband was reputed to be more hainous, or that the men, having the power of making laws, took care to enact them in favour of themselves. Thus God is said, *for the hardness of their hearts*, to have indulged the Jews in the matter of divorcing their wives; but the wives had not the like privilege over their husbands. In many places a man might have as many wives as he could maintain; but the women were to be content with one husband : and in like manner, here Judah, we find, condemns Tamar, tho' a widow, for her crime, to be burnt; whilst himself, in the same state of widowhood, thought fornication a very pardonable crime. It is questioned, however, by what right and authority he could pass his sentence upon her : and to answer this, it is supposed, that every master was judge and chief magistrate in his own family; and that therefore Tamar, though she was a Canaanite, yet being married into Judah's family, and having brought disgrace upon it, was properly under his cognizance. His cognizance, however, (according to the opinion of some), did not extend so far as to have her burnt at the stake, (as we call it), but only branded in the forehead for a whore; though others deny, that his authority extended even so far : for being in a strange place, it can hardly be thought, that the power of life and death, or indeed of any other penalty, was lodged in him: and therefore they think, that the words mean no more than this, — That she should be brought before a court of judicature, and sentenced according to the laws of the country; *Selden De jure nat. l. 7. c. 5. ; Le Clerc's and Patrick's Commentary; Howell's, and Universal History.*

† The words in the text are, *She hath been more righteous than I*: not more virtuous or chaste, for she knowingly committed adultery and incest, when he designedly did neither; but more just, in that he, by with-holding Shelah from her, had provoked her to lay this trap for him. So that, tho' Tamar was wicked in the sight of God, yet she may be said to be juster before Judah, or to have done no more in drawing him into this scrape, than what he justly deserved; *Pool's Annotations.*

affair than himself, and from that moment, took her home to his house; but had never any more communion with her.

When the time of her delivery was come, she was brought to bed of twins, but the manner of their birth was somewhat surprising: For though one of them put forth his hand, about which the midwife tied a scarlet thread, to distinguish him for the first-born; yet, as he withdrew it, his brother got before him, and so came first into the world; which occasioned his name to be *Phares*, i. e. one breaking forth, as the other with the thread on his hand was called *Zarah*.

To return to Joseph. He had not been long in prison, before his virtuous and obliging deportment gained him the favour of the keeper, inasmuch that he was intrusted with the management of the affairs belonging to the prison, and with the custody of the prisoners themselves.

At this time there were two persons of note, the king's cup-bearer, and his chief baker, for some offence or other, committed to the same prison where Joseph was, and by the head keeper, intrusted to his care and attendance. To this purpose, Joseph coming to their apartment one morning, and finding them both pensive and melancholy upon the account of a dream which each of them had had the night before, and under more concern still, because, in that place, they could have no person to interpret for them; to allay their superstitious humour in trusting to diviners and soothsayers, he told them, in the first place, that the interpretation of dreams did not depend upon rules of art, but if there were any certainty in it, must proceed from a divine inspiration, and then desired to know what it was that they dreamt.

The cup-bearer began, and told him,——That in his sleep he fancied he saw a vine, with three branches, which all on a sudden budded, then blossomed, and so bore ripe grapes; and that he had in his hand the king's cup, into which having squeezed the juice of the grapes, he gave it to the king, and the king drank it from his hand as usual. To this Joseph replied, That as the three branches denoted three days, it would not exceed the compass of that time, before the king †, having made an inquiry into the conduct

† The expression which Joseph here makes use of concerning the king's cup-bearer and baker, *Pharaoh shall lift up thy head*,

A. M.  
2276, &c.  
Ant. Chris.  
1728, &c.  
from Gen.  
xxxvii. to  
the end.

duct of his servants, would restore him to his favour, and his post again. Only he desired, that if his interpretation proved true, he would, in his prosperity †, be pleased to remember him, and to recommend his case to the king; since the truth was, that he had been fraudulently taken † from

*head*, seems somewhat too literally translated, since the words in the original mean no more, than that Pharaoh would have them brought forth and examined. The ancients, we are to know, in keeping their reckonings or accounts of time, or their list of domestic officers or servants, made use of tables with holes bored in them, in which they put a sort of pegs or nails, with broad heads, exhibiting the particulars, either number or name, or whatever it was. These nails or pegs the Jews call *heads*, and the sockets of the heads they call *bases*. The meaning therefore of *Pharaoh's lifting his head*, is, that Pharaoh would take out the peg, which had the cup-bearer's name on the top of it, to read it; *i. e.* would sit in judgment, and make examination into his accounts. For it seems very probable, that both he, and the baker, had been either suspected or accused of having cheated the king, and that when their accounts were examined and cast up, the one was acquitted, while the other was found guilty. And though Joseph uses the same expression in both cases, yet we may observe, that, speaking to the baker, he adds, that *Pharaoh shall lift up thy head from off thee*, *i. e.* shall order thy name to be struck out of the list of his servants, by taking the peg out of the socket; *Bibliotheca Bib. in locum.*

† There is nothing of a distrust of God's goodness, justice, or power, in making use of human means. The release of the king's cup-bearer appeared to Joseph to be a good opportunity, pointed out by providence, for him to lay hold on, and he would have been wanting to his own preservation, had he not employed it. Though therefore it may be thought, that his asking this court officer to represent his case to the king, might be in reward of compensation for his prediction; yet even herein he may be justified by apostolical authority, which in cases of this nature instructs, (1 Cor. ix. 4. and Gal. vi. 6.), that temporal advantages may very lawfully be both asked, and received. In the cup-bearer's not remembering him however, we may observe something that seems providentially to have turned to his advantage, since, had he been discharged before Pharaoh's dream, he might many ways have missed of that prodigious favour and advancement, which, by this means, he attained; *Bibliotheca Bib. in locum.*

† The words in the text are, *from the land of the Hebrews*, which some men suppose were added by Joshua, or some other writer,

from his own country, and cast into prison without any fault or offence of his.

† Hearing so happy an interpretation of this dream, the baker was the readier to propose his, which was to this effect. — That while, as he thought, he had on his head three wicker-baskets, in the uppermost of which were several kinds of baked meats for the king's table, the birds came and eat them out of the basket. To which Joseph immediately replied, that the three baskets (even as the three branches had done) signified three days; but that, in the space of that time, the king having made scrutiny into his behaviour, and found him guilty, would order him to be hanged upon a gibbet, for the fowls of the air to devour his flesh. And as Joseph foretold, so it came to pass: For three days after this, the cup-bearer was restored, and the baker was hanged. The cup-bearer, however, when himself had got into prosperity again, thought little of Joseph, till, in about two years after this, an accident happened which forced him in a manner to call him to remembrance.

The king his master had, in one night, two very portentous dreams, which gave him the more uneasiness,

A. M.  
2276, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1728, &c.  
from Gen.  
xxxvii. to  
the end.  
Of his chief  
baker,

and those of the king himself.  
writer, after the death of Moses; because, in Moses days, and much less in Joseph's, Canaan was not known by that name. It is not the whole land of Canaan, however, that Joseph here means, but only that part of it which lay about Hebron, where Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, had for a long while lived; Gen. xxii. 1, 2. xxxv. 27. xxxvii. 14. It is said, indeed, that they were strangers and sojourners in the country; but then they were strangers of great note and high renown, who were treated as princes, lived by their own laws, and made leagues not only with private men, but with cities, and with kings; Gen. xxiii. 6. xxi. 22. xxvi. 28. xxxiv. 6.; the fame of whose deeds could not but be spread abroad, both by the victory which Abraham got in a battle over several kings, and by the sack of Shechem, which their neighbours durst not revenge; all which might very well make that part of the country wherein they, for three generations, had resided, not improperly be called *the land of the Hebrews*; Patrick's Commentary.

† As flush as the chief baker was with hopes, there is this obvious difference between his and the cup-bearer's preface, viz. that he was not an agent, but a sufferer in his dream; for he did not give a cake or a confection to the king, as the other did the cup, but the fowls of the air descended upon his basket, and fled off with the dainties that were in it; *Patrick's Commentary*.

A. M.  
2276, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1728, &c.  
from Gen.  
xxxvii. to  
the end.

because none of the \* Egyptian Magi could give him the least light into their meaning. Seeing the king therefore in this perplexity, the cup-bearer could not forbear telling him,——That while he and the chief baker were under his Majesty's displeasure in prison, each of them, in the same night, had a dream, which a young man, an Hebrew, then in prison with them, interpreted exactly, and as the event happened; and that, in his opinion, he had a talent that way much superior to any that had hitherto been consulted.

Pleased with this discovery, and eager to have his dream explained, the king gave orders immediately for Joseph to be sent for; who, after he had shaved, and dressed himself, was introduced into his presence, where he had not been long, before the king related his dream to him, viz. “That as he was walking on the banks of the river “Nile,” as he thought, “he saw seven fat kine, which “fed in the meadows. And, soon after that, seven others, “exceeding lean, and frightful to behold, which came “and eat up the fat ones, and yet looked not a bit the “better; and that after this, he dreamt again, and fancied that he saw seven full ears of corn, proceeding all

\* The Chaldeans of old were the most famous people in the world for divination of all kinds; and therefore it is very probable, that the word *Hhartoumin*, which we reader *magicians*, is not of Hebrew, but Chaldee origin. The roots, however, from whence it springs (if it be a compound word, as probably it is) are not so visible; and therefore commentators are perplexed to know by what method men of this profession proceeded in their enquiry into secret things; whether they pretended to expound dreams, and descry future events, by natural observations, by the art of astrology, (which came much in request in future ages), by such rules as are now found in the books of Oneirocritics; or by certain characters, images, pictures, and figures, which were engraved with magical rites and ceremonies. It is not to be doubted indeed, but that the magicians, whom Pharaoh consulted for the interpretation of his dreams, made use of some at least, if not all these arts; and the Jewish doctors would make us believe, that after several attempts of divers kinds, they came at last to this exposition, that Pharaoh's daughters (for they suppose him to have seven) should die, and that he should have seven others born to him in their stead; but this being not at all satisfactory to their master, put the cup-bearer in mind of Joseph's great abilities that way; *Le Clerc's* and *Patrick's Commentary*.

“ from

" from the same stalk, which were in like manner devour-  
 " ed by seven others, that were blasted and withered."

A. M.  
 2276, &c.  
 Ant. Christ.  
 1728, &c.  
 from Gen.  
 xxxvii. to  
 the end.

As soon as the king had ended, Joseph giving him first to understand, that it was † by the assistance of God alone that he was enabled to be an interpreter of dreams, told him, that the seven kine, and seven ears of corn, signified the same thing, and the repetition of the dream only denoted the certainty of the event; that therefore as the lean kine seemed to eat up the fat, and the withered ears to consume the full and flourishing; so, after seven years of great plenty, other seven years of extreme famine should succeed, which would lay waste all the country, and leave no signs of the former plenty: and therefore, since it had pleased God thus to inform the king what seasons he intended to bring upon the earth, he hoped he would make a right use of the information, by appointing a wise and prudent man over his whole kingdom, who should take care to build granaries, and appoint officers under him in every province, who should collect and lay up † a fifth

† The words, wherein Joseph prefaces his interpretation of Pharaoh's dreams, are much of the same kind with what we find Daniel addressing Nebuchadnezzar upon the like occasion: *The secret, which the king hath demanded, cannot the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, the soothsayers, shew unto the king; but there is a God in heaven, who revealeth secrets, and maketh known unto the king what shall be in the latter days*: Dan. ii. 27, 28. Both these holy men insinuate, that the interests of princes are more especially the care of divine providence, and that therefore, for their admonition, he frequently sends dreams and visions upon them. And this declaration, previous to the exposition, was perfectly proper, and of mighty force to bespeak the king's attention and regard, at the same time that Joseph was asserting the being and interposition of Almighty God, in the guidance of human affairs; *Le Clerc's Commentary*, and *Bibliotheca Bib. in locum*.

† Since there were to be as many years of scarceness, as of plenty, some have made it a question, why Joseph advised no more than a fifth part of the corn, in plentiful years, to be laid up: but to this it may be replied, that the greater and richer sort were used, in time of plenty, to fill their store-houses with provision against a scarcer year, which sometimes happened; that in the times of famine, men were wont to live more frugally and parsimoniously, as the Egyptians at this time, according to Josephus, were obliged to do by Pharaoh's

A. M.  
2276, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1728, &c.  
from Gen.  
xxxviii. to  
the end.

Whereupon  
he is made  
viceroy or  
primeminister.

a fifth part of each plentiful year's product, against the succeeding years of famine.

† This interpretation, and the good advice given upon it, made the king conceive so great an opinion of Joseph's wisdom, that he thought no one could be so fit to manage the office of collecting the corn in the years of plenty as he, who had suggested a scheme so very beneficial. He therefore, in a short time, made him his deputy over the land of Egypt, and to that purpose invested him with the usual ensigns of that station. Gave him his own signet from off his finger, caused him to be clothed in a robe of fine linen, and put a golden chain about his neck; ordered him to ride in a chariot next to his own; and, wherever he went, heralds to go before, and in token that the viceroy was coming, to proclaim to the people †,

how

special command; that even in the years of famine, tillage went on, and the harvest might be something, (though not mentioned by reason that the product was comparatively inconsiderable), especially in the lands lying near the Nile; and that as the tenth part was an ordinary tribute due to the kings of Egypt, in the years of extraordinary plenty (when the fifth was no more than the tenth in other years) Pharaoh might think it proper to double this charge, or (what is rather to be supposed from a good king and a good counsellor) to buy as much more as was his tribute, which he might do at an easy rate, when such a vast plenty made corn extremely cheap; *Patrick's Commentary*.

† Here we may observe again, that Joseph directs Pharaoh to look up to God, as the author of all these events, and that not in an ordinary, but extraordinary manner, since such fertility, and such famine, did not proceed from mere natural causes, but from an over-ruling providence, which made the river Nile overflow its banks so largely for seven years together, and so occasion a great plenty; and then, for the next seven years, overflow very little, if at all, and so produce a very fore and long famine. Nor can it be objected to Joseph, that he was guilty of presumption or boldness, in giving his advice to Pharaoh, concerning the provision that was to be made against the ensuing scarceness, since he was conscious to himself, that he was best able to give such advice, and would have been guilty of the sin of omission, had he neglected to do it, in so great and so general a concern; *Patrick's Commentary*; and *Bibliotheca Bibl. in locum*.

† Annotators are much at a loss to determine of what original the word *Abrech* is, some pretending that it is altogether Hebrew, while others make it a compound of Hebrew and Syriac, and others



*bow the knee.* Nor was this all : For to attach him still closer to his service, and make him forget the very thoughts of ever returning to his own country, † he changed his name

A. M.  
2276, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1728, &c.  
from Gen.  
xxxvii. to  
the end.

others contend, at the same time, that it is purely Egyptian. Those who pretend that it is Hebrew, besides the signification of *bowing the knee*, (which it very well bears) by dividing it into two words, make it import a *tender father*, and suppose that Joseph might very properly be called a *father*, in point of his consummate wisdom, and young or tender in regard to his years. Those who make it a mixture of Hebrew and Syriac, divide it, in like manner, into two words, and suppose that as *ab*, in the Hebrew, is *father*, so *raeb* or *rach*, in the Syrian tongue, is *king*, in the same sense that Joseph says of himself, and (perhaps with allusion to this very name), *God has made me a father unto Pharaoh*, Gen. xlv. 8. *i. e.* in giving him wholesome counsel, even as a father does his children : But those who contend for its being purely Egyptian, do freely confess, that at this distance of time, and under such obsolescence of that language, it is next to impossible to find out the genuine signification of an honorary term, (as this very probably was) ; and therefore they observe, that as the Jewish historian makes no mention of this circumstance in Joseph's story, he might be induced to that omission, by reason of his not understanding this word of exotic growth. In this uncertainty of opinions therefore, we have thought it the best way to follow that translation which some of the best Hebrew interpreters, the Septuagint, and vulgar versions, have approved ; *Heidegger's Hist. patriarch. vol. 2. exercit. 20.*

† It was an ancient custom among eastern princes, upon their promotion of any favourite, to give him a new name. Nebuchadnezzar, we read Dan. i. 7. imposed new names upon Daniel, and his companions in Babylon ; and, to this very day, the Mogul never advances a man, but he gives him a new name, and that significative of something belonging to him : But here the question is, what the meaning of the name which Pharaoh gave Joseph is ? In the Hebrew text it is *Zaphnath-paaneah*, but in the Egyptian and Greek Pentateuch, it is *Pson-thonphanech*. The oriental versions, however, are pretty unanimous in rendering it, a *revealer of secrets* ; but there are some reasons why this should not be its true interpretation. For the time when Pharaoh gave the patriarch this name, was when he advanced him from the condition of an imprisoned slave, to that of a *ruler throughout all the land of Egypt* ; and therefore it is reasonable to suppose, that he gave it in commemoration of such promotion, rather than of his expounding dreams ; because to have

A. M.  
2276, &c.  
Ant. Chrif.  
1728, &c.  
from Gen.  
xxxvii. to  
the end.

name to that of *Zaphnah-paaneah*, which fignifies a *prime minifter*, and matched him into a noble family, to *Afenah*, the daughter of † *Potipherah*, prieft or prince of *On*; by whom he had two fons, the former of which he called *Manaffe*, intimating, that God had made him forget all his toils; and the other *Ephraim*, becaufe he had made him fruitful in the land of his affliction.

In the mean time, *Joseph* being now about thirty years old, when he was raifed to this height of power, took a progrefs through the whole kingdom; built granaries, appointed proper officers in every place, and, in fhort, ordered all things with fuch prudence and application, that before the feven years of plenty were expired, he had amaffed together an immense quantity of corn, enough to fupply both *Egypt* and the neighbouring country; fo that when the years of famine came on, and the people applied themfelves to *Pharaoh*, he remitted them to *Joseph*, who, when he faw it fit, opened his ftores, and fold provifion to all that came.

His wife  
manage-  
ment,

In the fecond year of the famine, *Jacob*, who was not exempt from the common calamity, hearing that there was corn to be bought in *Egypt*, fent ten of his fons thither to buy fome; who, upon their arrival, were directed to apply to *Joseph* for an order, and, as foon as they faw him,

have called him an *interpreter of dreams* only, had been degrading him to the level of magicians. Now if *Pharaoh* gave him this name in memory of his promotion, it is very likely, that this name was ftrictly and properly *Egyptian*, (otherwife the common people could not have underftood it), though *Mofes*, in his recording it, might endeavour to accommodate it to the *Hebrew* idiom; and if it was *Egyptian*, the word in that language fignifies what we call a *prime minifter*; or ftrictly the *first*, or *prince of the Lords*; *Bibliotheca Bibl. occaf. annot.* 41.

† The reader muft remember not to confound this name with *Potiphar*, who bought *Joseph* of the *Iſhmaelites*, becaufe their names in *Hebrew* are not differently written. The one, however, is called the *captain of the guards*, the other the *prince or prieft of On*; fo that the former muft have had his refidence in the capital, to be always about the king; but the latter lived at *On* or *Heliopolis*, about twenty miles diftant from *Memphis*, the metropolis of the kingdom: Nor can we fuppofe that *Joseph* would ever have married his mafter's daughter, left ſhe ſhould have proved not unlike her mother, for whoſe incontinence he had fo feverely ſmarted; *Universal Hiſtory*, l. 1. c. 7.

proſtrated

prostrated themselves before him, and begged that they might be supplied with corn. A. M. 2276, &c. Ant. Chris. 1728, &c. from Gen. xxxvii. to the end.

Joseph, at first sight, knew his brethren, but being minded to terrify them a little, would not, as yet, discover himself to them; and therefore, chusing to speak by an interpreter, with a severe look and angry tone, he asked them whence they came, and upon their answering, from the land of Canaan, he charged them with being \* spies, who were come to discover the weakness of the country. To which they replying, that they came with no other intent, than merely to buy corn for their numerous family, being all the † sons of one man, who once indeed had twelve, but that the youngest was left at home, and the next to him was dead; he immediately caught at their words, and put their honesty upon this probation:—That, since, as they said, they had a younger brother, some one of them should be dispatched to bring him, whilst the rest were kept in custody; otherwise he should look upon them, (and there he spake with a seeming earnestness), as no other than spies and enemies; and so ordered them all to prison, until they should come to a resolution.

After three days confinement, however, he sent for them again, and then, with a milder air, told them that as himself feared God, and was willing to act justly by them, he was loath that their family should want provision, or

\* These words, *Ye are spies*, are not to be looked upon as a lie, because they are not spoken by way of affirmation, but of probation only, in the manner that judges speak, when they examine suspected persons, or inquire into a crime, of which men are accused; and have therefore the force of an interrogation, *Are ye not spies?* or I must take you to be such, until you prove the contrary. This, though it was but a pretensive charge of Joseph, had yet the better colour, because Egypt was defenceless, and liable to incursions only on that side from whence his brethren came; for what with the interposition of large deserts, and shallow seas, it was pretty well secured on all other quarters; *Le Clerc's*, and *Patrick's Commentaries in locum*.

† By this they suggested the impossibility of their being spies, since no man, in his wits, would send so many, and all his own sons, upon so dangerous and capital an enterprise: nor was it probable that one man could have a design upon Egypt, but all the great men in Canaan must have joined in it, and then they would have sent men of different families, and not all of one family; *Patrick's Commentary*.

that

A. M.  
2276, *Sc.*  
Ant. Chris.  
1728, *Sc.*  
from Gen.  
xxvii. to  
the end.

that they themselves should suffer, if innocent ; he therefore propounded this expedient to them :—“ That one of them should be confined as an hostage for the rest, while they returned with corn for the family ; and that, when they came again, and brought their youngest brother with them, the confined should be released, and all of them reputed honest men.”

For persons in their circumstances there was no expulating with one who had them at his mercy ; and therefore they consented to do whatever he required. But in the interpreter's absence, they supposing that no one else understood their language, began to bewail their unrelenting cruelty to poor Joseph, and to condemn themselves severely for it ; while Reuben (who was not so culpable in the matter) put them in mind, that all this mischief might have been prevented, had they listened to his counsel, and not acted so inhumanly to their innocent brother, for whose sake, it was no more than what they might expect, that vengeance, at one time or other, would certainly overtake them.

Their discourse, in short, was so very dolorous and affecting, that Joseph could no longer contain himself, and was therefore forced to withdraw a little, to give his tears vent, and then coming in again, commanded † Simeon to be bound, and sent to prison : But setting the rest at liberty, he ordered the officer who distributed the corn, to supply them with what they wanted, and at the same time

† It may be supposed perhaps, that because Reuben was the eldest, he, upon this occasion, had been the properest hostage : But Reuben, we may observe, had shewed himself averse to those lengths of wickedness and inhumanity, (in which most of the other brothers were agreed) against Joseph. Reuben, in short, resolved to save him ; and as Judah was inclined to favour him, had Simeon joined with them, their authority might have prevailed for his deliverance : but Simeon was the person who was most exasperated against him. He was the eldest of those who had proposed to murder him, and was therefore a fit proxy for the rest ; the man (as the Hebrews say) who put Joseph in the pit, and was now very justly to be served in his kind : Though they who tell us this have a tradition, that as soon as his brothers were gone, Joseph had him unbound, and ordered him what provisions and conveniencies he pleased, during his confinement ; *Patrick's Commentary*, and *Bibliotheca Bibl. in locum*.

(as

(as a fresh matter for their surprise) † to put each man's money into the mouth of his sack. His orders were accordingly obeyed: And therefore, when they came to bait, and to give their beasts provender †, they were not a little frightened to find their money returned; nor failed they to make all the dismal reflections hereupon that their fears could suggest, concluding that the haughty viceroy had done this, that he might have a pretence to make them his slaves, at their next coming down.

As soon as they were got home, they acquainted their father with all these adventures; they told him the treatment they had received from the king's prime minister, and how he suspected them of being spies, of which they had no way to clear themselves, but by leaving Simeon bound in prison, as a pledge, till they should bring Benjamin, to show that what they told him of their family was true. These were sad tidings indeed, and what made their poor afflicted father break out into this melancholy complaint, "That one way or other, him they had deprived  
" of his children; that Joseph was dead, Simeon was left  
" in Egypt, and now they were going to take Benjamin  
" from him likewise, which were things too heavy for him  
" to bear."

A. M.  
2276, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1728, &c.  
from Gen.  
xxxvii. to  
the end.

Their account to their father Jacob, when they got home.

† This Joseph might do, without defrauding Pharaoh; for he might either supply them out of that stock of provisions which belonged properly to himself, or if the provisions were the king's, he might pay for them out of his own purse. Nor is there any occasion to conceive, that a person so entirely in favour and confidence with his prince, as Joseph was, had his hands tied up from disposing, at his own discretion and pleasure, of so small a boon as this to his friends, for their relief and comfort; *Musculus.*

† If it should be made a question, why Joseph's brethren made use of their own stocks, and especially in a time of so great scarcity, in a publick inn? the answer is obvious—That the inns, or resting places, in those parts of the world, neither were, nor are as yet, such as we meet with in England, and some other parts of Europe. They afforded no accommodation of any kind, but barely house-room. The passengers who travelled in those countries, carried most, if not all of their provisions with them; nor did they make any other use of these public-houses, but only to repose themselves in, at the end of their stages; *Musculus.*

A. M.  
2276, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1728, &c.  
from Gen.  
xxxvii. to  
the end.

In vain it was for Reuben, in order to prevail with his father to comply, to offer (as he did) that if he did not return him safe, he might take his two sons, and kill them, if he pleased: The death of a grandson was no compensation for the loss of a child; and therefore, instead of assuaging, this did but augment his grief, and make him absolutely resolve not to trust Benjamin with them: for *his brother is dead, says he, and he is left alone; if any mischief should befall him by the way, then will ye bring my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave.*

In such debates as these they spent the time, till the famine every day increasing, and their stock of provision being well nigh gone, necessity put them in the thoughts of going down again into Egypt. This their father likewise reminded them of, but without taking any notice of their obligation to the viceroy to bring their younger brother with them; which when Judah suggested to him, and set before him with all the utter impossibility of their going into Egypt, without his complying with that condition, he began to complain again, that he thought himself hardly used in their telling the viceroy any thing of the state of his family, or that they had another brother; which Judah endeavoured to excuse, by assuring his father, that what was said upon that head, proceeded from the simplicity of their hearts, and in answer to the interrogatories which the viceroy put to them, without ever dreaming that he intended to make such a cruel handle of it; and then perceiving his father to waver a little in his resolution, † he reiterate

† In the text, the words wherein Judah delivers himself to his father, are these, ——— *If thou wilt send our brother with us, we will go down and buy thee food; but if thou wilt not send him, we will not go down,* Gen. xliii. 4. 5.; which, at first view, seem to have an air of undutifulness in them, but upon a nearer inspection, will admit of this apology, *vis.* That this was not the first proposal made to Jacob by his sons, to have Benjamin go with them into Egypt. Reuben had once before offered his two sons for pledges, and received a repulse. Upon Jacob's renewing his orders therefore for them to go, Judah only had courage to engage in this fresh remonstrance. He reminds his father, first of the solemnity and earnestness with which Joseph had pretended, that without Benjamin, *they should not see his face*: Then he offers to go very willingly in obedience to his father's command, but desires to insist upon the condition of Benjamin's going with them, as finally, indispensably,

reiterates the necessity of their going again, and presses him to consent, with this solemn promise, that at the hazard of his own life, he would take care and return him safe: (a) *Of my hand shalt thou require him*, says he: *If I bring him not unto thee, and set him before thee, then let me bear the blame for ever.* A. M. 2276, &c. Ant. Christ. 1728, &c. from Gen. xxxvii. to the end.

But it was not so much his sons importunity, as the necessity of affairs, which induced Jacob to comply; and therefore, perceiving that there was now no remedy, he delivered up Benjamin; but, before they departed, instructed them what to do, viz. to take a double quantity of money with them, for fear that there was some mistake made in the other that was returned, † and some such presents as the country afforded, and what they imagined would be most acceptable to the viceroy: And so having intreated heaven for their success, he sent them away, with an aching heart, but a resolved acquiescence in God's good providence, let the event be it what it would.

As soon as they arrived at Egypt, they went directly to the king's granaries, and presented themselves before Joseph, who seeing their brother Benjamin with them, gave orders to his steward to conduct them to his house, where he designed they should dine that day. Here again they began Joseph's treatment of them upon their second coming into Egypt.

sably, and absolutely necessary. For the words compared with those of Gen. xlv. 26. do plainly denote as much. *We will not go down*, i. e. it is impossible, impracticable, unallowable for us to go. For the future tense, according to the Hebrew idiom, will bear this signification; and consequently will acquit Judah from all suspicion of rebellion, or undutifulness towards his father; *Bibliotheca Bebl. on Gen. annot 45.*

(a) Gen. xliii. 9.

† The present which Jacob ordered his sons to carry down to Joseph, is thus particularised in our translation: *A little balm, a little honey, spices, and myrrh, nuts and almonds*; Gen. xliii. 11. But there is reason to suspect, that some of these are not the real things which the original words intend. Balm in deed, (which we may suppose was that of Gilead), was of great price all the world over, and a small quantity of it was a present worth acceptance; but unless the honey in Canaan was better than ordinary, there doubtless was no want of it in Egypt: And therefore it is much more likely, that this part of the present consisted of dates, since the Hebrew expresses both by the same name; and in Judea, especially about Jericho, (as both Josephus and Pliny tells us), there was great plenty of

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began to fear, lest this might be a contrivance against them upon account of the money which was returned in their sacks; and therefore, before they entered the house, they acquainted the steward with the whole affair; and, to demonstrate their honesty, told him, that besides the money which they found returned, they had brought more along with them, to buy a fresh quantity of provisions.

The steward, on the other hand, being let into the secret, and perceiving the concern they were in, bade them dismiss all uneasy apprehensions; told them, that what they found in their sacks they ought to look upon as a treasure sent them from heaven owned that he himself had fairly received their money; and gave them assurance, that they should never hear any more of it; and (that they might believe his words to be true) he went and brought Simeon unbound to them; acquainted them that they were to dine with his Lord that day; and shewed them, in the mean while, all the tokens of civility that were fitting for welcome guests.

Joseph was to return by noon, and therefore his brothers took care to have their present in readiness; and, when he was come, introduced it in the handsomest and most submissive manner they could. He received them all with a friendly countenance; inquired much concerning the health and welfare of their aged father; and then, turning to Benjamin, asked them, if he was the younger brother they had mentioned to him; and without staying for their answer, saluted him in these words, *God be gracious to thee, my son*. But finding his affections begin to work, and fearing lest he should discover himself too soon, he retired into his chamber, and there vented his passion in a flood of tears; which when he had done, he washed his face, and returned to the company, and ordered the dinner to be served up.

Three tables were spread in a large dining-room; one for himself alone, by reason of his dignity; another for his

them. The word *Nekoth*, which is rendered *species*, should rather signify *storax*, which is an aromatic gum, put into all re-cious spicy ointments: And the word *Loth*, which is translated *myrrh*, would come nearer the original, if it were called *luidam*. *Botnim*, which we read nuts, are what we call *pistachoes*, which were highly esteemed by the ancients as a delicious food and with these almonds perhaps might not improperly be joined together *Universal History*, and *Patrick's Commentary*.

Egyptian



Egyptian guests \*, who hate to eat with people of a different nation ; and a third for his brethren, who were amazed to find themselves placed in exact order, according to their seniority, and did not a little wonder what this unexpected civility might end in.

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Joseph, however, during the whole entertainment, behaved very courteously. From his own table † he sent dishes to every one of his brothers, but to Benjamin he sent five dishes for each of their one ; which was another mystery they could not unriddle ; however, for the present, they were very cheerful and merry.

After they had eat and drank very plentifully, they began to think of taking their leave, and of going about the affair for which they came : But Joseph had one fright more in reserve for them ; and therefore he ordered his steward, when he filled their sacks with corn, to return their money, (as he had done before), but into Benjamin's sack

\* The reason which some assign for the Egyptians refusing to eat with the Hebrews, was their sacrificing some creatures which the Egyptians worshipped : but though, in after ages, they certainly did worship several kinds of animals, yet there appears nothing from the story that they did so in Joseph's days ; for their worship of the famous ox, called *Apis*, was a much latter invention, as many learned men have demonstrated. It is much more likely therefore, that this great abhorrence should be resolved into their different manner, both of dressing and eating their victuals. No people, as Herodotus tells (even where he treats of their manner of feasting, *Euterpe*, c. 28.) were more tenacious of their old customs than the Egyptians. They would not use those of any other nation whatever ; and therefore the Hebrews were not the only people they had an aversion to. For (as the same historian informs us) an Egyptian man, or woman, would not kiss the mouth of a Greek : would not make use of a spit or a pot belonging to them ; nor eat any meat that was cut with one of their knives : *Patrick's*, and *Le Clerc's Commentary*.

† The manner of eating among the ancients was not for all the company to eat out of one and the same dish ; but for every one to have one or more dishes to himself. The whole of these dishes were set before the master of the feast, and he distributed to every one his portion. As Joseph however is here said to have had a table to himself, we may suppose, that he had a great variety of little dishes, or plates set before him ; and as it was a custom for great men to honour those who were in their favour, by sending such dishes to them as were first served

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sack, not only to put his money, but the silver-cup likewise, wherein he himself used to drink, and after they were gone a little way out of town, to go and overtake them, and charge them with felony.

The steward did as he was commanded : And when he came up with Joseph's brethren, upbraided them with ingratitude, in so badly requitting his Lord's civility, as to steal away his cup. Conscious of their own innocence, and disdainful of so vile a charge, they put the matter upon this short issue——That whoever, upon search, should be found to have the cup, should be given up to suffer death, and themselves become all his Lords bond slaves. So said, so done: the beasts were unloaded: the sacks were searched; and to their great astonishment and surprise, the cup was found in Benjamin's. To no purpose it was for the poor youth to say any thing in his own defence: Upon such a demonstration none would believe him: and yet being all concerned in the disgrace, they loaded their asses again, and in a mournful manner returned to the city.

Joseph was at home, expecting their return, and when they came before him, reprimanded them very sharply, while they lay prostrate at his feet, and † acknowledged their guilt; but in the conclusion of his speech, he assured them, that the person only who was detected in the theft should remain a slave: The rest might return home when they pleased to their father.

Judah, who had taken Benjamin under his care, being by this time recovered from his surprise, drew near, and addressed Joseph in the most submissive and pathetic terms. He acquainted him with the whole case between them and their father, in relation to their bringing Benjamin into Egypt, to take away the suspicion of their being spies.

served up to themselves. Joseph shewed that token of respect to his brethren: but to express a particular value for Benjamin, he sent him five dishes to their one, which disproportion could not but be marvellous and astonishing to them, if what Herodotus tells us be true, l. 6. c. 27. viz. "That the distinction in this case, even to Egyptian kings themselves, in all publick feasts and banquets, was no more than a double mess;" *Patrick's Commentary*; and *Bibliotheca Bibl.*

† Judah, in behalf of himself and his brethren, might very well have pleaded in defence, that they received their sacks from the officer, tied up as they were, without ever once opening them; and that the same hand which now, for these two times

spies. He described very passionately their father's melancholy condition for the loss of his son Joseph; the extreme fondness he had for his son Benjamin; the difficulty they were under to prevail with him to trust him with them, so that he himself was forced to become security for his safe return; and that, if he should go home without him, his father's life was so wrapt up in the child, that he would certainly die with grief. Rather therefore than see this grief of his aged father, and his grey hairs with sorrow descending to the grave, he offered himself an equivalent for his brother: (*b*) *Now, therefore, I beseech thee, my Lord, let me, thy servant, abide here a slave, instead of the lad, and let him go up with his brethren; for how shall I see my father without him?* This moving speech, and generous offer, were what Joseph's soul could not withstand; and therefore, being able to contain himself no longer, he ordered all the company to leave the room, that he might have a more affectionate freedom in discovering himself to his brethren.

But no sooner had he told them, that he was Joseph their brother, (which was all that his full heart would let him utter,) than, reflecting upon what they had once done to him, they were all struck with such a surprise and confusion, that for a long time they could make him no answer.

As soon however as he had recovered himself, he desired them to draw near unto him: he embraced them all round with an unfeigned tenderness; and to dispel all farther apprehensions, told them, that their selling him into Egypt was directed by an unforeseen providence; that therefore they had no reason to be angry with themselves for doing it, since they were no more than the instruments in God's hand to bring about what his eternal purpose had determined; that he had no reason to resent it, since by that means he had been advanced to the honour and dignity of being governor of all Egypt: nor his father, or any of his family to murmur at it, since God had appointed this method for times had returned their money, was the most likely to have conveyed the cup into them: but since there was a manifest juggle in the thing, he was fearful of irritating the governor, if he should go about to detect it; and therefore he thought that the best way for him and his brethren to escape, was to acknowledge the crime, though they were innocent of it, and (as if they had no perception of the trick that was put upon them) to implore his pity and compassion, by arguments taken from other topics; *Le Clerc's Commentary*.

(*b*) Gen. xlv. 33, 34.

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A. M.  
2276, &c.  
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the preservation of their lives. For five years more, he told them, there were to be of the famine; and therefore he bid them hasten into Canaan, and tell his father of all his glory and greatness, and desire him to come down, that he might take care of him, and feed him in this time of dearth, and provide him with a country, (even the land of Goshen) not far distant from him, and very commodious for such as led a pastoral life. All this, he owned, would be strange and surprising for them to tell; but their father would hardly doubt the testimony of so many eye-witnesses; above all, he would not fail to believe what his favourite Benjamin told him: and with that, he threw himself upon Benjamin's neck, kissed him, and wept over him for joy; and having treated all the rest in the same kind manner, and as a person that was perfectly reconciled to them, they began to take courage, and conversed more familiarly with him.

A rumour, in the mean time, was spread through the court, that Joseph's brethren were come to buy corn; which, when Pharaoh heard, he sent for him; and told him, that since his father's family was so numerous, and the famine as yet not half over, his best way would be to send for them, and place them in what part of the country he thought fit; for that they should never want provisions or any other favour that he could shew them. He put him in mind likewise to send them a fresh supply of corn, and whatever else he thought would be necessary in their journey, with chariots and waggons to bring down their wives and children, and the best of their moveables.

Joseph gladly obeyed the king's command: And (besides the chariots and provisions) sent to his father ten asses, laden with the choicest commodities of Egypt; to his brethren he gave each of them changes of garments, but to Benjamin he gave five, with three hundred pieces of silver; and so dismissed them with this kind charge, that they should not *fall out by the way*. With hearts full of joy they proceeded in their journey to Canaan, and were gladly received by their good old father, especially upon the return of his two sons, Simeon and Benjamin, whom he scarce expected to have seen any more. But when they informed him, that his son Joseph was likewise alive, and in what pomp and splendour he lived; that he was the very man, the king's prime minister and governour of Egypt, who had put them into so many deadly frights; being not able to bear so much good news at once, he fainted away in their arms: but when he came to himself again, and they shewed him the

The account of all this to their father Jacob.

presents,

presents, which Joseph had sent, and the chariots and carriages which were come to take him and his goods away, his spirits revived, his doubts and his fears vanished, and in an extasy of joy, he cried out, (c) *It is enough! Joseph my son is yet alive; I will go and see him before I die.*

A. M. 2276, &c.  
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To see so dear a son, for whom he had mourned so long, in all his Egyptian state and glory, was enough to make him hasten his journey; but as his gratitude to God for all his late mercies vouchsafed unto him, and his farther want of the divine protection, to accompany him into Egypt, required some fresh act of religion from him, he chose to go to Beersheba, and there offer some sacrifices, both because it was the place where Abraham and Isaac had lived so long, and because it was in the way to Egypt, as being the utmost boundary of Canaan towards the south.

Here it was that God appeared to him again in a vision; bid him † not fear to go down into Egypt, since he would be with him, and protect him, and in due time bring his posterity out of it again to enter into the possession of the promised land; and that, as to his own particular, he should live near his beloved Joseph, die in his arms, † and have his eyes closed by his hand. So that, encouraged by

Jacob goes down into Egypt, and is joyfully received by his son Joseph.

(c) Gen. xlv. 28.

† It is not unlikely, that the good old man had promised himself the comfort of spending the remainder of his days in the land which God had been pleased to promise him; and therefore, after so much labour of life, and change of place, when he thought himself at the end of his pilgrimage, and perhaps depended upon the patriarchal line being put in possession before his death, to be obliged to leave his land, and to go into a foreign one, was not a little discouraging; especially if he retained in his mind the melancholy prediction to his grandfather, Gen. xv. 13. *Know of a surety, that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, four hundred years, and shall serve them; Bibliotheca Bibl. in locum.*

† There seems to be something of a reason in nature, why such a particular regard should be had at death to the eyes; and that is, because they are in life so eminently serviceable both to body and mind. We close the eyes of the dead, because no part of the body looks so ghastly after death, whereas nothing was so sprightly and beautiful before: and the reason why the nearest in blood or friendship should have this office, is too obvious to need any explication.

Dii precor hoc jubeant, ut euntibus ordine fatis,

Ille meos oculos comprimat, ille tuos.

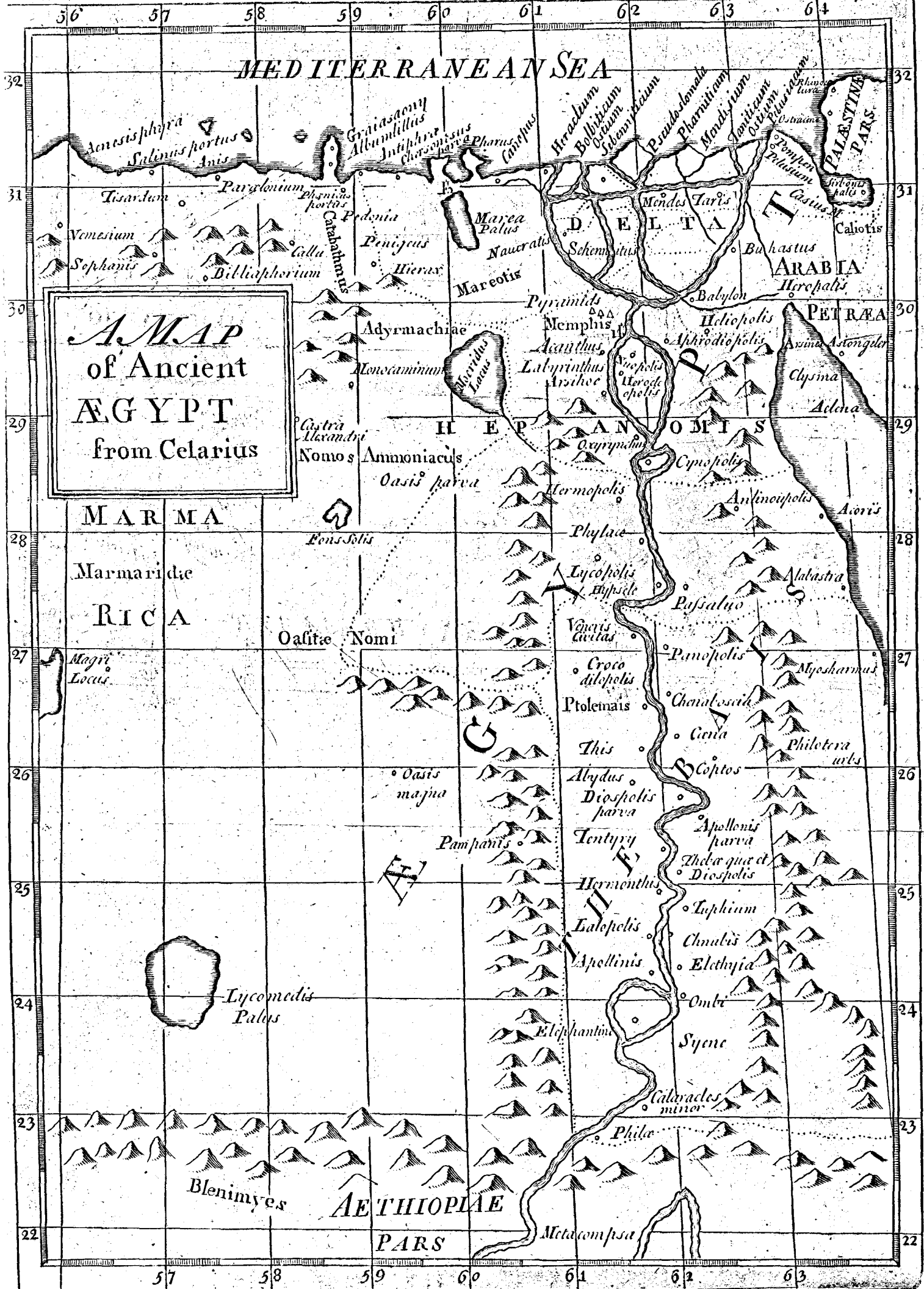
Penel. ad Ulyss. de Telaemch.

A. M. this divine promise, Jacob left Beerſheba, and cheerfully  
 2276, &c. pursued his journey into Egypt, where, when he arrived, †  
 Ant. Chriſt. he and his family made up in all juſt || the complement of  
 1728, &c. ſeventy perſons.

from Gen. xxxiii. 10, As ſoon as he came within the borders of Egypt, not far  
 the end, from the land of Goſhen, he ſent Judah before to acquaint  
 his ſon Joſeph with his arrival; who inſtantly took his  
 chariot, with a retinue ſuitable to his high ſtation, and  
 with

† The whole account of Jacob's ſons and grandſons, who  
 went along with him into Egypt, ſtands thus, — By Leah  
 32; by Zilpah 16; by Rachel 11; by Bilhah 7: in all 66, ex-  
 cluſive of Jacob himſelf, and of Joſeph, and his two ſons, which  
 makes up the ſeventy: and it was neceſſary indeed that theſe ge-  
 nealogies ſhould be exactly regiſtered, not only to diſtinguiſh  
 each tribe, and thereby diſcover the Meſſias when he came, but  
 (as it is in the caſe before us) to make it apparent, that the in-  
 crease of Iſrael, even under oppreſſion, ſhould bear a fair pro-  
 portion to the promiſe made to Abraham, viz. *That his ſeed*  
*ſhould be even as the ſtars of heaven, and as the ſand upon the ſea-*  
*ſhore for multitude;* Univerſal hiſtory; and Bibliotheca Bibl.

¶ There are three different accounts in Scripture of the num-  
 ber of Jacob's family, when they came down into Egypt. In  
 Gen. xvi. 26. it is ſaid, that *all the ſouls which came with Jacob*  
*into Egypt, were threeſcore and ſix*: in the very next verſe, and  
 in Deut. x. 22. it is ſaid, that *they were threeſcore and ten*;  
 and yet St. Stephen, in Acts. vii. 14. tells us expreſſly, that they  
 were ſeventy-five. Now, in order to reconcile theſe ſeeming  
 contradictions, we muſt obſerve, that in each place there is a  
 different manner of computation. In the firſt catalogue, Mo-  
 ſes ſpeaks of thoſe perſons only who came out of Jacob's loins,  
 i. e. his children and grandchildren that went into Egypt with  
 him, and theſe, excluſive of Jacob himſelf, and Joſeph and his  
 two ſons, who were in Egypt before, were exactly ſixty-fix:  
 Whereas, including Jacob himſelf, together with Joſeph and  
 his ſons, Ephraim and Manaſſeh, (who, tho' they were in E-  
 gypt before, yet living there as ſtrangers only, and having their  
 original from the land of Canaan, may be reckoned as if they  
 had come into Egypt with Jacob), the number is exactly ſe-  
 venty. The difference between Moſes and St. Stephen is a  
 little more difficult to reconcile; and yet, if we ſuppoſe that St.  
 Stephen follows the firſt number of Moſes, viz. ſixty-fix, out of  
 which he excluſes Jacob, Joſeph and his two ſons, and to which  
 he adds only nine of his ſons wives, (for Judah's wife was al-  
 ready dead, and Benjamin is ſuppoſed to be ſtill unmarried, and  
 Joſeph's wife out of the caſe), theſe nine wives, I ſay, which tho'  
 not of Jacob's blood, yet belonged to his family, and to Joſeph's  
 kindred,



MEDITERRANEAN SEA

A MAP  
of Ancient  
ÆGYPT  
From Celarius

MARMA

Marmaridæ

RICA

Magri  
Locus

Oasitæ Nomi

Lycomedis  
Palus

Blenimyes

ÆTHIOPLÆ

PARS

Meta com pisa

Galaracles  
minor

Syene

Philo

Apollinis

Lalopetis

Hermionthis

Tentyry

Diospolis  
parva

Abydos

Ptolemais

Croco  
ditopolis

Veneris  
Civitas

Lycopolis

Phylace

Hermopolis

Oxyrinchus

Labyrinthus

Memphis

Pyramidis

Schemisithus

D E L T A

Herachum

Bolbicum

Sebenniticum

Pseudobolus

Pharumium

Mondisium

Toniticum

Octium

Pharumium

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with infinite satisfaction, congratulated his arrival at a place where he had it in his power to make his life happy and comfortable. What the expressions of filial duty, and paternal affection were upon this occasion, words cannot describe: Tears of joy flowed from both sides; and while the son was contemplating the goodness of God, in bringing him to the sight of his aged father, the father, on the other hand, thought all his happiness upon earth completed in this interview; and therefore, (d) *Now, let me die*, says he to his son, *since I have seen thy face, because thou art yet alive.*

A. M.  
2276, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1728, &c.  
from Gen.  
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the end.

As soon as these tender greetings, and the solemn rejoicings which followed upon them were over, Joseph proposed to his father and brethren, to go and acquaint Pharaoh with their arrival: and as he supposed that the king would have a curiosity to see some of them, he gave them in charge, that in case he should ask them what occupation they were of, their answer should be, that they were shepherds, as their ancestors; for many generations, had been before them; by which means he might, † secure

kindred, (which is the very expression St. Stephen makes use of) added to the number of sixty-six other persons, will amount exactly to seventy-five; *Patrick's Commentary; Universal and Howel's Histories.*

(d) Gen. xlv. 30.

† By the general consent of ancient geographers, the land of Goshen is situate in the eastern part of Egypt, between the Red-sea and the river Nile, upon the borders of Canaan. It was a fruitful spot of ground, very fit for pasturage; and therefore Josephus tells us, that Pharaoh's own cattle were kept there; and accordingly we find him ordering Joseph to make one of his brothers the inspector-general over them. The country was separate from Egypt; and for this reason the Israelites, inhabiting it, might keep themselves in a bode without endangering their religion or manners, by intermixing with the Egyptians, and without incurring their envy or odium, as they would have done, had they lived among them, and shared any power or profit in the government. They came down into Egypt upon a particular exigency, and were to return again to take possession of the promised land; and therefore a country, that lay in a manner contiguous to it, was the most convenient for their a bode, that they might be in readiness to remove whenever God should order them to leave it, which they would not have found so easy a thing to do, had they been settled in the heart of Egypt; *Pool's Annotations.*

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for them the land of Goshen, which would be a separate habitation, and a happy retreat from the insults of the Egyptians, who were known † to have an utter detestation to shepherds.

With this caution he took five of his brothers along with him; and having informed Pharaoh, that his father and family were come as far as Goshen, he presented his brothers to the king, who for his sake received them very graciously; and, when he asked them what profession they were of, they told him that they were shepherds, as their family for many generations had been; that want of pasture for their cattle, and of sustenance for themselves, had made them leave Canaan; but that since (as they understood) his Majesty had been so hospitable, as to give them reception in his dominions, they humbly prayed that they might be allowed to settle in Goshen, as a country most convenient for their purpose; which he readily granted, and offered moreover to make any one of them, whom Joseph should appoint, his royal shepherd.

Not

† The country of Egypt (as Diodorus tells us, l. i.) was divided into three parts, whereof the priests had one, the King a second, and the soldiery a third: But under these there were three other ranks of men, shepherds, husbandmen, and artificers. The husbandmen served the king, and the other two orders, in tilling the ground for very small wages, and so did the shepherds, in their capacities: For the Egyptians, we must remember, had sheep and oxen, as well as horses and asses, which they sold unto Joseph, in the time of the famine. It cannot be thought, therefore, that they abominated all shepherds in general, but only such shepherds as were foreigners; and for what reason it was that they did this, is not so easily a matter to resolve. Some are of opinion, that shepherds were held in detestation, because they were a people in those days addicted to robbery, which made them very odious to the Egyptians; but others imagine, that theft among the Egyptians was not reputed so abominable a crime; and therefore they think, that the most probable reason of this aversion to shepherds, and to the Hebrews, as such, was the great oppression and tyranny under which they had lately groaned, when the Phœnician shepherds penetrated Egypt, wasted their cities, burnt their temples, murdered the inhabitants, and seated themselves for a considerable while in the possession of it. But upon whatever account it was, that the Egyptians had this aversion to shepherds, it certainly was an instance of Joseph's great modesty and

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Not long after this, Joseph, in like manner, presented his father to Pharaoh, who seeing him look very hale and hearty, and desiring to know of what age he might be, was informed by Jacob, that he was † an hundred and thirty; which when the king seemed to wonder at, he told him moreover, that his life was not, as yet, near so long as that of some of his ancestors, because his fate had been to have too large a share of troubles and fatigues to harass and wear him out: And so, wishing his Majesty abundance of health and prosperity, he returned to Goshen, where Joseph took care to supply him, and all his family, with such a plentiful provision of corn, and other necessaries, from

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the end.  
Has an interview  
with the  
King, and  
settles at  
Goshen.

love of truth, that he was not ashamed of an employment, so mean in itself, and so vile in the eyes of the Egyptians. Had he been minded to make the most of the matter, he might have instructed his brothers to have concealed their way or business of life; or, if he was aware that they would follow the same in Egypt that they had done in Canaan, he might nevertheless have put into their mouths the high dignity of their descent, and the wonderful history of their family; viz. that Abraham was their great-grandfather, a prince renowned for his defeat of four confederated monarchs; that Isaac was their grandfather, whose amity and alliance had been courted by kings; and that Israel was their father, who once gained a victory even over a mighty prince of the celestial host; all great men in their generations, and dignified with the conversation of God himself. This, and a great deal more, had Joseph been minded to serve the purposes of vanity, he might have suggested to his brethren; but, by this open declaration, we may perceive, that his pleasure and ambition was, that the wonderful chain of the divine measures and counsels, in bringing him from an humble condition of life, to such a sublimity of power and figure, might be as conspicuous as possible; *Pool's Annotations; Patrick's Commentary; and Bibliotheca Bibl. in locum.*

† Pharaoh's question to Jacob, and Jacob's answer, we may suppose, were not all the discourse that passed between them, but only what most deserved to be mentioned, because (as the learned Pererius observes) this answer of Jacob's is the very hinge upon which the whole chronology of the patriarchal times turns. The same excellent commentator remarks, that though Jacob lived seventeen years after this, yet, even at last he did not attain to the days of the years of the life of his father; since his father Isaac lived an hundred and fourscore years, and his grandfather Abraham to an hundred and seventy-five; *Bibliotheca Bibl.*

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Joseph's  
wife ma-  
nagement  
in Egypt.

the king's storehouses, as in the time of the greatest scarcity made him insensible of any want.

But while Jacob and his family lived in plenty, the Egyptians found the sad effects of the famine, which increased daily upon them, and Joseph holding up his corn at a high rate, in a short time brought all their money into the king's coffers; and when their money was gone, they were all (except the priests, who were furnished from the king's stores) obliged to part with their cattle, their houses, their lands, and || at length, their very selves, for provisions. All these Joseph purchased of the people in the king's name, and for the king's use; and, to let them see that the purchase was in earnest, and that their liberties and properties were now become the King's, he transplanted them from their former places of abode, into distant and different parts of the kingdom, that they might in time lose the very remembrance of their ancient possessions.

This, in another person, might have been thought an immoderate zeal for an absolute power in the king, and an advantage unjustly taken of the necessities of the subject; but Joseph so managed the matter, as to gain the commendation of both prince and people. For when the seventh and last year of famine was come, he acquainted them, that they might now expect a crop against next year; that the Nile would overflow, and the earth bring forth her fruits as usual. Hereupon he distributed fresh lands, cattle, and corn to them, that they might return to their tillage as before; but upon this condition he did it, that, from thenceforward, the fifth part of all the product of their lands should go to the King, and the rest be theirs. To these conditions the people willingly consented, as imputing the preservation of their lives entirely to Joseph's care; and from that time it passed into a law, that the fifth part of the product of the land of Egypt should always belong to the crown.

|| When the Egyptians were drove to this last extremity, in our translation it is said to be in the *second year*; but this must not be understood to be the *second year* of the seven years of famine, but the *second* after that last mentioned, wherein they had sold their cattle, which was in reality the last year of the famine; because he now gave them corn for seed, as well as for food; whereas, in the first years, there was neither sowing nor reaping, Gen. xlv. 6.; *Pool's Annotations*.

While

Whilst Joseph was enjoying the fruits of his great suc-  
cess and policy, his family at Goshen (which he failed not  
frequently to visit, became very wealthy, and very nume-  
rous, till at length his father Jacob finding himself grow  
old and feeble, and perceiving that his latter end was near  
approaching, sent for him, and to this purpose addressed  
himself to him. " Though the desire of seeing a son, so  
" dear to me as you are, raised to the height of Egyp-  
" tian glory, joined to the raging famine which then vi-  
" sited our land, made me willingly come down into this  
" strange country ; yet Canaan being the inheritance  
" which God promised to Abraham and his posterity, and  
" where he lies interred with my father Isaac, and some  
" others of our family, in the ground which he purchas-  
" ed of the inhabitants for that purpose ; my last, and  
" dying request to you is. † that you will not suffer me  
" to be buried here, but swear to see me carried to Mach-  
" pelah, and there deposited with my ancestors. Your  
" great power with the King will easily obtain that favour,

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the end.  
His visiting  
his father  
before he  
died.

† Though there be something of a natural desire in most men  
to be buried in the places where their ancestors lie; yet Jacob's  
aversion to have his remains deposited in Egypt seems to be  
more earnest than ordinary, or otherwise he would never have  
imposed an oath upon his sons, and charged them all, with his  
dying breath, not to suffer it to be done. For he very well  
knew, that, had his body been buried in Egypt, his posterity,  
upon that very account, would have been too much wedded to  
the country, ever to attempt the acquisition of the promised  
land ; and therefore, to wean them from the thoughts of con-  
tinuing in Egypt, and fix their minds and affections in Canaan,  
he ordered his body to be carried thither beforehand, in testi-  
mony that he died in full persuasion of the truth of the promi-  
ses which were given to him and his ancestors : Nor was it in-  
convenient, that future generations, after their return into Ca-  
naan, should have before their eyes the sepulchre of their fore-  
fathers, for a record of their virtues, and an incitement to the  
imitation of them. But the strongest motive of all for Jacob's  
desiring to be buried in Canaan, (supposing that he foreknew  
that our Saviour Christ was to live and die, and with some o-  
thers, rise again in that country), was, that he might be one  
of that blessed number ; as it was indeed an ancient tradition  
in the church, that among those *who came out of their graves af-  
ter our Lord's resurrection*, Matth. xxvii. 53. the patriarch Ja-  
cob was one ; *Pool's Annotations*, and *Bibliotheca Bibl.*

" which

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“ which is the last I have to ask.” Joseph was not long before he gave his father a satisfactory answer. He promised, and he swore to him, that he would fulfil his desire, which pleased the good old man to that degree that || he bowed, and made his acknowledgment for this kind assurance.

Joseph, who could not be long absent from court, took his leave of his father, but not without giving strict charge to some of the family, that upon the very first appearance of danger, they should immediately sent for him. Accordingly, as soon as word was brought him, that his father was a-dying, he took his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim with him, and went to visit him; who, when he heard that his favourite son was come, summoned all his

|| The words in our translation are, *he bowed himself upon the bed's head*, Gen. xlvii. 31. where some expositors, presuming that his *bowing* was a religious action, will, by no means, have it directed to Joseph, but to God only, for the assurance which Joseph had given him, that he should be buried according to his desire. But if the word must be translated *bowed*, there is no necessity to make it an act of adoration, but only a common form of civility, wherewith a father might comply, without any diminution to his superiority over his son. What led these expositors into this conception, was the version of the Septuagint, and the words of the apostle to the Hebrews, where Jacob is said (in allusion, as they suppose, to this passage) to have *worshipped upon the top of his staff*, Heb. xi. 21. But the plain truth is, that the apostle here speaks of another thing, not of what Jacob did now, when Joseph swore unto him, but of what he did when he blessed his other children. In the former case, he seems to have kept his bed; but, in the latter, to have received fresh spirits, and sat upon it, though leaning perhaps *upon his staff*. So that the apostle's words are not taken from those of Moses, but are a reflection of his own, whereby he signifies the strength of Jacob's faith, even when he was so weak as not to be able to bow himself and worship, without the help of his staff. This clearly removes the difficulty, and reconciles Moses and the apostle very perfectly. But there seems to be a more compendious way of doing this, for since the word *Shaca*, which signifies *to bow the body*, may, in like manner, be rendered *to lie or fall down*, the most easy translation seems to be, *he laid himself down upon his pillow*, as weak men are wont to do after they have set up a while, to dispatch some business; *Patrick's and Le Clerc's Commentaries.*

spirits

spirits together, and was so far revived, as to be able to sit up in his bed.

Here he began with recapitulating all the glorious promises which God had formerly made him, concerning his numerous posterity's inhabiting the land of Canaan, and concluded † with the death of his dear Rachel. "How tenderly I loved her," continued he, "all my family can testify; but this farther proof I design to give you of my affection to her. You have two sons born in a foreign country, and who, according to the usual order of inheritance, should have only the portion of grandchildren in the division of the promised land; but from this day forward, they shall be called by my name, be esteemed my sons, and as heads of two distinct tribes, (for they shall not be called the tribe of Joseph, but the tribe of Ephraim and Manasseh) receive a double portion in that allotment: But it must not be so with the other sons which you beget after these. They come in only for the portion of grandchildren: And to you in particular, I bequeath that tract of ground, which, by the force of arms, I took from the Amorites, that it may descend to your tribe for ever."

All this while Jacob, whose sight was very much decayed, talked to his son concerning his children, as if they had been absent; but when he perceived that they were in the room, he rejoiced not a little, and ordered them to be brought near him. Joseph placed them in a position according to the order of their age, to receive his father's blessing; but Jacob crossing his hands, laid his right (which

† Since Jacob had so strictly insisted upon his being buried with his father, and bound Joseph with an oath to see it done, it was proper for him to explain and clear himself, as to what might be secretly objected to his not interring Rachel (Joseph's own mother, and his best beloved consort) in that burying place where he so earnestly desired to lie himself; and for his excuse in this respect, he had two things to offer; first, That he was then upon his journey, and in his return from Padan: and, 2dly, That he had erected a monumental pillar upon her grave in a very public and frequented place: To which a Right Reverend commentator has added a further apology,—That as she died in childbed, and Jacob, in his travels, might not have all things necessary to preserve her body long, he was constrained to bury her sooner perhaps than otherwise he would have done, *Patrick's Commentary*; and *Bibliotheca Bibl. in locum*

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Jacob's ben-  
nediction  
to all his  
children.

carried with it the preference) upon the younger, and his left upon the elder of them; which Joseph supposing to proceed from a mistake, was going to rectify, but was told by his father, that what he did was by divine direction, and so made Ephraim not only the first in nomination, but gave him a blessing much more extensive than what he gave his brother.

By this time Jacob finding himself grow faint, and the hour of his departure near approaching, called the rest of his sons together, to take his farewell of them, and distribute his blessing, or rather to foretel what should befall them and their posterity, in future ages: And so directing his speech to them severally, he began with Reuben the eldest, and told him, ——— That for the crime of incest, in polluting his father's bed, he and his tribe were degraded † from the privileges of his birth-right. He told Simeon and Levi, (whom he joined together upon this occasion), that for their impious massacre of Hamor and his people, † their tribes should for ever be separated and dispersed among the other; but then, turning to Judah, he prophesied of him, that to his tribe should the sovereignty belong, and they be † situated in a very fruitful country; that from his name should

† The prerogatives of the birth-right consisted chiefly in the honour of the priesthood, in the rule and government of the family, and in a double portion of the inheritance, which at this time were all taken away from Reuben, and divided severally: since it appears in the sequel of the history, that the tribe of Reuben continued all along in obscurity, while the priesthood was conferred on Levi, the government on Judah, and the double portion on Joseph, to descend to their respective tribes; *Howell's History of the Bible.*

† Jacob's words, in this place, may imply a double dispersion, viz. of the two tribes from each other; and of their being interspersed among the rest: And accordingly that of Levi had no inheritance among his brethren in the land of Canaan, but only a certain number of cities assigned to them in every tribe. And as for that of Simeon, they had properly no more than a portion of Judah's inheritance, Josh. xix. 1. if we except some few places which they got upon Mount Seir, and in the wilds of the valley of Gedor, 1 Chron. vi. 39. &c. *Universal History, l. i. c. 7.*

† The country which the tribe of Judah was to inhabit, is thus described by Jacob: *Binding his sole unto the vine, and his arm unto the choice vine; he washed his garments in wine, and his*



should the whole nation of the Jews derive their appellation; and that the form of government which he then instituted, should endure among them until the Messiah came. † Of Zebulon he foretold that his tribe should be planted near the sea-coasts; and † of Issachar, that his should prove a pusillanimous people, and be lovers of inglorious ease more than of liberty and renown.

From Leah's sons the patriarch passes to those of his two concubinary wives; and † of Dan's posterity he foretels,

*his cloaths in the blood of grapes*, Gen. xlix. 11. which are expressions somewhat hyperbolical; (for they imply, that vines in this country should be as common as thorns in other places; and wine as plentiful as water); but were, in a great measure answered in that fertile land which fell to the tribe of Judah's share. For here was the valley of Escol, a bunch of whose grapes was brought by the spies, as a specimen of the fruitfulness of the land, Numb. xiii. 23. Here was a brook or torrent of the same name, along whose banks were the most delicious pastures for cattle; and, as modern travellers tell us, here are very large grapes still to be met with, especially in the valley of Hebron, which, in all probability, is that through which this torrent runs; *Pool's Annotations; Bibliotheca Bib.; and Universal History, l. 1. c. 7.*

† Had Jacob been present at the division of the land of Canaan, he could hardly have given a more exact description of Zebulon's lot, than we find him doing two hundred and fifty years before it happened. For it extended from the Mediterranean sea on the west, to the lake of Genezareth on the east, and lay therefore very commodiously for trade and navigation. The foretelling so precisely and distinctly the situation and employment of this tribe, though, at first appearance, it may seem a matter of no great moment, yet will be found to be quite otherwise, when it is considered, that such particulars as these could not but be very convincing to the Israelites, that it was nor chance, nor power, nor policy, that put them in possession of the land of Canaan, but, *God's right hand, and his arm, and the light of his countenance, because he had a favour unto them.*

† No less remarkable is the description of Issachar's tribe, since, though they were a very laborious people in all rural employments, yet they had no great inclination to war: and were therefore frequently infested, and subjected by strangers, especially in the time of the judges.

† The Jews think, that the prophecy of Dan's destroying his enemies by craft, was more particularly fulfilled when

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tels, that though they were descended from an handmaid, yet they should have the same privileges with the other tribes, should become a politic people, and greatly versed in the stratagems of war; of † Gad's, that they should be frequently infested with robbers, but overcome them at last; of Ather's, that they should be situated in a fruitful and exuberantly rich soil; and † of Naphtali's, that they should spread their branches like an oak, and multiply exceedingly.

Jacob had reserved the sons of his beloved Rachel to the last; and therefore, turning to † Joseph, at the same time

Sampson, who was of that tribe, pulled down the temple which crushed himself and the Philistines to death.

† Gad's lot happened on the other side of Jordan, where they were continually exposed to the incursions of the bordering Arabs; but by their watchfulness and bravery, they not only prevented them, but several times caught, and plundered them in their turns, insomuch that in one battle, they took from them fifty thousand camels, two hundred and fifty thousand sheep, besides an hundred thousand men prisoners, Deut. xxxiii. 22. &c.

‡ The words in our translation, *Naphtali is a hind let loose, he giveth goodly words*, are very obscure, and scarce intelligible. For tho' the former part of the prediction is commonly applied to Barak's overcoming Sifera, and the latter to that noble canticle which Deborah made upon that occasion; yet the exposition which the learned Bochart gives us of this passage, *He shall be like a tree that shooteth out pleasant branches*, is both more agreeable to the original, and more answerable to the event; since no tribe multiplied so wonderfully as this of Naphtali, who had but four sons when he came into Egypt, and yet could muster upwards of fifty-three thousand men fit to bear arms, when he came out of it, i. e. in less than 220 years; *Essay towards a new translation*.

† In the benediction which Jacob gives his favourite Joseph, there are two remarkable titles which he confers upon him. 1st, *That he was the shepherd, and the stone of Israel*, which seems to be a thankful recognition of Joseph's kindness to his father and family, in keeping and feeding them, even as a shepherd does his sheep; by which means he became the foundation or basis, as it were, of the house of Jacob, by preserving them from perishing by famine, and continuing them settled in the best part of the Egyptian kingdom, for a considerable time: Though some refer it rather to his virtuous resisting the temptations of his mistress, and patiently enduring the

time that he recollects his past troubles, and sets forth the future greatness of his tribe, he pours down upon him, and in him, upon his posterity, benedictions of all kinds. "The Lord, even the God of thy father," says he, "shall bless thee *with the dew of heaven*, and with the *fatness of the earth*, with the *fruit of the womb*, i. e. with a numerous posterity, and with the *fruit of the breast*, with plenty of all sorts of cattle. May all the blessings, promised to me and my forefathers, be doubled upon Joseph's royal head; may they out-top and out-stretch the everlasting mountains, and prove to him more fruitful, and more lasting than they."

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Whether Jacob might foresee no merit or happiness extraordinary in the tribe of Benjamin, or that its being afterwards blended with the tribe of Judah might make it partake of the same blessing; but so it was, that he contented himself with describing its † fierce and warlike disposition which

the master's severity, to both of which he remained as immovable as a stone. 2d, The other title is, that he was *separate from his brethren*: where, though the word *Nazir* signifies to *separate*, (as Joseph was certainly separated from his brethren, when he was sold into Egypt), yet, as it is hardly supposeable that Jacob would couch so cruel an action in so soft a term, it is rather to be thought, that he used the word *Nazir*, which signifies *crowned*, in allusion to the superintendents of the king's household in all the eastern countries, who were called *Nazirs*, and wore probably some kind of diadem about their heads, by way of distinction and grandeur. And as for the fruitfulness promised to Joseph, this was exemplified in the large extent of his two-fold tribe, Ephraim and Manasseh, which at the first numbering yielded seventy-two thousand seven hundred, Num. i. and at their second, eighty-five thousand and two hundred men, all able to go out to war, Numb. xxvi.

† How brave and warlike a body of men, and how very expert in feats of arms, this tribe became, we may conceive from what we are told of them, viz. that *there were seven hundred chosen men among them, left-handed, every one of whom could sling stones at an hair's breadth, and not miss*; Judges xx. 15. And how pertinacious they were in their undertakings of this kind, is manifest both from the fierce battles which they fought against all the other tribes, (tho' in a very bad cause, Judges, xix.), wherein they twice came off the conquerors; and from the long opposition which the house of Saul, descended from this tribe, made against the accession of David to the throne, and

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Death and pompous funeral.

which, like a ravenous wolf, would shed the blood of its enemies, and in the evening divide their spoil.

Thus the good old patriarch having given his † blessing to his children, according to the divine direction, and not according to his own inclination, reminded them all, (but Joseph more especially), to bury him among his ancestors, in the cave of Machpelah; and so laying himself down in his bed again, in a short time expired, after he had lived 147 years in all, and seventeen of these in Egypt.

The loss of so good a father was doubtless lamented by all his family, but by none with more sincere expressions of filial sorrow than by Joseph. At length, remembering his dying charge, he ordered his physicians (according to the custom of the country) to \* embalm his father's body,

and which could not be suppressed, until Abner, the general of their forces, had forsook them: *Judges*, and *1 Sam*, *passim*.

† Besides these prophecies of Jacob, which were sufficiently verified by their events, the Jews ascribe some other works to him viz. a treatise, intitled, *The ladder to heaven*; and another called *Jacob's testament*, which Pope Gelasius reckons among the Apocrypha, together with some forms of prayer, which the Jews use every night, and pretend that they were composed by him. As to the commendations which they so plentifully bestow upon this patriarch, these, in a great measure, are justified by the character which the author of Ecclesiasticus gives him, chap. xlv. 23. And as the Mahometans allow him not only to be a prophet, but the father likewise of all the prophets, except Job, Jethro, and Mahomet; so they believe, that the royal dignity did not depart from his posterity until the times of John the Baptist, and Jesus Christ; and that from him the twelve tribes of the Jews did spring, even as their own twelve did from Ishmael: *Calmet's Dictionary*, under the word *Jacob*.

\* The manner of embalming among the Egyptians, according to Herodotus, Diodorus, and others, was as follows. When a man died, his body was carried to the artificers, whose business it was to make Coffins. The upper part of the coffin represented the person who was to be put in it, whether man or woman; and (if a person of distinction) was generally adorned with such paintings and embellishments as were suitable to its quality. When the body was brought home again, they agreed with the embalmers; but according to the quality of the person, the prices were different. The highest was a talent, i. e. about three hundred pound Sterling; twenty minæ was a moderate one, and the lowest a very small matter. As the body

lay

body, and all preparations for his funeral to be made. For the space of seventy days they continued their mourning for him;†; in which time it being improper for Joseph to appear at court, he desired some of the officers about the king, to acquaint his majesty that his father, before his death, had obliged him, upon oath, to bury him in a sepulchre belonging to their family, in the land of Canaan; and that therefore he begged leave to go and fulfil his last commands, and would, without delay, return again. The king readily consented to his request, and ordered moreover the chief officers of his household, and some of the

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lay extended, one of them, whom they called *the designer*, marked out the place on the left side where it was to be opened, and then a dissector, with a very sharp Egyptian stone, made the incision through which they drew all the intestines, except the heart and kidneys, and then washed them with palm-wine, and other strong and blinding drugs. The brains they drew through the nostrils, with an hooked piece of iron, made particularly for that purpose, and filled the skull with astringent drugs. The whole body they anointed with oil of cedar, with myrrh, cinnamon, and other drugs, for about thirty days; by which means it was preserved entire, without so much as losing its hair and sweet, without any signs of putrefaction. After this, it was put into salt about forty days, and therefore, when Moses says that forty days were employed in embalming Jacob, Gen. l. 3. he must mean the forty days of his continuing in the salt of nitre, without including the thirty days that were spent in the other operations above mentioned; so that, in the whole, they mourned seventy days in Egypt, as Moses likewise observes. Last of all, the body was taken out of this salt, washed, and wrapped up in linen swaddling bands dipped in myrrh, and rubbed with a certain gum, which the Egyptians used instead of glue, and so returned to the relations, who put it into the coffin, and kept it in some repository in their houses, or in tombs made particularly for that purpose; *Calmer's Dictionary*, under the word *Embalm*; and *Warburton's Divine legation*, vol. 2. l. 3..

† It was against rule for any person, how great soever, in mourning apparel, to appear in public, and especially in the royal presence, because in that state they were looked upon as defiled; and therefore Joseph does not go himself, but desires some of the courtiers to carry his request to the king: and this request he was the rather bound to make, because the retinue and guard which the pomp of the funeral, and the danger of molestation from enemies, made necessary, could not be obtained without the king's leave; *Museus*.

principal

A. M.  
2276, &c.  
Ant. Chrif.  
1728, &c.  
from Gen.  
xxxvii. to  
the end.

principal nobility of the kingdom, to attend the funeral, who joined with his own and his father's whole family, some in chariots, and some on horfeback, made \* a very large and pompous proceffion.

As foon as they were entered into the land of Canaan, they made an halt at † the *threshing floor of Atad*, and there continued mourning, and lamenting the death of their

\* The splendour and magnificence of our patriarch's funeral seems to be without a parallel in history. What hitherto has most affected me in the comparison, were indeed the noble obsequies of Marcellus, as Virgil has described them; but how do even these (with all their parade of poetry about them) fall short of the plain and simple narrative before us? For what are the six-hundred beds for which the Roman solemnities, on this occasion, were so famous, in comparison of that national itinerant multitude, which swelled like a flood, and moved like a river; to all Pharaoh's servants, to the elders of his house, and all the elders of the land of Egypt, *i. e.* to the officers of his household, and deputies of his provinces, with all the house of Joseph and his brethren, and his father's house, conducting their solemn sorrow for near three hundred miles into a distant country; *Bibliotheca Bibl. occas. annot.* 46.

† The words in the text are,——*And they came to the threshing-floor of Atad, which is beyond Jordan*, Gen. l. 10. Where this place was, we cannot determine from any account in Scripture; but it is very probable, that it lay not far from the place where Jacob was buried, and so not far from Hebron. For since it is absurd to suppose, that the corpse of Jacob was carried to the Cave of Machpelah such a round-about way as the Israelites went afterwards into the land of Canaan, *viz.* through Arabia Petrea, quite on the eastern side of Jordan, it remains to suppose, that these places are said to be beyond Jordan, not in respect of Egypt, from whence Jacob's corpse was brought, but in respect of the place where Moses was, when he wrote the history, *i. e.* in a country on the east of Jordan; and consequently the places beyond Jordan must be such as lay on the west of Jordan: But why they made the threshing-floor of Atad, rather than the place of interment, the scene of their lamentations, is not so easy to resolve. Perhaps it was a place more convenient to stay in for seven days, than the field of Machpelah; or perhaps it might be the custom, at the very entrance of the country, where they carried the corpse to be buried, to fall into lamentations, which they might repeat at the grave again, tho' no mention be made of it here; *Well's geography of the Old Testament*, vol. 1. and *Patrick's Commentary*.

friend,

friend and father seven days; which made the Canaanites, perceiving that the company came from Egypt, call the place *Abel-mizraim*, or *the mourning of the Egyptians*, ever after. They thence continued their march till they came to the field of Machpelah, where \* they deposited Jacob in the cave with his ancestors, and so returned to Egypt again.

A. M.  
2276, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1728, &c.  
from Gen.  
xxxvii. to  
the end.

As soon as their father was buried, Joseph's brethren began to reflect on the wrongs they had formerly done him, and were not a little apprehensive, that as he certainly had it in his power, he might now have it in his intention, to avenge himself of them: and therefore they consulted together, and framed his message,——That it was his father's earnest request, that he should forget all past injuries, and continue them under his protection as formerly. This when Joseph heard, such was his compassionate temper, that he could not refrain from weeping; and therefore (to remove their fears) he sent immediately for them, and, receiving them with the same kind affection as when their father was alive, excused the actions committed against him in such an obliging manner, and gave them such assurances of his future love, and adherence to them upon all occasions, as made them return to their families full of joy and satisfaction.

Joseph's  
promises to  
his brothers

\* The sacred history gives us no further account of any particulars in Joseph's life, though he lived fifty-four years and his death.

\* The Jewish doctors have a tradition of a bloody fight which Joseph had at his father's funeral, with one Tzepho, the son of Eliphaz, who would have opposed his burying him in the cave of Machpelah, as disputing his title to the ground, but that Joseph, and his men, having overcome him, carried him away with them into Egypt, and kept him there prisoner as long as Joseph lived; however, as soon as he was dead, Tzepho found means to escape into Italy; *Universal History*, in the notes, l. i. c. 7.

\* The author of Ecclesiasticus has given us an encomium of the patriarch Joseph in these words: *Of Jacob was this man of mercy born, who found favour in the eyes of all flesh. He was born to be the prince of his brethren, and the support of his family; to be the head of his kinsmen, and the firm support of his people. His bones were visited, and prophesied after his death*, chap. xlix. 15. His meaning is, that his bones were removed out of Egypt, and that this fell out as a consequence of his prophecy, that God would visit the Hebrews, and bring them into the

A: M.  
2276, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1728, &c.  
from Gen.  
xxxvii. to  
the end.

years after his father's death. It informs us, that he lived to see himself the happy parent of a numerous offspring in his two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, even to the third generation; and all this while, we may presume, that he continued in high favour with his prince, and in weighty employments under him. But when he grew old, and found his death approaching, he sent for his brethren, and with the like prophetic spirit, that his father Jacob had done, told them, that God, according to his promise, would not fail to bring their posterity out of Egypt into the land of Canaan; and therefore he made them swear to him (as he had done to his father) that when it should please God thus to visit them, they would not forget to † carry his body

promised land. The Jewish rabbins have taken a great latitude in ascribing several particulars to this great man, which have not the least foundation in Scripture. They make him the inventor of all the arts and sciences, for which the Egyptians afterwards became so famous; and attribute to him the composition of several books, such as Joseph's prayer, Joseph's mirror, &c. which do not redound so much to his credit. Mahomet in his Alcoran, (Surat. 12.) relates his history at length, but blends it with many fabulous circumstances, which have been much improved by the eastern people; for they make him in a manner greater than the Jewish doctors do. They tell us equally, that he taught the Egyptians the most sublime sciences, and particularly geometry, which was highly necessary in their division of the land. They suppose, that all the wells, and baths, and granaries, which go under his name, nay, that all the ancient pyramids, and obelisks, though they do not, were of his erection; and they believe, that he had all along upon his shoulder a point of light, like a star, which was an indelible mark of the gift of prophecy; with many more fictions of the like nature; *Calmet's Dictionary*, under the word *Joseph*.

† There are several reasons which might induce Joseph not to have his dead body immediately carried into Canaan, and buried as his father was. 1st, Because his brethren, after his decease, might not have interest enough at court to provide themselves with such things as were necessary to set off the pomp and solemnity of a funeral befitting so great a personage. 2dly, Because he might foresee, that the Egyptians, in all probability as long as their veneration for his memory was warm, would hardly have suffered his remains to have been carried into another country. 3dly, Because the continuance of his remains among them might be a means to preserve the remembrance of the services



body along with them: and to this purpose, as soon as he was dead, (which was in the hundred and tenth year of his age), they had his body embalmed, and \* kept in a coffin, until the time of their deliverance should come.

A. M.  
2276, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1728, &c.  
from Gen.  
xxxvii. to  
the end.

### The O B J E C T I O N.

“ THE history of Joseph is as little liable to exceptions, as almost any portion of Scripture; and yet therein we meet with some facts that are not so agreeable to our apprehensions, nor consonant to the character of that holy patriarch. For, to pass by Jacob's farewell, which seems rather to curse than bless his children, besides the many odd comparisons that attend it; what shall we say to Joseph's marrying into an idolatrous family, and swearing so frequently *by the life of Pharaoh*; to his practising (as his steward insinuates) arts of divination, and advising the king to take the advantage of a famine, (at the hazard of a mutiny), in order to impoverish all his subjects, except the priests; and what is more than all, to his cruel usage of his brethren, and putting his aged father into so many frights?

services he had done them, and thereby an inducement to them to treat the relations he had left behind him with more kindness. 4thly, And chiefly, because the presence of his body with the Israelites might be a pledge to assure them, and a means to strengthen and confirm their faith and hope in God's promises to their progenitors, that he would infallibly put their posterity in possession of the land of Canaan: and accordingly, when Moses delivered them out of Egypt, he carried Joseph's body along with him, (Exod. xiii. 19.) and committed it to the care of the tribe of Ephraim, who buried it near Shechem, (Josh. xxiv. 32.) in the field which Jacob, a little before his death, gave to Joseph, as his peculiar property; *Pererius*, and *Patrick's Commentaries*; *Pool's Annotations*, and *Calmet's Dictionary* under the word.

\* The Jewish rabbins have a story, that the Egyptian magicians came and told Pharaoh, that if he had a mind to keep the Hebrews in his dominions, he must hide Joseph's body in some certain place, where they should never find it, because it would be impossible for them to go out of Egypt without it; that thereupon his body was put into a chest of 6000 lb. weight, which was sunk in the mud of one of the branches of the river Nile, and that Moses was forced to work a miracle to get it out, and carry it away; *Calmet, ibid.*

A. M. 2276, &c. Ant. Christ. 1728, &c. from Gen. xxxvii. to the end.

“ His care and concern for the support of his father, while he lived, and for his honourable interment, when he came to die, was highly commendable without doubt; but we cannot but think, that the sacred historian was minded to aggrandise his port and manner of living when he represents him as *(e)* commanding his servants the physicians to embalm his father. For besides the extravagant piece of state of having such a body of domestics about him, *(f)* there is reason to presume, that the science of physic, properly so called, was not at this time so much as professed in Egypt, as it certainly was not in Greece, until Hippocrates brought it into request: And consequently, that the physicians, which Moses here mentions, in order to display poor Joseph’s magnificence, were no better than a company of dissectors and embalmers, which Egypt was known to abound with.

“ However this be, it is hardly supposeable, that Joseph should, in so short a time as Moses allows him, acquire a knowledge of the Egyptian language, sufficient to qualify him for the office of Potiphar’s steward; nor can we conceive the reason why his master, if he believed his wife, and supposed him guilty of invading his bed, did not immediately put him to death. But the greatest wonder of all is, how this same Potiphar could be called an *eunuch*, when it is so notorious that he had a wife: How Jacob can say of himself, that he got a tract of ground *with his sword and his bow*, when it is so well known, that he was a peaceable man, and was never engaged in war; or how the famous prophecy of the sceptre’s not departing from Judah can be said to have been fulfilled in its appointed time, when the Jews (it must be owned) had lost all government of their own, and were subject to other nations, long before the Messias came.”

Answered, by shewing that the prophecy concerning Judah’s sceptre was fulfilled in due time.

The most material objection we have placed at last; and because it relates to a passage in Scripture, which is known to have its difficulties, it may not be improper, in order to give it a clear solution, first to cite the passage itself, and then to explain the terms contained in it:

(e) Gen. I. 2.

(f) Shuckford’s Connection, vol. 2. l. 9.

(g) *The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come, and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.* A. M. 2276, &c. Ant. Christ, 1728, &c. from Gen xxxvii. to the end.

1. Now the word *Shevet*, which we render *sceptre*, has both a literal and a figurative signification. In its literal, it denotes a *rod*, a *wand*, a *sceptre*, a *shepherd's crook*, &c. and in its figurative, it either implies the correction and punishment, whereof the rod, or the authority and power, whereof the sceptre is the ensign. It cannot be doubted, I think, but that the word is to be taken in a figurative sense here; and yet it cannot be supposed to signify *punishment*, because the tribe of Judah was so far from being in a state of affliction, that it always flourished exceedingly, and even in the time of its captivity, enjoyed its own form of government. The word must therefore, in this place, be put for that power and dominion whereof the sceptre, in ancient times, was thought a fitter representation, than either the crown or diadem.

2. The word *Mechokek*, which we translate *lawgiver*, is not synonymous with the former, but has two distinct significations. It sometimes signifies, not a person who has power to make laws himself, but only to *teach* and *instruct* others in those laws that are already made: And in this sense it differs very little from the scribes, and doctors, and teachers of the law, whereof there is so much mention made in our Saviour's days. At other times, it denotes a person invested with power and authority even to make laws, but then this authority of his is inferior to that of a king; so that properly he may be called an inferior magistrate or governour set over a people by the licence of some monarch, and, by his commission, appointed to rule: And in this sense the word should rather be taken here, because there were such governours and deputies set over the Jews, after their return from the Babylonish captivity.

3. The phrase which we render *between his feet*, (according to the modesty of the Scripture-expression), means nothing else, but of his seed or posterity; and so the intendment of this part of the prediction must be, that *the tribe of Judah should have lawgivers of their own to the very last times.*

(g) Gen. xlix. 10.

4. From

A. M.  
2276, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1728, &c.  
from Gen.  
xxxvii. to  
the end.

4. From whatever *radix* it is that the word *Shiloh* is derived, both Jews and Christians are agreed in this, that by the person to whom this title is applied, the patriarch intended the great Saviour of the world, who is called *the Messias*, or *Christ*.

5. By Judah here, there is not an absolute necessity to understand the people of that tribe only, but all those likewise who were afterwards called *Jews*. And,

6. Whether we refer the gathering of the people to the tribe of Judah, (as they did in the times of the captivity), or to *Shiloh*, when he should come, as to the main of the prophecy, there is not a great deal of difference; since the main of the prophecy is, ——— *That the Messias should come, before the Jewish government would totally cease*. And therefore the question is, Whether there was any form of government subsisting among the Jews, and particularly in the tribe of Judah, at the time when Christ was born?

The form of government which Jacob, upon his death-bed, instituted, was that of dividing his family into tribes, and making his own, and the two sons of Joseph, heads over their respective houses. This government was properly aristocratical: But in times of some extraordinary exigence, all authority was devolved into the hands of a judge, who, when the end for which he was appointed was effected, (in the same manner as the Roman dictator did), resigned up his power, and became no more than *one of the princes of the tribes of his fathers*.

The abuse of this judicial power, however, in the hands of Samuel's sons, made the people desirous of a regal government; and in that form it continued, from the time it came into David's hand, (who was of the tribe of Judah) for the space of four hundred and seventy years. The division of the kingdom made a great alteration in the fortunes of the people; for the Assyrian captivity was the ruin of the ten tribes. They lost their government, and from that time never recovered it; but it was not so with the kingdom of Judah, in the Babylonish: (b) For, if we consider that the Jews were carried to Babylon, not to be slaves, but were transplanted as a colony, to people that large city; that they were

(b) Bishop Sherlock's third dissertation, annexed to his *Use and Intent of Prophecy*.

commanded

commanded therefore, (i) by the prophet, to *build houses*, and *plant gardens*, and to seek the *peace of the city* in which they were captives ; and that upon the expiration of their seventy years captivity, many of them were so well settled in ease and plenty, that they refused to return to their own country again. If we consider farther, that the Jews lived at Babylon as a distinct people, and were governed in their own affairs by their own elders ; that they appointed feasts and fasts, and ordered all other matters relating to their civil and ecclesiastical state among themselves ; and that upon their return from Babylon, they were thought a people considerable enough to be complained of to Artaxerxes ; we cannot but conclude, that they made all along a figure, far from comporting with the condition of mere slaves, subjected entirely to a foreign yoke, without any law or government of their own.

A. M.  
2276, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1728, &c.  
from Gen.  
xxxvii. to  
the end.

After the time of this captivity indeed, the Jews were never so free a people as they had been before. They lived under the subjection of the Persian monarch, and under the empire of the Greeks and Romans, to their last destruction ; but still they lived as a distinct people, governed by their own laws ; and the authority of the Persian, and other kings over them, destroyed not that rule, which, in all the vicissitudes that befel them, they still possessed.

How the case stood in the time of the Asmonæan princes, may be collected from several passages in the Maccabees : And that the like government subsisted, to the very death of Christ, may, in like manner, be vinced from many instances in the gospel ; but one or two of these will be enough to illustrate the thing.

When our Saviour tells the Jews, (k) *The truth shall make you free*, and they reply, *We are Abraham's children, and were never in bondage to any man*, surely they had not forgot their captivity in Babylon, much less could they be ignorant of the power of the Romans over them at that time ; and yet they accounted themselves free ; and so they were, because they lived by their own laws, and executed judgment among themselves. When our Saviour foretels his disciples, that they (l) *should be delivered up*

(i) Jer. xxix. 5, 7.

(k) John viii. 32, 33.

(l) Matth. x. 17.

A. M.  
2276, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1728, &c.  
from Gen.  
xxxvii. to  
the end.

to councils, and scourged in synagogues, he shews, at the same time, what power and authority were exercised in the councils and synagogues of the Jews: And (to mention but one instance more) when Pilate, willing to deliver Jesus, says to the Jews, (m) *take ye him and crucify him*; and again, (n) *Take ye him, and judge him according to your own law*; he likewise shews, that the Jews lived under their own law, and had the exercise of judicial authority among themselves.

By this deduction it appears evidently, that the sceptre placed in the hand of Judah, by his father Jacob, just before his death, continued in his posterity, till the very death of Christ. From that time all things began to work towards the destruction of the Jewish polity, and within a few years, their city, temple, and government, were utterly ruined, and the Jews not carried into a gentle captivity, to enjoy their laws, and live as a distinct people, in a foreign country; but were sold, like beasts in a market, became slaves in the strictest sense, and, from that day to this, have neither prince nor lawgiver among them: So that, upon the whole, (o) the sense of Jacob's prophecy, with relation to Judah, as it is now fulfilled, may not improperly be summed up in this paraphrase.

"The power and authority which shall be established in the posterity of Judah, shall not be taken from them, or at least, they shall not be destitute of rulers and governors, (no, not when they are in their declining condition), until the coming of the Messiah. But when he is come, there shall be no difference between the Jews and Gentiles, who shall be all obedient to the Messiah; and after that, the posterity of Judah shall have neither king nor ruler of their own, but their whole commonwealth shall quite lose all form, and never recover it again."

How Jacob may be said to have taken a tract of land by force of arms.

The bequest which Jacob makes to his son Joseph, runs in this form:—(p) *Moreover, I have given to thee one portion above thy brethren, which I took out of the hand of the Amorite, with my sword, and with my bow.* But when did we ever read of Jacob's being a military man? His sons indeed invaded Shechem, and took, not from the Amorites, but the Hivites, the adjacent coun-

(m) John. xix. 6. (n) Chap. xviii. 31. (o) Patrick's Commentary in locum. (p) Gen. xlviii. 22.

try, as we may suppose; but so far is he from approving of what they did, that, to his very dying hour, we find him severely remonstrating against it, and must therefore be supposed too conscientious, either to retain himself, or to consign to his beloved son, a portion of land acquired by such wicked and sanguinary means.

The tract of ground therefore which he mentions, must certainly be that (*q*) which he purchased of Hamor, the father of Shechem; which he gave Joseph for a burying-place, and where Joseph, in consequence of that donation, (*r*) was afterwards buried, and not in the field of Machpelah, the common repository of most of his ancestors. And to resolve the difficulty of his saying, that he *took it from the Amorite by force of arms*, when it is manifest that he *bought it of Hamor the Hivite, for an hundred pieces of silver*; we may observe, that the persons who are called Hivites in one place, may, without any impropriety, be called Amorites in another, for as much as the Amorites, being the chief of all the seven nations in Canaan, might give denomination to all the rest, in like manner as all the people of the United Provinces are, from the pre-eminence of that one, commonly called *Hollanders*: And then, if we can but suppose, that after Jacob's departure from Shechem, for fear of the neighbouring nations, some straggling Amorites came, and seized on the lands which he had purchased, and that he was forced to have recourse to arms to expel the invaders, and maintain his right, all the difficulty, or seeming repugnance, of the passage vanishes.

(*s*) Jacob, we allow, was a man of peace, but his sons were warriors; and to them he might the rather give permission to recover the possession of what he had bought, because he looked upon it as an earnest of his posterity's future possession of the whole land. (*t*) And though we read nothing in the foregoing history, either of the Amorites invading Jacob's property, or of his expelling them thence; yet this is far from being the only instance of things being said to be done in Scripture, (*u*) whose circumstances of time, place, and persons, we find no where recorded; and a much easier supposition it is, than to make

(*q*) Gen. chap. xxxiii. 19. compared with Joshua xxiv. 32. (*r*) Josh. xxiv. 32. (*s*) Pool's Annotations. (*t*) Patrick's Commentary. (*u*) To this purpose, see Gen. xlviii. 22. Deut. ii. 9, 10, 11. Josh. xxiv. 11.

A. M. (as some have done) *the sword and the bow*, here mentioned, to signify the money wherewith he purchased this small territory.

2276, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1728, &c.  
from Gen.  
xxxvii. to  
the end.

Jacob's prophecies, or blessings to his sons vindicated.

Jacob is the first, that we read of, who particularly declared the future state of every one of his sons, when he left the world; but it has been an ancient opinion, that the souls of excellent men, the nearer they approach to their departure hence, the more divine they grew, had a clearer prospect of things to come, and (as (x) Xenophon makes Cyrus speak) *at the point of death, became prophetic*. Though therefore the last words which we find our patriarch uttering to his sons, may be rather accounted prophecies than benedictions; yet since the text assures us, that (y) *he blessed every one with a separate blessing*, we may fairly infer, that though he found reason to rebuke the three eldest very sharply; yet if his rebukes, and the punishment pronounced against them, had the good effect to bring them to a due sense of their transgressions, it was a blessing to them, though not a temporal one; though even in this last sense, it cannot be said, but that he blessed them likewise, since he assigned each of them a lot in the inheritance of the promised land, which it was in his power to have deprived them of.

However this be, (z) it is certain that all impartial critics have observed, that the style of these blessings or prophecies (call them which we will) is much more lofty than what we meet with in the other parts of this book; and therefore some have imagined, that Jacob did not deliver these very words, but that Moses put the sense of what he said into such poetical expressions. But to me it seems more reasonable to think, that the spirit of prophecy now coming upon the good old patriarch, raised his diction, as well as sentiments; even as Moses himself is found to have delivered (a) his benedictions in a strain more sublime than what occurs in his other writings.

It is true, indeed, that in the predictions of the patriarchs, as well as in the benedictions of Moses, several comparisons do occur which are taken from brute animals. Thus Judah is compared to a *lion*, Issachar to an *ass*, Dan to a *serpent*, Benjamin to a *wolf*, and Naphtali to an *hind let loose*. But this is so far from being a disparagement to the prophetic spirit, that it is a commendation

(x) Lib. 8. (y) Gen. xlix. 28. (z) Patrick's Commentary. (a) Deut. xxxiii.



of it; since if the *lion* be a proper emblem of *power* and *strength*; if the *ass* be an image of *labour* and *patience*; if the *serpent*, an hieroglyphic of *guile* and *subtily*; if the *wolf*, a symbol of *violence* and *outrage*; and if *an hind let loose* be no bad representation of a people loving liberty and freedom; then were these qualities, which nothing but a divine spirit could foresee, abundantly specified, (as their respective histories shew, in the posterity of the several heads of tribes to which they are applied.

And as these comparisons are a kind of testimony of the divine inspiration of the holy patriarch upon this occasion, so are they far from being any diminution of the dignity of the subject he was then treating of; since a man must be a stranger to all compositions of this kind, who is not persuaded, that comparisons taken from the animal world, are, as it were, the sinews and support of what we call the Sublime; and who finds not himself less inclined to cavil at Jacob's manner of expression, when he perceives the lofty Homer comparing his heroes so frequently to a lion, a wolf, an ass, a torrent, or a tree, according to the circumstances he places them in, or the different point of light wherein he thinks proper to take them. And I mention it as an argument of the truth and excellency of the Mosaic history, that we find its author adhering to the original simplicity, and pursuing that very method of writing, which was certainly in vogue, when the most ancient books that we know any thing of were composed.

Moses's method of writing, (as we have had occasion more than once to take notice) is very succinct; and therefore when he tells us, that upon Joseph's coming into Egypt, and being sold to Potiphar captain of the guard, he commenced steward of his household, we must not suppose, that there did not a sufficient space of time intervene to qualify him for that office. What therefore some of the Jewish doctors tell us, seems not improbable, viz. that his master, as soon as he bought him, sent him to school, and had him instructed, not in the language only, but in all the learning of the Egyptians. However this be, it is certain that there is no small affinity between the Hebrew and Egyptian tongue; so that a person of good natural parts, and of an age the fittest that could be for learning any thing, might, with a little diligence and application, make himself master of it in a very short time.

A. M.  
2276, &c.  
Ant. Chris.  
1728, &c.  
from Gen.  
xxxvii. to  
the end.

Why Joseph might be made Potiphar's steward very soon.

A. M.  
2276, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1728, &c.  
from Gen.  
xxxviii. to  
the end.

Joseph indeed, as we may observe, talked to his brethren by an interpreter; and that he might do, though the difference between the two tongues was not very great. (b) A Frenchman, we see, is not understood at first by an Italian or Spaniard, though all the three languages are derived from the same original; but when once he is let into the knowledge of this, and comes to perceive their different formations and constructions, what was foreign to him before, soon becomes familiar. And, in like manner, Joseph, with a small matter of instruction, and some observation of his own, might be let into the secret of the Egyptian language, the nature of their accounts, and the customs of the country, and so become every way qualified to give the content, we find he did, in the place to which he was advanced.

In what  
sense Poti-  
phar, tho'  
a married  
man, is  
called an  
eunuch.

(c) The notion that we have of an eunuch, is a person who has lost his virility; and therefore to assign him a wife, (as we find Potiphar had a very naughty one), may seem a manifest incongruity; but for this there is an easy solution to be given. The word *Saris* indeed denotes equally an *eunuch*, and any *court minister*; and the reason of this ambiguity is, — That as eastern kings, for their greater security, were wont to have slaves, who were castrated, to attend the chambers of their wives and concubines, and, upon proof of their fidelity, did frequently advance them to the other court-employments, such as being privy-counsellors, high-chamberlains, captains of their guards, &c. it hence came to pass, that the title of *eunuch* was conferred on any who were promoted to those posts of honour and trust, even though they were not emasculated. And indeed when we read in the books of Kings and Chronicles, so frequent mention made of eunuchs about the person of David, and other Jewish princes, we must be far from supposing that these were all eunuchs in reality, since it was unlawful, (d) according to their historian, in that nation, to castrate even a domestic animal; and according to the institution of their law, an express prohibition it was, that (e) *he who had his privy members cut off, should not enter into the congregation of the Lord.*

(b) Le Clerc's Commentary, in Gen. xlii. 23. (c) Heidegger's Hist. patriarch. vol. 2. exercit. 20. (d) Joseph. Antiq. l. 4. c. 8. (e) Deut. xxiii. 1.

Both the Arabic version, and the Targum of Onkelos, A. M. 2276, &c. Ant. Christ. 1728, &c. from Gen. xxxviii. to the end. are therefore very right in rendering the word, *a prince, or minister* of Pharaoh: for if we compare the several parts of his history, we shall find, (*f*) that Potiphar had the chief command of the forces that guarded the person and palace-royal: that as such he presided in all courts and causes, that had a more immediate relation to these; that he had power under the king, of judging and deciding all cases within those walls, of imprisoning and releasing, of life and death, and of hastening or suspending the execution of capital punishments.

And if Potiphar was a person invested with all this authority, it may seem a little strange, why he did not immediately put Joseph to death; since, had his wife's accusation been true, his crime deserved no less a punishment: but whether it was, that Joseph had found means to vindicate himself, by the mediation of the keeper of the prison, who was Potiphar's deputy, though there is no account of it in Scripture; or God, in behalf of the righteous, might interpose to mollify the heart of this great man, and restrain his hand from doing violence; the issue of the matters shews, that he was in a short time convinced of his innocence, or otherwise it cannot be believed, that he would have suffered him to be made so easy, and to be invested with so much power in the prison; though, at the same time, he might not think proper to release him, for fear that so public an acquittal might bring disreputation both to his wife and himself.

Joseph could not but foresee, that to live in the palaces of kings, and to accept of high posts and honours, would be very hazardous to his virtue. (*g*) But when he perceived the hand of Providence so visible in raising him, by ways and means so very extraordinary, to eminence, and an office wherein he would have it in his power to be beneficial to so very many, he could not refuse the offers which the king made him, without being rebellious to the will and destination of God. To him therefore who had secured him hitherto, he might in this case commit the custody of his innocence, and accept of the usual ensigns of honour, without incurring the censure of vanity or ostentation.

(*f*) Bibliotheca Bibl. on Gen. vol. 2. occas. annot. 39.  
(*g*) Heidegger's Hist. patriarch. vol. 2. exer. 20.

A. M.  
2276, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1728, &c.  
from Gen.  
xxxvii. to  
the end.  
and marry  
an Egyptian  
woman.

And though, in after ages, all marriages with infidels were certainly prohibited; yet there seems to be at this time a certain dispensation current, for as much as Judah, to be sure, if not more of Joseph's brethren, had done the same: besides that, in Joseph's case, there was something peculiar. (b) For as he was in a strange country, he had not an opportunity of making his addresses to any of the daughters of the seed of Abraham; as the match was of the king's making, he was not at liberty to decline it, without forfeiting his pretensions to the royal favour, and consequently to the means of doing so much good; and as it is not improbable, that he might be advised to it by a particular revelation, so it is highly reasonable to believe, that he converted his wife, at least to the worship of the true God, before he espoused her: even though there should be nothing in that opinion of the rabbins, that he made a proselyte likewise of her father, the priest of On, (who could not but be desirous to purchase at any rate so advantageous an alliance), and took this occasion to establish the rite of circumcision, if not in all Egypt, at least among persons of the sacred order, who (according to the account of those who wrote the history of that country) in very early days certainly were not without it.

That he  
was not ac-  
customed to  
swear.

Some may imagine, that, the better to personate an Egyptian Lord, and thereby conceal himself from his brethren, or rather to comply with the language of the court in this particular, *Joseph swore by the life of Pharaoh*, in the same manner as the Romans, in adulation to their emperor, were wont to swear by his genius. It must be acknowledged indeed, that as every oath is a solemn appeal to God, to swear by any creature whatever must needs be an impious and idolatrous act; and therefore the proper solution of this matter is, — not that oaths of this kind were allowable before the institution of Christianity, but that Joseph, in making use of these words, did not swear at all. (i) For since every oath implies in it, either an invocation of some witness, or a postulation of some revenge, (as our great Sanderson terms it), to say that Joseph appealed to the life of Pharaoh, as a witness, is ridiculous; and without a very forced construction indeed, the words can never be supposed to include in them a curse; and therefore their most easy signification must be, what we call *indicative*: *By the life of Pharaoh*, i. e. as sure and certain as Pharaoh li-

(b) Heidegger, *ibid.* (i) Sanderson's *Prælec.* 5. § 7.

veth,

veith, ye are spies ; just as we say, *By the sun that shines I speak truth*, i. e. as sure as the sun shines ; neither of which can with any propriety be called *oaths*, but only vehement asseverations.

A. M.  
2276, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1728, &c.  
from Gen.  
xxxvii. to  
the end.

The words which Joseph's steward, sent to apprehend his brethren, makes use of, are, (k) *Is not this the cup in which my Lord drinketh, and whereby indeed he divineth ?* and the words wherein Joseph accosts them, when they are brought before them, are, (l) *What deed is this that ye have done ? Wot ye not, that such a man as I can certainly divine ?* And from hence (m) some have imagined, that Joseph was a person addicted to magical art, and by virtue of this single cup, could discover strange and wonderful things. But, in answer to this, others have observed, (n) that the word *Nasbah*, which we render *to divine*, was formerly of an indefinite sense, and meant in general *to discover*, or *make a trial of* ; and accordingly they have devised a double acceptation of the steward's words, as if he should say, — *By this cup (viz. left in a careless and negligent manner) my master was minded to make an experiment, whether you were thieves, or honest men, or say, — By this cup, wherein he drinketh, my \* master discovers and finds out the temper and dispositions of men, when they are in liquor.* But both of these senses seem a little too much forced, and are far from agreeing with the other words of Joseph.

That he did  
not practise  
divination,  
though he  
seems to  
pretend it.

It must be acknowledged therefore, that as magical arts of divers kinds were in use among the Egyptians, many years before Joseph's time of coming thither ; and that as Joseph, by his wonderful skill of interpreting dreams, had gained a great reputation for knowledge, and perhaps, among the populace, might pass for a diviner ; he took an occasion from hence, in order to carry on his design, to assume a character that did not belong to him. There is no reason however to infer from the words, that \* the art

(k) Gen. xliv. 5.

(l) Ver. 15.

(m) Vid. Saurin's

Dissertation 38.

(n) Poole's Annotations, and Patrick's Commentary.

\* What may seem to give some small sanction to this sense, is that known passage in Horace.

Reges dicuntur multis urgere cucullis,

Et tentare mero, quem perspexisse laborant,

An sit amicitia dignus.

De Arte Poet.

\* Julius Serenus tells us, that the method of divining by the cup,

A. M.  
2276, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1728, &c.  
from Gen.  
xxxvii. to  
the end.

art of divining by the cup, (as it came afterwards to be practised), was then in use in Egypt; (*o*) because the words before us (according to the sense of the best interpreters) do not relate to this cup as the instrument, but as the subject of divination; not as the thing with which, but as the thing concerning which this magical inquiry was to be made. And so the sense of the steward's words will be, "How could you think, but that my Lord, who is so great a man at divination, would use the best of his skill to find out the persons who had robbed him of the cup, which he so much prizes?" And this tallies exactly with the subsequent words of Joseph, *Wot ye not that such a man as I*, "I, who have raised myself to this eminence, by my interpretation of dreams, and may therefore well be accounted an adept in all other sciences, should be long at a loss to know who the persons were that had taken away my cup?" This seems to be the natural sense of the words; the only one, indeed, that they will fairly bear; (*p*) And though they do not imply, that Joseph was actually a magician, yet they seem to justify the notions of those men, who think that he carried his dissimulation to his brethren so far as to make them believe that he really had some knowledge that way.

Was not  
unkind to  
his father,  
or brethren.

The Royal Psalmist, in his description of the sufferings of Joseph, (*q*) tells us, that he was not only sold to be a *bond-servant*, but that *his feet were hurt in the stocks, and*

cup, among the Assyrians, Chaldees, and Egyptians, was to fill it first with water, then to throw it into thin plates of gold and silver, together with some precious stones, whereon were engraven certain characters; and after that, the persons who came to consult the oracle, used certain forms of incantation, and so calling upon the devil, were wont to receive their answers several ways: Sometimes by articulate sounds; sometimes by the characters which were in the cup, rising upon the surface of the water, and by their arrangement, forming the answer; and many times by the visible appearing of the persons themselves, about whom the oracle was consulted. Cornelius Agrippa (*De occult. philos.* l. 1. c. 57.) tells us likewise, that the manner of some was, to pour melted wax into the cup, wherein was water, which wax would range itself in order, and so form answers, according to the questions proposed; *Saurin's Dissertation* 38.; and *Heidegger's Hist. patriar. exercit.* 20.

(*o*) Heidegger's *Hist. patriar.* vol. 2. exercit. 20. (*p*) *Saurin's Dissertations.* (*q*) *Psal.* cv. 17, 18.

iron

*iron entered into his soul*, which signifies at least that he endured very hard usage, before *the time came that his cause was known*, and his innocence discovered; and of all this his brethren, when they sold him into slavery, were properly the occasions. So that, could we conceive, that any angry resentments could harbour in a breast so fully satisfied of a divine providence in all this dispensation, we might have imagined, that Joseph took this opportunity to retaliate the injuries which were formerly done to him; but this he did not. He desired indeed to be informed in the circumstances of their family, without asking any direct question; and therefore, he mentions his suspicion of their being spies, merely to fish out of them (as we call it) whether his aged father, and his younger brother were yet alive. For, upon their return, we may perceive (especially considering that it is the first minister of a mighty state that speaks to a company of poor indigent shepherds) a wonderful tenderness in his expressions: (r) *Is your father well; the old man of whom you spake, is he still alive?* besides the instructions which he plainly gave his steward, to bid them be of good cheer. When he understood that his father and brother were both alive, and as yet had not matters prepared for the removal of his father and family, the eagerness of his affections may perhaps be thought to have carried him a little too far, in demanding his brother to be brought to him; but we are not to doubt but that Joseph, by the divine spirit, wherewith he was endowed, did certainly foresee what would happen, (s) and that his father's grieving a little time for Benjamin would be so far from endangering his health, that it would only increase his joy, when he saw him again, and dispose him the better for the reception of the welcome news of his own advancement in Egypt; which, had it come all upon him at once, and on a sudden, might have been enough to have bereaved him of his senses, if not of his life itself, by a surfeit of joy.

Upon their second dismissal, after a very kind entertainment, it may be thought perhaps a piece of cruelty in Joseph, to have his cup conveyed (of all others) into Benjamin's sack, and thereupon to threaten to make him a bond-slave for a pretended felony: But herein was Joseph's great policy and nicety of judgment. He himself had been severely treated by the rest when he was young, and therefore was minded to make an experiment, in what manner

(r) Gen. xliii. 7.

(s) Universal History, l. i. c. 7.

A. M.  
2276, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1728, &c.  
from Gen.  
xxxvii. to  
the end.

A. M.  
2276, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1728, &c.  
from Gen.  
xxxvii. to  
the end.

they would now behave towards his brother; whether they would forsake him in his distress, and give him up to be a bond-slave, as they had sold him for one; or whether they would stand by him in all events, make intercession for his release, or adventure to share his fate.

This perhaps may be thought his carrying the matter a little too far: But without this conduct, Joseph could not have known, whether his brethren rightly deserved the favour and protection which he might then design, and afterwards granted them. Without this conduct, we had not had perhaps the most lively images that are to be met with in Scripture, of injured innocence, of meekness and forbearance, and the triumphs of a good conscience, in him; and of the fears and terrors, the convictions and self-condemnations of long concealed guilt, in them. Without this conduct, we had not had this lovely portraiture of paternal tenderness, as well as brotherly affection; we had never had those solemn, sad, and melting words of Jacob, (t) *If I am bereaved of my children, I am bereaved*, enough to pierce a tender parent's heart; or those others, (u) *Joseph is yet alive, I will see him before I die*, enough to raise it into joy and exultation again. In a word, without this conduct, he had never had that courteous, that moving, that pleasingly mournful speech, wherein Moses makes Judah address Joseph, in behalf of his poor brother Benjamin, which exceeds all the compositions of human invention, and flows indeed from such natural passions, as art can never imitate.

(t) Gen. xliii. 14.

(u) Chap. xlv. 28.

\* The observation of a learned author upon the dialogue between Jacob and his sons, as well as the speech of Judah, is well worth our notice and serious consideration. "Since such passages are related by men, who affect no art, and who lived long after the parties who first uttered them, we cannot conceive how all particulars could be so naturally and fully recorded, unless they had been suggested by his spirit, who gives mouth and speech to man; who being alike present to all successions, is able to communicate the secret thoughts of forefathers to their children, and put the very words of the deceased (never registered before) into the mouths or pens of their successors, for many generations after, and that as exactly and distinctly as if they had been caught in characters of steel or brass, as they issued out of their mouths: For it is plain, every circumstance is here related, with such natural specifications



imitate. So that, upon a review of his whole conduct, Joseph is so far from deserving blame, that all this seeming rigour and imperiousness of his did eventually produce a great deal of good ; and was in reality no more than the heightening the distress, or thickening the plot (as we call it in a play) to make the discovery, or future felicity he intended his family, more conspicuous and agreeable.

It must be acknowledged indeed, that Moses has done justice to the history of Joseph, and employed most of the tender passions of human nature to give it a better grace ; but we must not therefore infer, either that he hath transcribed truth, or committed an error, in recording the quality of the persons employed to embalm his father. What has led some into a great mistake concerning the origin of physic, and that it was of no vogue in the world until the days of Hippocrates, was the great superiority of skill and genius which he demonstrated both in his practice and writings. The truth is, the divine old man (as (x) one expresses it) did so totally eclipse all who went before him, that as posterity esteemed his works the canon, so did it look upon him as the great father of medicine. But if we will credit the testimony of (y) Galen, (who though a late writer, was a very competent judge), we shall find, that he was far from being the first of his profession, even among the Greeks.

Homer indeed, in his poem of the Trojan war, seems to have cut out more work for surgeons than physicians ; and therefore we find the chief of the faculty only employed \* in healing wounds, extracting arrows, preparing anodynes, and other such like external operations ; but if we look into his other work, which is of a more pacific strain, we shall soon discern the use of internal applications

“ specifications, (as he terms it), as if Moses had heard them talk ; and therefore could not have been thus represented to us, unless they had been written by his divine direction, who knows all things, as well forepast, as present, or to come ;” *Dr. Jackson on the Creed*, l. i. c. 4.

(x) Warburton's divine legation of Moses, vol. 2. lib. 4.

(y) Meth. Medic. lib. 1.

\* Ἰατροὶ γὰρ ἀνὴρ πολλῶν ἀνίστατο ἄλλων  
ἰῆς τ' ἐκλάμυνεν ἐπὶ τ' ἡπύη φάρμακα πάσσειν.

*Iliad* 9.

A. M.  
2276, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1728, &c.  
from Gen.  
xx. vii. to  
the end.

when we find \* Helen brought in, as giving Telemachus a preparation of opium, which (as the poet informs us) she had from Polydamna, the wife of Thon, an Egyptian physician of great note. And well might the physicians of Egypt be held in great esteem, “ when (as Herodotus relates the matter) every distinct distemper had its proper physician, who confined himself to the study and cure of that only; so that one sort having the cure of the eyes, another of the head, another of the teeth, another of the belly, and another of occult diseases, we need not wonder, that all places were crowded with men of this profession, or that the physicians of Joseph’s household should be represented as a large number.” True it is indeed, that these physicians (and the very best of them) were employed in embalming the dead; but then, there was a wise designation in this, viz. (z) not only to improve them in the knowledge of anatomy, but to enable them likewise to discover the causes of such disorders as were a baffle to their art. And therefore it was the custom of the kings of Egypt, (as Pliny informs us), to cause dead bodies to be dissected, on purpose to find out the origin and nature of all diseases. Thus it appears from the concurring testimony of other historians, that the practice of physic was a common thing in Egypt, as early as the days of Joseph; that the multitude of its professors makes it no strange thing, his having a number of them in his family; and that the nature of the thing, as well as the order of the state, obliged the very best of them to become dissectors and embalmers.

Joseph’s  
public ma-  
nagement.

This may serve for a vindication of what the sacred historian has related of our patriarch in his private life, and we come now to consider him in his public capacity. As soon as he had foretold the king the long famine that was to befall Egypt, he gave him advice to have the fifth part of the product of the country laid up in store against the ensuing want. The tenth part (according to the constitution of the nation) belonged to the king already, and to advise him to purchase as much more, for seven succeeding years,

\* Τοῦ Διὸς θυγάτηρ ἔχε φάρμακα μητιόνενα  
Ἑσθλά, τὰ οἱ Πολύδამνα πόρεν Ὀἴῳ παρακοίῃς  
Ἀιγυπτίῃ, τῇ πλεῖστα φέρει ζειδωρὸς ἄγρεα  
φάρμακα, πολλὰ μὲν ἐσθγὰ μεινυμένα, πολλὰ δὲ λυγρά.  
Ἰηρὸς δὲ ἕκαστος ἐπιστάμενος περὶ πάντων  
Ἀνθρώπων

Odyss. lib. 4.

(z) Warburton, *ibid.*

was to consider him as the public father of his people, for whose support and welfare he was concerned to provide. When himself was appointed to the office of gathering in the corn, he took care, no doubt, to have his granaries in fortified places, and, as the scarceness increased, to have them secured by a guard of the king's forces, to prevent insurrections and depredations. When he came to open his storehouses, he sold to the poor and to the rich; and was it not highly reasonable that he who bought the corn, should likewise sell it? or that the money, which, by the king's commission and order, had been laid out for such a stock of provisions against the approaching necessities of his subjects, should return to the king's coffers again, to answer his occasions? When their money was gone, they brought him their cattle; but this they did of their own accord, without any compulsion or circumvention; and might he not as legally exchange corn for cattle, as he did it for money before? His corn he kept up perhaps at an high rate; but had he sold it cheap, or given it *gratis*, the people, very likely, would have been profuse and wanton in the consumption of it; whereas his great care and concern was, to make it hold out the whole time of the famine. He obliged the inhabitants of one city and district to remove, or make room for those of another; but this he might do, not so much to shew their subjection to Pharaoh, as to secure the public peace, by disabling them, in this way, from entering into any seditious measures and combinations.

It cannot be imagined indeed, but that in a time of such general want and calamity, mens minds would be ripe for rapine, violence, and mutiny; and yet we meet with no one commotion, during the whole period of his critical ministry, which bespeaks the skill of the mariner, when he is found able to steer steady in the midst of so tumultuous a sea. In fine, after he had a long while executed his high trust, and the years of famine were come to a conclusion, he gave the people back their liberties and estates, reserving to the king no more than a double tenth out of the produce of their lands, as a tribute of their vassalage; which, considering the richness of the soil, and the little pains required in cultivating it, was an imposition far from being burthensome to the subject, or vastly disproportionate to the benefit they had received.

There

A. M.  
2276, &c.  
Ant. Chris.  
1728, &c.  
from Gen.  
xxxviii. to  
the end.

A. M.  
2276, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1728, &c.  
from Gen.  
xxxvii, to  
the end.

and favour-  
ing the  
priests, vin-  
dicated.

There is but one thing more that I find objected to Joseph in this public station, (a) and that is, his favour and indulgence to the priests, (and priests that were idolaters), in sparing their lands, and laying no tax upon them.

The Jewish doctors have a tradition, that when Joseph was in prison, and his master had bad designs against him, it was by the interests of the priests that he was set free, and that, consequently, in gratitude, he could not do less than indulge them with some particular marks of his favour, when he came into such a compass of power. But there is no occasion for any such fiction as this. (b) The priests of Egypt were taken out of the chief families of the nation; they were persons of the first quality; were consulted upon all public affairs of consequence; and, upon a vacancy, generally some one of them succeeded to the crown. It was not likely therefore, that persons of their high rank and station wanted Joseph's assistance, to strengthen their interest, for the obtaining of any immunities; nor is it apparent that they had it. On the contrary, it seems evident from the text, that whatever peculiar favours they were vouchsafed, proceeded all not from Joseph's good-will, but from the king's immediate direction and appointment: For the *land of the priests bought he not*, says Moses, (*Ci chok le-cohanim meeth Pharaoh*) because Pharaoh had made a decree expressly against it, or, (in analogy to our translation), *because there was an appointment for the priests, even from Pharaoh; and the portion which he gave them, they did eat, and therefore sold not their lands.*

Why Pharaoh, when he thought fit to lessen the property of his common subjects, did not, at the same time, attempt to reduce the exorbitant riches of the priests, we may, in some measure account for, if we consider, that according to the constitution of the kingdom, the Egyptian priests were obliged to provide all sacrifices, and to bear all the charges of the national religion, which, in those days, was not a little expensive; so very expensive, that we find, in those countries where the soil was not fruitful, and consequently the people poor, men did not know well how to bear the burden of religion; and therefore Lycurgus, when he reformed the Lacedemonian state, instituted sacrifices, the meanest and cheapest that he could think of. But Egypt, we know, was a rich and fertile country, and there-

(a) Lord Shaftesbury's Characteristics, vol. 3. miscel. 3.

(b) Shuckford's Connection, vol. 2. l. 7.

fore, in all probability, the king and people being desirous that religion should appear with a suitable splendour, made settlements upon the priests from † the very first institution of government among them, answerable to the charges of their function. Add to this, that the priests of Egypt were the whole body of the nobility of the land; that they were the king's counsellors and assistants in all the affairs which concerned the public; (c) were joint agents with him in some things, and in others his directors and instructors. Add again, that they were the professors and cultivators of astronomy, geometry, and other useful sciences; that they were the keepers of the public registers, memoirs, and chronicles of the kingdom; and, in a word, that under the king, they were the supreme magistrates, and filled all prime offices of honour and trust: And considering them under these views, we may possibly allow, that Pharaoh might think that they had not too much to support the station they were to act in, and for that reason, ordered that no tax should be raised upon them.

Thus we have endeavoured to clear the sacred history from all imputations of improbability or absurdity, as well as Joseph's conduct both public and private, from all unjust censure, during this period of time; and may now produce the testimony of several Heathen writers, in confirmation of many particulars related herein.

That the memory of Joseph, and of the wonderful benefits he did, during the time of his administration, was preserved among the Egyptians, under the worship of Apis, Serapis, and Osiris; that the Egyptian manner of interpreting dreams was taken from what occurs in his history; and that the *Charistia*, mentioned by (d) Valerius and (e) Ovid), viz. *festival entertainments*, either for confirming friendship, or renewing it when broken, were transcripts of the feast which Joseph made for his brethren, is the general opinion of such learned men as have made the deepest inquiry into these matters.

† It is the opinion of some, that Mizraim, the founder of the Egyptian monarchy, might, in memory of some Nochaical tradition, set apart, at the very first, a maintenance for the priesthood, however degenerate and corrupt. Be this as it will, it is certain, that in process of time, their allotment increased to such a degree, that they became possessors of one third part of the whole land, according to Diodorus, l. i.

(c) Diodorus Siculus, l. i. (d) Lib. ii. c. i. (e) De Fast. l. 2.

That

A. M.  
2276, &c.  
Ant. Chris.  
1728, &c.  
from Gen.  
xxxvii. to  
the end.

A. M.  
2276, &c.  
Ant. Chris.  
1728, &c.  
from Gen.  
xxxvii. to  
the end.

That the patriarch Jacob went down with his whole family into Egypt, where he found his son Joseph in great power and prosperity, is reported by several Pagan writers, who are cited (*f*) by Eusebius: That the Egyptians, (according to what Moses tells of them) had an unaccountable antipathy to shepherds, especially foreigners, is related (*g*) by Herodotus: That the priests in that country enjoyed several high privileges, and were exempted from paying all taxes and public imposts, is every where apparent (*h*) from Diodorus: And that Joseph was just such a person as Moses has represented him, the testimony (*i*) of Justin, (with which we conclude the patriarch's story), is enough to convince us. "Joseph, the youngest of his brethren," says he, "had a superiority of genius, which made them fear him, and sell him to foreign merchants, who carried him into Egypt, where he practised the magic art with such success as rendered him very dear to the king. He had a great sagacity in the explanation of prodigies and dreams; nor was there any thing so abstruse, either in divine or human knowledge, that he did not readily attain. He foretold a great dearth, several years before it happened, and prevented a famine's falling upon Egypt, by advising the king to publish a decree, requiring the people to make provision for divers years. His knowledge, in short, was so great, that the Egyptians listened to the prophecies coming from his mouth, as if they had proceeded, not from man, but from God himself."

#### DISSERTATION IV.

##### *Of the Person and Book of Job.*

The person  
and book of  
Job real.

THAT Job was a real person, and not a fictitious character, and his story matter of fact, and not a parabolical representation; \* is manifest from all those places,

(*f*) Prepar. Evan. l. 9.

(*g*) Lib. 2. c. 47.

(*h*) Lib. 1.

(*i*) Lib. 36. c. 2.

\* Nay, upon the supposition that the whole book were a dramatic composition, this would not invalidate the proofs which we have from Scripture, of the real existence of this holy patriarch, or the truth of his exemplary story. On the contrary, it much confirms them; seeing it was the general practice of dramatic writers, of the serious kind, to chuse any illustrious character, and well-known story, in order to give

ces in Scripture, where mention is made of him : And therefore when, in the Old Testament, we find Job put in company with Noah and Daniel, and equally distinguished for his righteousness, as in the New he is commended for his patience, we cannot well suppose that the Spirit of God, in both these places, intended to delude us with a phantom instead of presenting us with a real man.

A. M.  
2276, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1723, &c.  
from Gen.  
xixvii. to  
the end.

Whether we allow that the book of Job is of divine revelation or not, we cannot but perceive, that it has in it all the lineaments of a real history ; since the name, the quality, the country of the man, the number of his children, the bulk of his substance, and the pedigree of his friends, together with the names and situations of several regions, can give us the idea of nothing else : Though it must not be dissembled, that in the introduction more especially, there is an allegorical turn given to some matters, which (as they relate to spiritual beings) would not otherwise so easily affect the imagination of the vulgar.

(k) Job, according to the fairest probability, was in a direct line, \* descended from Abraham by his wife Keturah :

give the piece its due dignity and efficacy : And yet, (what is very surprising), the writers on both sides, as well those who hold the book of Job to be dramatical, as those who hold it to be historical, have fallen into this paralogism, that if dramatical, then the person and history of Job is fictitious : Which nothing but their inattention to the nature of a dramatic work, and to the practice of dramatic writers, could have occasioned ;

*Warburton's Divine Ligation, vol. 3 lib. 6.*

(k) Spanheim's History of Job, c. 5.

\* At the end of the Greek, the Arabic, and Vulgate versions of Job, we have this account of his genealogy, which is said to have been taken from the ancient Syriac. " Job dwelt in Aushitis, upon the confines of Idumea and Arabia His name at first was Jobab. He married an Arabian woman, by whom he had a son called *Eznou*. For his part, he was the son of Zerah, of the posterity of Esau, and a native of Bozrah ; so that he was the fifth from Abraham. He reigned in Edom, and the kings before him reigned in this order :—Balak, the son of Beor, in the city of Dinhabah ; and after him Job, otherwise called Jobab. Job was succeeded by Hulham, prince of Teman ; after him reigned Hadad, the son of Bedad, who defeated the Midianites in the fields of Moab. Job's friends who came to visit him, were Eliphaz, of the posterity of Esau, king of Teman ; Bildad king of the Shuhites ; and Zophar king of the Naamathites." According to this account, Job

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must

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from Gen.  
xxxvii. to  
the end.

rah : For by Keturah, the patriarch had several sons, whom he, being resolved to reserve the chief patrimony entire for Isaac, portioned out, (as we call it), and sent them into the east to seek their fortunes, so that most of them settled in Arabia ; and for this reason perhaps it is, that the author of his history records of Job, that before his calamities came upon him, (l) *He was the greatest of all the men of the east.*

The character which God himself gives of Abraham is this, — (m) *I know him, that he will command his children, and his household after him, and that they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment ; which may well afford another argument for Job's being descended from the house of Abraham, since we find dispersed every where in his speeches, (n) such noble sentiments of creation and providence, of the nature of angels, and the fall of man, of punishments for sin, and justification by grace, of a redemption, resurrection, and final judgment ; notions which he could never have struck out from the light of nature, but must have had them originally from the institution of his parents, as they successively derived them from the first father of the faithful, who had them immediately from God. But (what is an undoubted matter of fact) by his wife Keturah, (o) Abraham had a son, whose name was Shuah, and therefore when we read of (p) Bildad the Shuhite, we may well suppose, that he was a descendent from that family ; who, living in the neighbourhood, perhaps, might think himself obliged, by the ties of consanguinity, to go and visit his kinsman, in such sad circumstances of distress.*

His country.

In what part of the world the land of Uz lay, various opinions have been started, according to the several families from whence Job is made to descend : But upon supposition that he sprung from one of Keturah's sons, his habitation is most properly placed in that part of Arabia. He must be contemporary with Moses, and the three friends who came to see him, must be kings. But the learned Spanheim, who has examined this matter to the bottom, finds reason to think, that Job was a distinct person from Jobab ; was sprung from Abraham by his wife Keturah ; and lived several years before the time of Moses ; *Calmet's Dictionary* on the word *Job* ; and *Spanheim's Life of him.*

(l) Job i. 3.

(m) Gen. xviii. 19.

(n) Spanheim's History of Job, c. 10.

(o) Gen. xxv. 2.

(p) Job. ii. 11.



*terra*, which has to the north, Mesopotamia and the river A. M. Euphrates; to the west, Syria, Palestine, and Idumea; 2276, &c. and to the south, the mountains of the happy Arabia. Ant. Christ. 1728, &c. And this description receives some farther confirmation from Gen. xxxvii. to the end. from the mention which the history makes of the Chaldeans and Sabæans plundering his estate, who were certainly inhabitants in these parts.

In what age of the world this great exemplar of suffering lived, the difference of opinions is not small, even though there be some criterions to direct our judgment in this matter. (*q*) That Job lived in the world much earlier than has been imagined, is, in some measure, evident from his mentioning, with abhorrence, that ancient kind of idolatry, the adoration of the sun and moon, and yet passing by in silence the Egyptian bondage, which, upon one occasion or other, could have hardly escaped the notice, either of him or his friends, had it not been subsequent to their times. That he lived in the days of the patriarchs therefore is very probable, from the long duration of his life, which continuing an hundred and forty years after his restoration, could hardly be less in all than two hundred; a longer period than either Abraham or Isaac reached. That he lived before the law, may be gathered from his making not so much as one allusion to it, through the whole course of his life, and from his offering, (even with God's order and acceptance), such sacrifices in his own country, as were not allowable, after the promulgation of the law, to be offered in any other place, but that (*r*) *which the Lord had chose in one of the tribes of Israel*; and that he lived after Jacob, may be inferred from the character given him by God, *viz.* that for uprightness, and the fear of God, there was none like unto him upon the earth, which large commendation could not be allowed to any, whilst Jacob, God's favourite servant, was alive; nor can we suppose it proper to be given to any, even while Joseph lived, who, in moral virtues, and other excellencies, made as bright a figure as any in his time. Thus may the computation be reduced to a very narrow compass; and though it be extremely difficult to point out the precise time, yet the general opinion is, that he lived in the time of the children of Israel's bondage, and therefore his birth is placed in the very same year wherein Jacob went down into Egypt, and the beginning of his trial in the year when Joseph died;

(*q*) Spanheim, c. 3.

(*r*) Deut. xii. 13, 14.  
L 1 2

though

A. M.  
2276, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1728, &c.  
from Gen.  
xxxvii. to  
the end.

His former  
greatness,  
and subse-  
quent suf-  
ferings.

(s) though it might probably be less liable to exception, if his birth were set a little lower, much about the time of Jacob's death; and then Joseph, who survived his father about four and fifty years, will be dead about sixteen years, at which time Job might justly deserve the extraordinary character which God gave him, and have no man then alive, in virtue and integrity, able to compare with him.

How considerable a figure Job made in the world, both in temporal and spiritual blessings, the vastness of his stock (which was the wealth of that age), consisting of seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yokes of oxen, and five hundred she-asses; the largeness of his family, consisting of seven sons and three daughters; and the excellency of the character which God was pleased to give him, together with the greatness of his sentiments, and the firmness and constancy of his mind in all he suffered, are a sufficient demonstration: And yet we see, that as soon as God submitted him to the assaults of his spiritual enemy, what a sad catastrophe did befall him. The Sabæans ran away with his asses; the Chaldeans plundered him of his camels; a fire from heaven consumed his sheep and servants; a wind overwhelmed all his children; and while the sense of these losses lay heavy upon his spirits, his body was smitten with a sore disease, in so much that he who, but a few hours before, was the greatest man in the country, in whose presence the young men were afraid to appear, and before whom the angel stood up, to whom princes paid the most awful reverence, and whom nobles, in humble silence, admired; divested of all honour, sits mourning on a bed of ashes, and instead of royal apparel, has (t) *his flesh clothed* (as himself expresses it) *with worms and clods of earth*, and is all overspread with sores and ulcers.

What his  
distemper  
was.

According to the symptoms which Job gives us of himself, his distemper seems to have been a leprosy, but a leprosy of a more malignant kind, (as it always is in hot countries), than our climate (blessed be God) is acquainted with; and those who would have it to be a malady of a more opprobrious name, lose all the sting of the sarcasm, when they are told, that this distemper, be it what it will, was not of Job's contraction, but of Satan's infliction, not the effect or consequence of his vice, but the means appointed for the trial of his virtue.

(s) Howell's History of the Bible.

(t) Job vii. 5.

Their

Their opinion however seems to be well founded, who make this distemper of Job not one simple malady, but a complication of many. For since the great enemy of mankind, saving his life, had a full licence to try his patience to the uttermost, it is not to be questioned but that he played all his batteries upon him : and accordingly we may observe, that (u) besides the plagues pustulated to afflict his body, the devil not only instigated his wife † to grieve his mind, but disturbed his imagination likewise to terrify his conscience. For when the holy man complains, (x) *Thou scarest me with dreams, and terrifiest me with visions*, the analogy of the history will not suffer us to interpret, that God himself did inject these affrightening dreams, but that the devil (to whose temptations he had submitted him) did raise gloomy thoughts, and frame horrid and ghastly objects in his imagination, thereby to urge him to melancholy and despair.

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the end.

How long this load of various calamity lay upon him, is no where mentioned in Scripture ; and therefore since it is submitted to conjecture, they who (to magnify the sufferings) prolong the duration of them to a year, and (as some do) to seven, (y) seem to be regardless of the tender mercies of the Lord ; especially when there are some circumstances in the story, which certainly do countenance a much shorter time. The news of the misfortunes which attended his goods and family, came close upon the heels of one another, and we cannot suppose a long space before he was afflicted in his body. † His three friends seem to have

How long it continued.

(u) Young's Sermons, vol. 2.

† Some of the Jewish doctors imagine, that Dinah, the daughter of Leah, was this wife of Job's ; but this seems to be a mere fiction. The moroseness, and impiety of the woman, as well as the place of her habitation, do no ways suit with Jacob's daughter : and therefore the more probable opinion is, that his wife was an Arabian by birth, and that though the words which we render *curse God and die* may equally bear a quite contrary signification, yet are they not here to be taken in the most favourable sense, because they drew from her meek and patient husband so severe an imprecation, *Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?* Job. ii. 10. ; Spanheim's History of Job, c. 6. (x) Job vii. 14.

(y) Bedford's Scripture-chronology. l. 3. c. 4.

† Eliphaz, the Temanite, was the grandson of Esau, and son of Teman, who dwelt in a city of the same name in Idumea,

not

A. M.  
2276, &c.  
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the end.

have been his near neighbours; and they came to visit him, as soon as they heard of the ill news, which usually flies apace. When they saw his misery, seven days they sat with him in silence: After this, they entered into a discourse with him, and at the end of this discourse (which could not well last above another week) God healed his sores before his friends (who being men of eminence in their country, may be supposed to have business at home; as soon as this melancholy occasion was over) were parted from him. Now, since all this may be included in the space of a month, and a month may be thought time enough for God to have made trial of his faithful servant; when once such trial was made, we have reason to believe, that he would withdraw his heavy hand, because his character in Scripture is, that (z) *he doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men.*

Of the contents of the book of Job.

The unaccountable greatness of Job's calamities had led his friends into a misconception of him, and made them surmise, that it must be the vindictive hand of God, either for some deep hypocrisy, or some secret enormity that fell so heavy upon him: And therefore Eliphaz, in three orations, Bildad, in as many, and Zophar in two, argue, from common topics, that such afflictions as his could come from no hand but God's, and that it was inconsistent with his infinite justice, to afflict without a cause, or punish without guilt; and thereupon charging Job with being either a grievous sinner, or a great hypocrite, they endeavour by all means to extort a confession from him. But Job, conscious of his sincerity to God, and innocence to man, confidently maintains his integrity; and, in speeches returned to every one of theirs, refutes their wicked suggestions, and reproves their injustice and want of charity: but always observes a submissive style and reverence when he comes to speak of God, of whose secret end, in permit-

not far from the confines of Arabia Deserta. Bildad, the Shuhite, was descended from Shuah, the son of Abraham and Keturah. It is almost impossible to find out who Zophar the Naamathite was, though some will have him descended from Esau; but as for Elihu, who comes in afterwards, he was the grandson of Buz, the son of Nahor; lived in the southern parts of Mesopotamia; and upon the supposition of Job's being sprung from Abraham, was his distant relation: *Spanheim's Life of Job, c. 11.*

(z) Lam. iii. 33.

ing this trial to come upon him, being ignorant, he often begs a release from life, lest the continuance of his afflictions should drive him into impatience.

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During these arguments between Job and his friends, there was present a young man, named *Elihu*, who having heard the debates on both sides, and, disliking both their censoriousness, and Job's justification of himself, undertakes to convince them both, by arguments drawn from God's unlimited sovereignty, and unsearchable wisdom, that it was not inconsistent with his justice to lay his afflictions upon the best and most righteous of the sons of men; and that therefore, when any such thing came upon them, their duty was to bear it without murmuring, and to acknowledge the divine goodness in every dispensation.

When every one had spoken what he thought proper, and there was now a general silence in the company, the Lord himself took up the matter, and out of a whirlwind directed his speech to Job; wherein, with the highest amplifications, describing his omnipotence in the formation and disposition of the works of the creation, he so effectually convinced him of his inability to understand the ways and designs of God, that with the profoundest humility he breaks out into this confession and acknowledgment: Behold, (a) *I am vile, what shall I answer thee! I will lay my hand upon my mouth. Once have I spoken, but I will not answer; yea twice, but I will proceed no farther.* This acknowledgment pleased God so well, that he declared himself in favour of Job against his injurious friends, and hereupon putting an end to his sufferings, \*cured him of all his grievances, and rewarded his faith and piety with a portion of earthly felicity, double to what he had before, and with the prolongation of his life, beyond the common extent of those times.

This is a brief analysis of the book of Job: And whoever looks into it with a little more attention, will soon

Its character.

(v) Job. xl. 4, 5.

\* The eastern people have a tradition, that upon God's proposing to make no farther trial of Job, the angel Gabriel descended from heaven, took him by the hand, raised him from the place where he was, struck the ground with his foot, and caused a fountain of the purest water to spring out of it, wherein Job having washed his body, and drank a cup or two of it, found himself perfectly cured and restored to health again; *Calmét's Dictionary* under the word *Job*.

perceive

A. M.  
2276, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1728, &c.  
from Gen.  
xxxvii. to  
the end.

When and  
by whom  
written.

perceive, that the author of it, (whoever he was), (b) has put in practice all the beauties of his art, to make the four persons, whom he brings upon the stage, keep up each his proper character, and maintain the opinions which they were engaged to defend; will soon perceive, that for its loftiness of style, and sublimeness of thoughts, for its liveliness and energy of expression, for the variety of its characters, the fineness of its descriptions, and the grandeur of its imagery, there is hardly such another composition to be found in all the records of antiquity, which has raised the curiosity of all ages, to find out the person who might possibly be the author of it.

Some have imagined, that as it has been no uncommon thing in all ages, for persons of distinction to write their own memoirs, Job himself, or some of his friends at least, who bore a part in the series of this history, might set about the inditing it, if not for any other reason, at least in compliance to its request, (c) *O, that my words were now written, that they were printed in a book!* But though some family records may possibly be kept of events so remarkable as those, that occur in Job's life, † yet the poetical

(b) Universal History, l. i. c. 7. (c) Job. xix. 23.

† St. Jerom, in his preface to the book of Job, informs us, that the verse (in which it is chiefly composed) is heroic. From the beginning of the book to the third chapter, he says, it is prose: but from Job's words, *Let the day perish wherein I was born*, &c. chap. iii. 3. unto these words, *Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes*, chap. xlii. 6. the verses are hexameter, consisting of dactyls and spondees, like the Greek verses of Homer, and the Latin of Virgil. Marianus Victorius, in his note upon this passage of St. Jerom, says, That he has examined the book of Job, and finds St. Jerom's observation to be true. Only we must observe, that the several sentences directing us to the several speakers, (such as these, *Moreover the Lord answered Job, and said*, chap. xl. 1. *Elihu also proceeded and said*, chap. xxxvi. 1. *Elihu spake moreover, and said*, chap. xxxv. 1. &c.), are in prose, and not in verse. St. Jerom makes this farther remark, that the verses in the book of Job do not always consist of dactyls and spondees, but that other feet do frequently occur instead of them; that we often meet in them a word of four syllables, instead of a dactyl and spondee: and that the measure of the verses frequently differs in the number of the syllables of the several feet; but allowing

poetical turn, which is given to the latter part of the book more especially, seems to favour of a more modern composition than suits with the æra wherein we suppose Job to have lived.

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he end.

Others therefore suppose, that the story of Job was at first a plain narrative, written in the Arabian tongue, but that Solomon, or some other poetical genius like him, gave it a dramatic cast, and in order to make the subject more moving, introduced a set of persons speaking alternately, and always in character. But though this was certainly the mode of writing then in vogue, yet how there came so much of the Arabian and Syrian dialect to creep into a book that was composed at a time when the Hebrew tongue was in its very height of perfection, we cannot conceive; nor can we be persuaded, but that, in reading the whole, we taste an antiquity superiour to that of David or Solomon's time. And yet, this notwithstanding, (*d*) some have endeavoured to bring down the author of the book of Job to the times of the Babylonish captivity, and suppose the book to have been written for the consolation of the captives in distress. But if we suppose it written for the sake of the Jews, is it not strange, that in a discourse of such a kind, there should not be one single word of the law of Moses, nor so much as one distant allusion to any rite or ceremony of it, or to any of the forms of idolatry, for which the Jews suffered in the time of their captivity? The Jews, I say, certainly suffered for their iniquity; but the example of Job is the example of an innocent man, suffering for no demerit of his own. Now apply this to the Jews in their captivity, and the book contradicts all the prophets before, and at the time of their captivity, and seems to be calculated, as it were, to harden the Jews in their sufferings, and to reproach the providence of God for bringing them upon them. Without troubling ourselves therefore to examine, whether the conjectures of these, (*e*) who carry the date of this book even lower than the captivity, and impute it (*f*) to Ezra, that ready scribe in the

ing two short syllables to be equal to one long one, the sums of the measure of the verses are always the same; *Shuckford's Connection*, vol. 2. l. 9.

(*d*) Bishop Sherlock's use and intent of prophecy, disser. 2.

(*e*) Warburton's divine legation, vol. 3. lib. 6.; et Sentimens de quelques theol. de hol. p. 183, &c. (*f*) Ezra vii. 6.

A. M. 2276, &c. Ant. Christ. 1728, &c. from Gen. xxxvii. to the end.

law of Moses, as he is styled, have any good foundation to support them, we may sit down contented with what is the common, and as far as I can see, as probable an opinion as any, *viz.* That (*g*) Moses (as soon as God put it in his heart to visit his people) either while he continued in Egypt, or while he lived in exile in Midian, either translated this book from Arabic, (in which some suppose it was originally), or wrote it entirely by a divine inspiration for the support and consolation of his countrymen the Jews, groaning under the pressure of the Egyptian bondage; that by a proper example, he might represent the design of providence in afflicting them, and at the same time give them assurance of a release and restoration in due time.

A practical inference from Job's example.

This is what most of the Jews, and several Christian writers have affirmed, and believed, concerning the book of Job; but the author from whom I have compiled a great part of this dissertation, has by several arguments, hardly surmountable, gone a great way to destroy the received opinion, and left nothing to depend on but this,——That the writer of this book was a Jew, and assisted therein by the spirit of God; that it has always been esteemed of canonical authority; is fraught with excellent instructions; and, above all, is singularly adapted to administer comfort in the day of adversity. Not to quit therefore this subject without an exhortation to this purpose, (*b*) *You have heard of the patience of Job, says the apostle, and have seen the end of the Lord;* and therefore, (*i*) when we find our spirits begin to flag under the sense of any affliction, or bodily pain; when our patience begins to be tired with sufferings, which are greater than we can bear, and our trust in God to be shaken, because he pours down his judgments upon us; let us enliven our fainting courage, by setting before us such noble patterns as this; and let us be ashamed to sink under our burthens, in their weight far disproportionate to those, which a man, made of the same flesh and blood as we are, and supported by no other helps than are afforded us, without murmuring against God, without lessening his confidence in him, without impeaching his justice, and without desponding of his goodness, both patiently endured, and triumphantly overcame.

(*g*) Spanheim's Life of Job, c. 13. (*b*) James v. 11.  
(*i*) Bishop Smalridge's Sermon of trust in God.



# C H A P. V

*The Sufferings of the Israelites, and the means of their Deliverance out of Egypt.*

## The H I S T O R Y.

NOT long after the death of Joseph, there happened <sup>A. M. 2433, &c.</sup> a revolution in Egypt, and a new king, who had no knowledge of the great services which Joseph had done <sup>Ant. Christ. 1571, &c.</sup> the crown, perceiving the vast increase of the Israelites, <sup>from Exod. ch. i. to xii. i.</sup> began to fear, that in case of an invasion, they possibly might side with the enemy, and depose him; and therefore he called a council, wherein it was resolved, not only to <sup>A revolution in E.</sup> impose heavy taxes upon the people, but to confine them <sup>gypt occasions the</sup> likewise to the hard labour of bearing burthens, and dig- <sup>oppression</sup> ging clay, making bricks, and † building strong cities <sup>for of the Is-</sup> the <sup>raelites.</sup>

\* The original words *Sare Massim*, which we translate *task-masters*, do properly signify *tax-gatherers*, and the *burthens* are afterwards mentioned as distinct things, under another name : So that the resolution in council was both to lay heavy tributes upon them, to impoverish, and heavy burthens, to weaken them. Philo, in his life of Moses, tells us, that they were made to carry burdens above their strength, and to work night and day; that they were forced at the same time to be workers and sersers both; that they were employed in brick-making, digging, and building; and that, if any of them dropped down dead under their burdens, they were not suffered to be buried. Josephus in his Jewish antiquities, (l. 2. c. 9.), tells us, in like manner, that they were compelled to learn several laborious trades, to build walls round cities, to dig trenches and ditches, to drain rivers into channels, and to cast up dikes and banks to prevent inundations. And not only so, but that they were likewise put upon the erection of fantastical pyramids, which were vast piles of buildings, raised by the kings of Egypt, in testimony of their splendor and magnificence, and to be the repositories of their bodies, when dead. Thus, by three several ways, the Egyptians endeavoured to bring the Israelites under; by exacting a tribute of them, to lessen their wealth; by laying heavy burdens upon them, to weaken their bodies; and by preventing, by this means, as they imagined, their generating and increasing.

† The two cities here mentioned, *viz. Pithon* and *Raamses*, are said, in our translation, to be *treasure-cities*, but not places

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2433, &c.  
Ant. Christ,  
1571, &c.  
from Exod.  
c. i. to xiii.

the king; thereby to impoverish their spirits, as well as wear out and infeeble their bodies.

This resolution of council was soon put in execution, and task-masters accordingly set over the people, who should keep them to drudgery, and use them with cruelty, and do all they could, in short, to make their lives miserable; but such was the goodness of God to them, that the more they were oppressed, the † more they multiplied; in-somuch, that the king, finding that this expedient would not do, sent for two of the most eminent of their midwives whose names were *Shiphrah*, and *Puah*, and gave them strict charge, that whenever they were called to do their office to an Hebrew woman, they should privately strangle

where the king reposed his riches, but rather his grain or corn; for such repositories seem to have been much in use among the Egyptians, ever since the introduction of them by Joseph. Considering, however, the name and situation of these two cities, that *Pithon*, according to Sir John Marsham, was the same with *Pelusium*, the most ancient fortified place in Egypt, called by Ezekiel, chap. xxx. 15. *the strength of Egypt*; and by Suidas, long after him, κλέις τῆς Αἰγύπτου, *the king of Egypt*; as being the inlet from Syria: And that *Raames*, in all probability, was a frontier town, which lay in the entrance of Egypt from Arabia, or some of the neighbouring countries; it seems hardly consistent with good policy to have granaries, or store-cities in any other than the inland parts of a country: And therefore, as these were situated in the out-parts of Egypt, it is much more likely, that they were fortified places, surrounded with walls, and towers, and deep ditches, which would cost the Hebrews an infinite deal of labour in building, than that they were repositories, either for corn, or treasure; *Patrick's Commentary*, and *Wells's Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. 2.

† Commentators observe, that, in this passage of Scripture, where Moses describes the vast increase of the Israelites, he employs a great variety of words in expressing it; and because the words he makes use of are six in all, some of the Hebrew expositors have thence concluded, that the women brought forth six children at a birth. Aristotle indeed, in his history of animals. [17. c. 4.] tells us, that the country of Egypt, where the Hebrew women bred so plentifully, was so strangely prolific, that some of their women, at four times, brought twenty children: But without having recourse to such prodigious

strangle the child, \* if it was a male, and leave only the † females alive. But they abhorring such a cruel and  
A. M. 2433, &c.  
 Ant. Christ. 1571, &c.  
 from Exod. ch. i. to xiii.

impious digious births, as happened but seldom, we need but suppose, that the Israelites, both men and wen, were very fruitful; that they began soon, and continued long in begetting; and then there will be no impossibility for 70 males, in the compass of 215 years, to have multiplied to the number specified, even at the rate of one child every year. For according to Simler's computation, 70 persons, if they beget a child every year, will in 30 years time, have above 2000 children; of which admit that one third part only did come to procreate, in 30 years more, they will amount to 9000. The third part of them will, in 30 years more, be multiplied to 45,000; and, according to this calculation, in 210 years, the whole amount will be at least 2,760,000. So that, if there was any thing miraculous or extraordinary in all this, it was, that they should be able to multiply at that rate, notwithstanding their hard labour and cruel bondage; *Patrick's Commentary*; and *Universal History*, l. 1. c. 7.

\* Josephus tells us, that there was a certain scribe, (as they called him), a man of great credit for his predictions, who told the King, that there was a Hebrew child to be born about that time, who would be a scourge to the Egyptians, and advance the glory of his own nation, and if he lived to grow up, would be a man eminent for virtue and courage, and make his name famous to posterity; and that by the counsel and instigation of this scribe it was that Pharaoh gave the midwives orders to put all the Hebrew male children to death; *Jewish Antiquities*, l. 2. c. 9.

† For this distinction in his barbarity the king might have several reasons. As, 1. to have destroyed the females with the males had been an unnecessary provocation and cruelty, because there was no fear of the *womens joining to the king's enemies, and fighting against him*. 2. The daughters of Israel exceeded very much their own women in beauty, and all advantages of person; and therefore their project might be to have them preserved for the gratification of their lust. Philo tells us, that they were preserved to be married to the slaves of the Egyptian lords and gentry, that the children descended from them might be slaves even by birth. But suppose they were married to freemen, they could have no children, but such as would be half Egyptians, and in time be wholly ingrafted into that nation. But, 3. Admitting they married not at, yet as the female sex, among the Hebrews, made a very considerable figure in Egypt for their sense and knowledge, the care of  
their

A. M.  
2433, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1571, &c.  
from Exod.  
ch. i. to xiii.

impious practice, had no regard to the king's command, but saved, male and female alike; and when the king sent for them, and reprimanded them for their disobedience, they had this answer in readiness; — — — † That the Hebrew women being of a much stronger constitution than the Egyptian, were generally delivered before they came.

This was a piece of servitude not unacceptable to God, but to Pharaoh it seemed no more than a mere evasion; and therefore resolving upon a more effectual method to extirpate the Hebrews, he published an edict, wherein he commanded all their male children to be thrown into the river; and that they might be more subject to the inspection of his searchers, \* he built them houses, and obliged them to live in settled habitations.

Some

their families, and application to business, and for their skill and dexterity in many accomplishments that were much to be valued for the use and ornament of life, such as the distaff and the loom, dying, painting, embroidering, &c. such women as these would make excellent servants and domestics for the Egyptian ladies, who had no relish of spending their time any other way than in idleness and pleasure; *Bibliotheca Bibl. in locum.*

† It is generally supposed that the midwives, upon this occasion, told a lie; but there is no reason for such a supposition, tho' possibly they might conceal some part of the truth, which is not unlawful, but highly commendable, when it is to preserve the innocent; for many of the Hebrew women might be such as are here described, though not every one of them. The answer of the midwives therefore is so far from being a sneaking lie to save their lives, that it is a bold confession of their faith and piety to the hazard of them, viz. that they saw so plain an evidence of the wonderful hand of God, in that extraordinary vigour in the travail of the women, that do what Pharaoh would, they durst not, would not, strive against it, because they would not strive against God; *Lightfoot's sermon on 2 Sam. xix. 29.*

\* The making the midwives houses, is, by most interpreters, ascribed to God, and the thing is supposed to have been done in a metaphorical sense, i. e. God gave them a numerous offspring, or family, and a very lasting succession or posterity. For there are five things, say they, which go to complete the greatness or eminence of a family, as such; its largeness, its wealth, its honours, its power, and its duration. And therefore, since the midwives hazarded their own lives to save those of the Hebrew children, and to preserve the Israelites a numerous progeny and posterity, the God of Israel, in return, not only made their own lives long and prosperous, but gave them very numerous

Some years before this edict, Amram, who was of the house of Levi, had married a woman named † *Jochebed*,  
A. M. 2433, &c.  
 Ant. Chris. of 1571, &c.  
 from Exod. ch. x. to xiii.

ous families, and an enduring posterity, in whom they might be said to live after death, even from generation to generation. But all this is a very forced construction, and what the original words will by no means bear. We should therefore rather think, that these houses were built, not for the midwives, but the Israelites, and that it was not God, but Pharaoh, who built them. The case seems to be this;—Pharaoh had charged the midwives to kill the male children that were born of the Hebrew women; the midwives feared God, and omitted to do what the king had commanded them, pretending, in excuse for their omission, that the Hebrew women were generally delivered before they could get to them. Pharaoh hereupon resolving to prevent their increase, gave charge to his people to have all the male children of the Hebrews thrown into the river; but his command could not be strictly executed, whilst the Israelites lived up and down the fields in tents, which was their ancient and customary way of living; for they would shift here and there, and lodge the women in childbed out of the way, to save their children. Pharaoh therefore built them houses, and obliged them to a more settled habitation, that the people whom he had set over them, might know where to find every family, and to take an account of all the children that should be born. So that this was a very cunning contrivance of Pharaoh, in order to have his charge more strictly and effectually executed than it could otherwise have been done; and was a particular too remarkable not to be inserted in Moses's account of this affair. The only seeming difficulty is, to reconcile the words in the text to what has been here advanced; but this will be none at all, if the words be rightly translated, and the verses rightly distinguished in this manner. Exod. i. 20. *And God dwelt with the midwives, and the people multiplied, and waxed very mighty, and this happened* (or was so, or came to pass) *because the midwives feared God.* Ver. 21, 22. *And Pharaoh built them, (i. e. the Israelites) houses, and charged all his people, saying, every son that is born, ye shall cast into the river, and every daughter ye shall save alive;* Shuckford's Connection, vol. 2. l. 7.

† Jochebed was not only of the same tribe, but own aunt likewise to Amram. For though the Septuagint, Vulgate, and (after them) many learned expositors, both Papists and Protestants, have thought that she was no more than his uncle Kohath's daughter, and consequently his cousin-german, because the marriage of an aunt was afterwards forbidden in the Levitical law; yet the plain matter of fact is repugnant to all this. In

Exod.

A. M. of the same tribe, and by her had a daughter, whose name  
 2433, &c. was *Miriam*, and four years after that, a son whom they  
 Ant. Christ. called *Aaron*; and in the time of this cruel persecution,  
 1571, &c. his wife was again delivered of a fine lovely boy, whom she  
 from Exod. ch. i. to xiii. was very desirous to preserve. For three months therefore  
 she \* kept him concealed; but fearing at length a discovery,  
 she resolved to commit him to the providence of God; And accordingly  
 having made a little basket, or boat of rushes, she plaistered it within  
 and without with bitumen or pitch, to make it keep out the water.  
 Into this she put the poor infant; and leaving it among the flags,  
 by the bank of the river, she placed his sister, at a proper distance,  
 to observe the event.

Exod. vi. 18. it is said expressly, that Kohath, the father of Amram, was the son of Levi. In Numb. xxvi. 39. it is said, that Jochebed was Levi's daughter, and born in Egypt; and here again, in Exod. vi. 20. it is said, that Amram *took him Jochebed, his father's sister, to wife*: And therefore, without subverting the natural sense of these texts, we cannot but conclude, that the nephew married his aunt. For the prohibitions made upon the degrees of consanguinity, do not flow from the law of nature; but only oblige by virtue of the command of God; and therefore before the command took place, relations of a nearer affinity were allowed to be joined together. Nor can the supposed difference of their age be any argument to the contrary, since Levi might have her, when he was an hundred years old, and she consequently be very little, if any at all older than her nephew; *Saurin's Dissertation* 43.

\* Josephus tells us this story,——That Amram finding his wife with child, and being solicitous about the king's edict, prayed earnestly to God to put an end to that dreadful persecution; and that God appeared to him, and told him, that he would in due time free his people from it, and that the son who shortly would be born unto him, should prove the happy instrument of their glorious deliverance, and eternise his own name thereby:——That this made him conceal him as long as he could; but fearing a discovery, he resolved to trust him to the care of Providence, arguing in this manner:——That if the child could be concealed, (as it was very difficult to do, and hazardous to attempt it), they must be in danger every moment, but as to the power and veracity of God, he did not doubt of it, but was assured, that whatever he had promised he would certainly make good; and with this trust and persuasion, he was resolved to expose him; *Jewish Antiquities*, l. 2. c. 9.

As good luck would have it, Pharaoh's daughter, attended with her maids of honour, in a short time after, came to the river to bathe herself; and spying the basket at some distance, she ordered one of the company to go and fetch it out; which when she had uncovered, the surprising beauty of the infant, weeping and making its little moan, so moved her heart with compassion, that she immediately declared her intention to have it brought up, notwithstanding she perceived it was certainly one of those children whom her father, in his edict, had ordered to be drowned.

A. M.  
2433, &c.  
Ant. Chris.  
1571, &c.  
from Exod.  
ch. I. to xiii.

By this time Miriam, the child's sister, had conveyed herself into the company; and † hearing the princess inquire for a nurse, offered her service to go and fetch one out of the neighbourhood; which when she was ordered to do, she hastened to her mother, who came with all speed, and took the child from the princess, who promised to see her well paid for her care in nursing it.

When the child was of an age fit to be weaned, his mother carried him to court, to shew him to the princess; who \* soon grew so fond of him, that she adopted him for her

† The princess is called by Josephus, *Thermuthis*; by Artapanēs, as he is cited by Eusebius, [Præp. l. 9. c. 4.] *Mercis*; and in the Alexandrian Chronicle, *Myrrina*. But Josephus adds farther, that Thermuthis having sent for several wet nurses, one after another, the child turned its head scornfully from their breasts, and would not suck: Whereupon Miriam told the princess, that if the nurse and the child were of different nations, her milk would never agree with it, but that if an Hebrew woman was fetched, he would probably take the breast from her; and that upon this she was bid to go for one, and immediately brought her own and the child's mother, whom he fell a sucking very greedily, to the admiration of all the by-standers; *lib. 2. cap. 9.*

\* And well might the princess be fond of the child, who (according to Josephus) had charms enough to engage any one's affections. "For as he grew up, he shewed a pregnancy of understanding much above those of his years, and did every thing with such a grace, as gave the world to understand what they might in time expect from him. After three years of age, he was such a miracle of a child for beauty and comeliness of stature, that people would stop, and stand gazing on him with delight and admiration, wherever they saw him; and his carriage and behaviour was so very obliging,

A. M. her own, and in remembrance of his being *taken out of the*  
 2433, &c. *river*, gave him the † Egyptian name of *Moses*. But his  
 Ant. Christ. father and mother, † who brought him up in his infancy,  
 1571, &c. had

from 1000.  
 ch. i. to xliii.

“ that he won upon the most morose and unsociable sort of men.  
 “ Thermuthis herself,” continues our author, “ being as much  
 “ delighted with him as any, wanting issue of her own, and ha-  
 “ ving resolved to adopt him for her son, brought him one day  
 “ to her father, and in merriment told him, that she came to  
 “ present him with a successor, in case he wanted one. The  
 “ king received him with an affectionate tenderness, and to gra-  
 “ tify his daughter, took off his crown, and placed it upon the  
 “ child’s head; but so far was he from being pleased with it,  
 “ that he threw it upon the ground, and trampled upon it with  
 “ his feet. This action was looked upon as an ill omen to the  
 “ king and his government, insomuch that the scribe we men-  
 “ tioned before, being then in the company, cried out to have  
 “ the child killed: *For this is the child, says he to the king,*  
 “ *which I foretold your Majesty would be the destruction of Egypt,*  
 “ *and he hath now confirmed the prophecy, by the affront he hath*  
 “ *put upon your government, in treading the crown under his*  
 “ *feet. In short, this is he by whose death alone you may promise*  
 “ *yourself to be secure. For take him but out of the way, the*  
 “ *Hebrews shall have nothing more to hope for, and the Egyptians*  
 “ *nothing more to fear.* This speech gave some uneasiness to  
 “ Thermuthis; and therefore she immediately took the child  
 “ away, without any opposition from the king, whose heart  
 “ God had disposed not to take any notice of what the scribe  
 “ had said:” *lib. 2. ibid.*

† Both Philo, Josephus, and Clemens Alexandrinus, will have the word *Moses* to be derived from the Egyptian *Mo*, which, according to them, signifies *water*, and *Ifes* or *Yfes*, which means *preserved*, as much as to say, *saved from the waters*, or *preserved from drowning*. It is very likely indeed, that the princess should give the child a name from no other language than her own; but then it is to be considered, that the Hebrew word *Mashah*, (from whence the name naturally flows, and to which the princess herself owns she alludes), might have the same signification in her tongue that it has in the Hebrew, where it always signifies *a drawing out of the water*, 2 Sam. xxii. 17.; Psal. xviii. 16.; and Isa. xliii. 2. It cannot be doubted but that Moses had another name given him by his own parents at the time of his circumcision; but what that name was, we have no certainty, nor can we tell from what authority it is that Clemens informs us that it was Joachim; *Patrick’s Commentary*.

† Besides the education which his own parents gave him, Philo acquaints us, that from his Egyptian masters, he was taught



had taken care to instruct him in such things as related to the religion and history of his ancestors; and therefore when he arrived to maturity, he left the court, and coming to live among his brethren, was himself an eye witness at what a merciless rate the Egyptian task-masters treated them.

A. M.  
2433, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1571, &c.  
from Exod.  
ch. 1. to xiii.

This raised his resentment and indignation to such a degree, that seeing one day an Egyptian abuse an Hebrew in a very gross manner, he stepped in to his assistance, and perceiving no body near, slew the Egyptian, and buried his body in the sand.

The occasion of his leaving Egypt

The next day, as he walked out again, he found two Hebrews in contest with one another; whereupon he admonished them to consider that they were brethren, and would have decided the quarrel between them: But he who was the aggressor rejected his arbitration with contempt, and upbraided him with the murder of the Egyptian the day before. This gave Moses some uneasy apprehensions, that as the thing was now blown, it might not be long before it reached Pharaoh's ear, and endanger his life; so that he thought it the † best way to leave Egypt, and

taught arithmetic, geometry, physic, music, and hieroglyphics; otherwise called *enigmatical philosophy*; that from the Chaldeans he learnt astronomy; from the Assyrians their character or manner of writing; and from the Grecians all their liberal arts and sciences. But that was not a time for the Egyptians, who excelled the rest of the world in all sorts of learning; to send for masters from Greece, which rather stood in need of Egyptian teachers; for to be learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, (as St. Stephen asserts of Moses, Acts-vii. 22.), was to have the best and most liberal education that the whole world could at that time afford.

† Josephus, who has given us several particulars of Moses's life, which in modesty perhaps he might not think proper to record of himself, has assigned a farther reason for his leaving Egypt, of which it may not be improper, in this place, to give the reader this short abstract. "When Moses was grown to man's estate, he had an opportunity offered him of shewing his courage and conduct. The Ethiopians, who inhabited the upper land on the south side of Egypt, had made many dreadful incursions, plundered and ravaged all the neighbouring parts of the country, beat the Egyptian army in a set battle, and were become so elated with their success, that they began to march towards the capital of Egypt. In

A. M. 2433, &c. Ant. Chris. 1571, &c. from Exod. ch. I. to xiii. “ and to secure himself by flying into the country of Midian, beyond the Red-sea.

“ this distress, the Egyptians had recourse to the oracle, which answered, that they should make choice of an Hebrew for their general. As none was more promising than Moses, the king desired his daughter to consent, that he should go, and head his army; but she, after having first expostulated with her father, how mean a thing it was for the Egyptians to implore the assistance of a man whose death they had been plotting, would not agree to it, until she had obtained a solemn promise upon oath, that no practices or attempts should be made upon his life. When Moses, by the princess’s persuasion, had at last accepted the commission, he made it his first care to come up with the enemy before they were aware of him; and to this purpose, instead of marching up the Nile, as the custom was before, he chose to cross the country, though the passage was very dangerous, by reason of the poisonous flying serpents which infested those parts; but for this he had a new expedient. The bird Ibis, though very friendly to every other creature, is a mortal enemy to all serpents; and therefore having got a sufficient number of these, he carried them along with him in cages, and as soon as he came into any dangerous places, he let them loose upon the serpents, and by their means and protection, proceeding without any harm or molestation, he entered the enemy’s country, took several of their cities, and obliged them at last to retreat into Saba, the metropolis of Ethiopia. Moses sat down before it: But as it was situate in an island, with strong fortifications about it, in all probability it would have cost him a longer time to carry it, had not Tharbis, the king of Ethiopia’s daughter, who had the fortune once to see him from the walls, behaving himself with the utmost gallantry, fallen in love with him. Whereupon she sent privately to let him know, that the city should be surrendered to him, upon condition that he would marry her immediately after. Moses agreed to the proposal; and having taken possession of the place, and of the princess, returned with his victorious army to Egypt. Here, instead of reaping the fruits of his great achievement, the Egyptians accused him of murder to the king, who having already taken some umbrage at his valour and great reputation, was resolved to rid himself of him: But Moses having some suspicion of it, made his escape, and not daring to go by the common roads, for fear of being stopped by the king’s guards, was forced to pass through a great desert to reach the land of Midian.”

In the plains of Midian, there is a well, common to all the natives of the place: Here it was that Moses had stopped to refresh himself, when seven of the daughters of Jethro, † the chief man of the country, came to draw water for their flocks: but when they had filled their

A. M.  
2433, &c.  
Ann. Christ.  
1571, &c.  
from Exod.  
ch. i. to xlii.

His retreat  
to Midian,  
and living  
with Jethro.

† The word *Cohen* signifies indifferently either *priest* or *prince*; and accordingly, in these early ages, both these offices were frequently united in one and the same person. It seems, however, that Jethro was scarce a prince in that country; for then, one would think, that the shepherds would not have dared to have been so insolent to his daughters; and yet if he was a priest, it is made a matter of some contest between two famous rabbins, whether he was an idolater, or a worshipper of the true God. Aben Ezra is of opinion, that as he was descended from Midian, the son of Abraham, by Keturah, in all probability he professed the true religion; nor can he suppose that Moses would have married his daughter, had he been bred up in a false one: Whereas Moses, it is plain, not only owns his alliance with his family, but, upon his arrival in the camp of Israel, invites him to offer sacrifices to the Lord, [Exod. xviii. 11. 12], as one who adored the same God with the Israelites. Kimhi, however, on the other hand, affirms, that at first he was an idolatrous priest, but afterwards, when he came to Moses in the wilderness, and was particularly informed of all those great and wonderful things which God had wrought in Egypt for the deliverance of the Hebrews, he became a convert to the worship of the true God; and for this he produces a passage in the same chapter, ver. 11. *Now I know that the Lord is greater than all Gods; for in the thing wherein they deal proudly, he was above them.* But besides this, there is a farther difficulty in relation to this Jethro. In Exod. iii. 1. he is expressly called *the father-in-law of Moses*; and yet the father of the young women, whom Moses defended at the well, and whereof he certainly married one, is said to be Ruel, chap. ii. 18. and not Jethro: either therefore this Ruel must be their grandfather, who being head of the family, might, in a larger sense, be called *father*, as we find instances of the like nature in Gen. xxi. 43; 2 Kings xiii. 14. &c.: or (as others will have it) this Ruel, or Jethro, was one and the same person, under different denominations. Upon supposition, therefore, that he was descended from the family of Cush, it is imagined, that while he continued in Idumæa, his name might be *Ruel*, but upon his removal into Midian, to avoid the wars and tumults in his own country, he came to be called *Jethro*, as being the only remainder (for so the word signifies) of the Cushites in that country; *Bibliotheca Bib.*; and *Bedford's Scripture chronology*, l. 3. c. 4.

troughs

A. M.  
2433, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1571, &c.  
from Exod.  
ch. 1. to xiii.

troughs, a parcel of rude shepherds, being minded to serve their own turn first, seized on their water, and frightened the damsels away: which Moses perceiving, went to their assistance, and forcing the shepherds to retire, drew the young virgins more water, and gave it to their flocks.

Hereupon taking their leaves, they made haste home; and while their father was wondering at their speedy return, they informed him how civil a certain stranger had been, both in watering their flocks, and protecting them from the insults of the rustics; which made Jethro send and invite him to his house, and treat him in a manner suitable to the civility he had shewn to his daughters; insomuch that Moses, after he had tarried there some time, was so pleased with his courteous reception, that he expressed a willingness to take up his abode with him, † and become his shepherd. This proposal Jethro very readily embraced; and to attach him the more to his interest, gave him his † daughter Zipporah

† It can hardly be supposed, but that a person of Moses's education would, in the space of 40 years, which he abode in Midian, find some other employment for himself than keeping sheep; and therefore some have imagined, that in this time he wrote the book of Job (as we mentioned before) to comfort the Israelites, by the example of his admirable patience, under their heavy oppression in Egypt, and the book of Genesis likewise, that they might the better understand what promises had been made to their ancestors, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and that the time for their accomplishment was approaching. Nor can we suppose, but that the several arts and sciences, which he had been taught in his youth, he took care, in this place of happy retirement, to cultivate and improve; *Patrick's Commentary.*

† It may be made a standing observation, that divine authors do not relate all the passages of a story, (as other authors delight to do), but such only as are most material. We may therefore suppose, that a great many things intervened between Moses's entrance into Jethro's family, and his marriage to his daughter; especially considering, that his children were so young at the time of his return into Egypt. The observation of Philo, however, is not altogether to be neglected, *viz.* "That men of a great genius quickly shew themselves, and are not made known by length of time:" and therefore he thinks, "That Jethro, being first struck with admiration of his goodly aspect, and then of his wife discourse, immediately gave him the most beautiful of all his daughters to be his wife, not staying to inquire of any body who he was, because his own most excellent qualities sufficiently

Zipporah in marriage, by whom he had two sons, whereof the elder he named *Gershom*, which signifies a *stranger*, alluding to his own condition in that country; and the younger *Eliezer*, importing, *God my help*, in grateful acknowledgement of God's having delivered him from the hands of Pharaoh, who sought his life.

A. M.  
2433, &c.  
Ant. Chris.  
1571, &c.  
from Exod.  
ch. i. to xiii.

While Moses lived in the family of Jethro, the king who was upon the Egyptian throne when he left the country, died; but his successor, who was no less a tyrant, and oppressor of the Israelites, laid such heavy burthens upon them, as made their lives extremely miserable, till at length their complaints reached heaven; and as the time of their deliverance grew near, God remembering the covenant which he had made with their forefathers, began to look upon them with an eye of pity and compassion.

God's appearing to him in the burning bush.

Moses was to be his instrument in bringing about their deliverance; and therefore, while he was feeding his father-in-law's flock, and as they wandered in their feeding, followed them as far into the desert as † mount Horeb, he saw a bush on fire, and, as he thought, flaming for

“ sufficiently recommend him to his affection;” *De vita Mo-*  
*sis, l. i.*

† Horeb is a mountain in Arabia Petræa, at so small a distance from mount Sinai, that they seem to be no more than two tops belonging to the same mountain. Sinai lies to the east, and Horeb to the west; but we find them frequently in Scripture used promiscuously. For, whereas the author of the Hebrews several times asserts, that God gave his law to the Israelites at Horeb, though other places expressly say, that it was at Sinai, this is easily agreed by observing, that they both made but as it were one mountain with two tops, whereof that of Sinai is much the higher, though that of Horeb exceeds it in fruitfulness and pleasure. It is not for that reason, however, nor yet for its vast height, that it obtained the title of *The mount of God*. Josephus indeed tells us, (l. 2. c. 12.), that the people of the country had a tradition, that God, in a more particular manner, dwelt there; and that therefore, in reverence to the place, they always declined feeding their flocks upon it: But the true reason of its being so called is, that, in after-ages, it became famous for fundry events, and at this time received its name by way of anticipation. For here it was, 1. That God appeared to Moses in the bush; 2. That he manifested his glory at the delivery of the law; 3. That Moses, with his rod, brought water out of the rock; 4. That by lifting up his hands, he made

A. M. 2433, &c. Ant. Chris. 1571, &c. from Exod. ch. i. to xiii. for a considerable while, but (what occasioned his astonishment) not in the least damaged or consumed. This raised his curiosity to go a little nearer, and see if he could discover the cause of it; but as he was approaching, † he heard a voice out of the bush, calling unto him, and ordering

made Joshua prevail against the Amalekites; 5. That here he fasted twice forty days and forty nights; 6. That from hence he brought the two tables of the law; and 7. That here Elijah was vouchsafed a noble vision; with some others of the like nature; *Calmet's Dictionary; Universal History, l. i. c. 7.; and Well's Geography of the Old Testament, vol. 2.*

† In the text, it is said, that *the Angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire, out of the midst of the bush*, Exod. iii. 2. But whether it was a created angel, speaking in the person of God, or God himself, or (as the most received opinion is) Christ the son of God, has been matter of some controversy among the learned. Those who suppose it no more than an angel, seem to imply, that it would be a diminution of the Majesty of God to appear upon every occasion, especially when he has such a number of celestial ministers, who may do the business as well. But considering that God is present every where, the notification of his presence, by some outward sign, in one determinate place, (which is all we mean by his appearance), is, in our conception, less laborious (if any thing laborious could be conceived of God) than a delegation of angels, upon every turn, from heaven, and seems in the main to illustrate, rather than debase the glory of his nature and existence. But however this be, it is plain, that the angel here spoken of was no created being, from the whole context, and especially from his saying, *I am the Lord God, the Jehovah, &c.* since this is not the language of angels, who are always known to express themselves in such humble terms as these, *I am sent from God, I am thy fellow-servant, &c.* It is a vain pretence to say, that an angel, as God's ambassador, may speak in God's name and person; for what ambassador of any prince ever yet said, *I am the king*? Since therefore no angel, without the guilt of blasphemy, could assume these titles, and since neither God the Father, nor the Holy Ghost, are ever called by the name of an angel, *i. e.* a messenger, or person sent, whereas God the Son is called by the prophet Malachi, chap. iii. 1. *the Angel of the covenant*, it hence seems to follow, that this angel of the Lord was God the Son, who might very properly be called *an Angel*; because, in the fulness of time, he was sent into the world in our flesh, as a messenger from God, and might therefore make his temporary apparitions, pre-  
fages,

dering him to \* pull off his shoes, because the ground whereon he stood was holy. Moses obeyed; and while the voice went on to declare itself the God, who had all along been kind to his ancestors, and had now with compassion seen the afflictions of his brethren, and was come down to deliver them from their oppressors, he fell down upon the ground, and covered his face with his garment, as being unable to sustain the refulgency of the divine presence.

Moses, by this time, had entirely laid aside all thoughts of rescuing his brethren, the Israelites, from their thralldom; nor had he any opinion of his own abilities, if he should make the attempt, to succeed in so difficult an undertaking: And therefore, when God proposed the thing to him, and opened the whole manner and method in which he would have it executed, he began to excuse himself, by urging his meanness and insufficiency to take upon him the character of a divine ambassador. This difficulty God endeavoured to remove, by assuring him, that he would be with him, and assist him in every step he took; that he would enable him to accomplish the thing, though never so perplexed and arduous: And for a token of his veracity herein, that, within a small compass of time, he should see that very people, who now were in slavery, set free, and worshipping him on that very mountain.

A. M. 2433, &c.  
Ant. Christ. 1571, &c.  
from Exod. ch. i. to xiii.  
And encouraging him, tho' very reluctant, to undertake the deliverance of the Israelites.

sages, and forerunners, as it were, of his more solemn mission;  
*Pool's Annotations.*

\* Justin Martyr, (in his second apology) is of opinion, that the custom of putting off the shoes, both among the Jews and Gentiles, before they began to officiate in holy things, took its rise from this precept given to Moses; but our learned Mr. Mede seems to be of a different opinion, viz. that Moses did not give the first occasion to this rite, but that it was derived from the patriarchs before him, and transmitted to future ages from that ancient general tradition. It is certain that Pythagoras, who took his institutes chiefly from the Egyptians, delivers it as a rule in his Rubrick *ὅστις καὶ ἀνυπόδητος, καὶ πρὸς ἱερὰ προσέρχεται*, i. e. *he who sacrifices, should put off his shoes, and so approach to the holy ordinance*; and therefore God, in compliance to an ancient custom then in practice among the Egyptians, might speak to Moses, who was a person well acquainted with their ceremonies, to decalceate, as very well knowing, that it would be a means to create in him a greater reverence to the divine presence, and a more awful attention to what he was going to say; *Patrick's and Le Clerc's Commentaries.*

A. M.  
2433, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1571, &c.  
from i. x. d  
ch. i. to xiii.

Moses, still unwilling to undertake the thing, desired to know what he was to say to the people, and by what name he was to call the person who sent him upon this message: To which request God was pleased to reply,—That he who sent him was an eternal, independent, self-existent being, † the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, by which name he gloried to be called; and therefore he required him, first to assemble the elders of Israel together, and acquaint them with his design, and then to go directly to the king, and demand of him a dismissal of the Israelites, at least for three days journey into the wilderness, in order to sacrifice to their God; which, though at the first he knew he would be far from granting, yet in the end, would be glad to consent to, when he should see the divine power exerted upon sundry occasions, and so many miracles wrought before his eyes as would compel him to let them go.

Such a solemn assurance as this, from the mouth of God himself, was enough, one would think, to have gained a ready compliance; but Moses still demurs to the thing, and makes it an objection, that the people, when he came to them, might possibly question his credentials: And therefore, to obviate this, God promises to enable him to work miracles for their conviction. And for a specimen of this, when he had him throw the rod that was in his hand upon the ground, it instantly became a serpent terrible to behold; but when he ordered him to take it up, it resumed its former shape; when he put his hand into his bosom, \* upon pulling it out, it was all over leprous, but upon putting

† God, no doubt, was the God of Noah, and of all the holy patriarchs, who lived before these three were born; but for a peculiar reason he is called their God, because of his covenant, and the promise made to each of them, that the blessed seed should spring from their loins, in opposition to the pretensions of other neighbouring people, who, as the learned Dr. Alix observes) were their rivals in that hope. And so the word will denote, as much as if he had said, *the God of Abraham*, and not of Lot, as the Ammonites and Moabites pretended; *the God of Isaac*, and not of Ishmael, as his posterity pretended; and *the God of Jacob*, and not of Esau, as the Edomites boasted; *Parrick's Commentary*.

\* It is no improbable conjecture, that as God commanded Moses to work all his wonders before Pharaoh, this miracle of the leprosy gave occasion to the fabulous story, which was invented



putting it in, and pulling it out again, it became as clean as before; and (as if this were not enough) to gain him a

A. M.  
2533, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1571, &c.  
from Exod.  
ch. i. to xiii.

vented in after-ages, viz. "That Moses was a leper, and the Israelites a scabby race, whom the Egyptians were forced to drive out of their country, for fear of the infection." This defamation is first met with in Manetho's Egyptian History; from Manetho it descended to Apion, the Greek Historian; and from him Justin and Tacitus, two noted Roman authors, undoubtedly took it. But as Manetho might not at first maliciously devise it out of his own head, so those writers, from whom he compiled his history, might derive it from this passage of Moses's appearing with a leprous hand before Pharaoh, which was presently noised about the country, without the other part of his being immediately cured. For, (according to the argument of Josephus) "there needs no other proof of his being no leper, than what arises from his own words, viz. That no lepers should be admitted into any towns or villages, but live apart in a distinct habit by themselves; that whoever touched a leper, or lodged under the same roof with him, should be reputed unclean; and that whoever should come to be cured of that disease, should pass through certain purifications, wash himself with fountain-water, shave off all his hair, and offer such and such sacrifices, before he should be received into the holy city. Now if Moses (says he) had been afflicted with this distemper himself, it is incongruous to think, that he would ever have been so severe upon others for it." The leprosy indeed was a distemper in a manner peculiar to the Egyptians:

*Est elephas morbus, qui propter flumina Nili*

*Gignitur Egypto in media, neque præterea usquam.*

as both Lucretius (l. 6.) and Plutarch tells us: And if it was so in Moses's time, he may be presumed to have made laws more strict against it, with an intention to excite the people's carefulness to avoid a distemper which they had already seen so much of, but had now (together with the other calamities of their bondage) happily escaped. For that the people at this time, were in good health, is evident from the long journey they undertook, and which on all hands is agreed, they did perform: And that they were not expelled by the Egyptians, but went away from them sore against their will, their pursuit of them to the Red-Sea, and losing all their lives with a purpose of retaking them, (facts that are attested by several Heathen authors), are an abundant demonstration; *Joseph contra Apion; Plutarch's Quest. nat.; Bibliotheca Bibl. vol. 2. exercit. 4.; and Patrick's Commentary.*

A. M.  
2433, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1571, &c.  
from Exod  
ch. i. to xiii.

further credit among the people, he gave him a standing power to convert water into blood, whenever there was occasion.

But the promise of all this miraculous power could not prevail with Moses to accept of this office. He alleged, in excuse, his want of eloquence, and || the natural impediment he had in his speech. But this defect likewise God promises to supply in an extraordinary manner; and as he was the great author of human nature, to give him all the faculties that were necessary for the business, he put him upon. So that, driven from all his subtleties, Moses was at last compelled to declare downright, that he had no inclination to the office; and therefore desired of God to let him alone, and find out some other that was fitter for his purpose.

So blunt a refusal was not so pleasing to God, and might have been resented with indignation; but, instead of that, he resumed the objection, and told Moses, that as to his defect of utterance, this his brother Aaron (who would be fond of the office, and was already set out from home to meet him) would be sufficiently capable of supplying. To him therefore he bid him impart the whole affair, and to make use of him as his orator, but to reserve the chief conduct of it to himself, and not to forget † to take along  
with

|| Moses here tells us of himself, that he was slow of speech, which most interpret to be a *stammerer* or *stutterer*; and yet St. Stephen (Acts vii. 22. declares of him, that *he was mighty in words, as well as deeds*; but this admits of an easy reconciliation, if we do but suppose, that the sense of what he spake was great and weighty, tho' his pronunciation was not answerable to it. As God however tells him, Exod. iv. 11. that he it was who made the mouth, and could consequently give to any man what faculties he thought convenient, or remove any impediment he might have, it seems not improbable, that either by use and exercise, or else by God's immediate cure of his defect, Moses had acquired a better facility in delivering his mind, since we find him making several speeches to the people, especially that excellent discourse before his death, in the beginning of Deuteronomy; as he has likewise (where his song occurs towards the latter end) given an ample demonstration, that he wanted not eloquent words, when he pleased to employ them; *Patrick's Commentary*.

† Wonderful are the stories which the Hebrew doctors tell us of this rod, *viz.* That it originally grew in paradise, was brought

with him his rod, wherewith he would enable him to work all miracles. A. M. 2433, &c. Ant. Chris. 1571, &c.

By these persuasions, and demonstrations of a miraculous power to assist him, Moses, at last, was prevailed on to accept the commission, and accordingly went to his father-in-law, and † without telling him the occasion, requested from Exod. ch. i. to xiii. leave Moses returning to Egypt, is met by his brother Aaron,

brought away by Adam, from him passed to Noah, and so through a succession of patriarchs, till it came to be transplanted into Jethro's garden, and there took root again, God knows how; that it was called *Zaphir*, (whence Ziphorah his daughter had her name), and had the *Tetragrammaton* written upon it; that when Ziphorah fell in love with Moses, her father consented that she should have him, if he could pluck up this Zaphir-rod; and at the same time published a proclamation, that whoever did it first, should marry his daughter; that hereupon several lusty young men came, and tried their strength in vain; but that Moses, by being acquainted with the true pronounciation of the name of God, in virtue thereof, did it with ease, and so not only obtained his daughter, but this rod into the bargain, with which he wrought afterwards all his wonders in Egypt. But how fictitious soever all this may be, it is certain that in Exod. iv. 20. this staff is called *the rod of God*; and that partly because it was appropriated to God's special service, to be the instrument of all his glorious works; and partly to shew, that whatever was done by that rod, was not done by any virtue in it, or in the hand of Moses, but merely by the power of God, who was pleased, for the greater confusion of his enemies, to use so mean an instrument. Nor is it an improbable conjecture, that the wands which great ministers are wont to carry in their hands, in token of their power and office, were originally derived from this of Moses; *Universal History*, l. 1. c. 7.; and *Pool's Annotations*.

† He was, both in justice and decency, obliged to acquaint his father-in-law with his intention to leave Midian, and go into Egypt, because he had bound himself by an oath to live with him, and was resolved now to take his wife and children, as being well assured of a speedy return. But he thought fit to conceal from him the errand upon which God sent him, lest he should endeavour to hinder or discourage him from so difficult and dangerous an enterprize. So that Moses, in this instance, has given us a rare example of piety and prudence, in that he took care to avoid all occasions and temptations to disobedience to the divine commands; as well as of a singular modesty and humility, in that such glorious and familiar converse with God, and the high commission with which he had honoured him, made him neither forget the civility and duty

A. M.  
2433, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1571, &c.  
from Exod.  
ch. i. to xiii.

leave to go and visit his brethren who were in Egypt. His father-in law readily consented to it ; so that taking his wife and children along with him, he was proceeding in his journey, when (to his great surprize) an angel appeared to him in the inn where he lodged, and, with a stern countenance, and flaming sword in his hand, threatened to kill him, because, by the persuasions of his wife, or his own indulgence, he had neglected to circumcise his younger son ; which when his wife perceived, she immediately took a knife, made of a sharp \* flint, and therewith circumcising the child, pronounced over him the usual form of admission into the pale of the church ; which when she had done, the angry vision disappeared, and gave signs that God was appeased.

While Moses was on his way to Egypt, Aaron, by a divine revelation, was informed thereof, and ordered to go and meet him in the wilderness. Not far from the mount of Horeb they met : And after mutual embraces and endearments, Moses began to open unto him the purport of his commission, the instructions he had received from God, and the miraculous works he was impowered to shew ; And thus proceeding to Egypt, the two brothers called an assembly of the chief elders of the people, wherein Aaron declared to them the message which God had sent by Moses, while Moses, (to confirm the truth of his divine mission), wrought the several miracles which God had appointed him, before their eyes ; insomuch that they were all

duty which he owed to his father, nor break out into any public and vain-glorious ostentations of such a privilege ; *Pool's Annotations.*

\* Whether it was required that the instrument made use of in the circumcision of children, was to be of stone or flint, and whether the Hebrews never used any other, is a question very learnedly discussed by Pererius, in his disputation on this place. That the Heathens performed such sort of abscisions with sharp flints or stones, is evident from several authors ; and tho' Pererius determines against the constant use of the flint among the Hebrews in circumcision, and against its being prescribed or enjoined in the institution, yet there is great reason to presume, that this operation was never done with any other kind of instrument, before that of Joshua's circumcising the Israelites in the wilderness ; *Bibliotheca Bibl. in locum,*

fully

fully convinced that he was a true prophet, come from the God of their fathers, who had at length commiserated their afflictions, and sent now to deliver them from their bondage : And with this persuasion, they kneeled down upon their knees, and worshipped God.

A. M. 2433, &c.  
Ant. Christ. 1571, &c.  
from Exod ch. 2. to xiii.

Not many days after, Moses and Aaron went to court, and having obtained admission to the king, requested of him that he would give the Israelites leave to go three days journey into the wilderness, in order to perform a solemn service to the Lord their God. But Pharaoh was so far from complying with their request, that knowing no being superior to himself, he profanely questioned the existence of their God ; or if there was such a thing, he could not see why they might not serve him in Egypt, as well as elsewhere ; and therefore he positively refused to let them go.

They apply to the king, but to no effect.

The truth is, he suspected that they had a design of revolting from his service, and had been laying schemes to get out of his dominions. This to him was an argument that they had too much leisure ; and an effectual way to check their indulging themselves in such contrivances, was to take care to leave them fewer vacant hours ; and therefore he ordered greater tasks, and more work to be laid upon them. † He reprimanded Moses and Aaron for going among the people, and interrupting them in their employments. He gave their task-masters charge, not to allow

† The words of Pharaoh are, *Why do ye, Moses and Aaron, let the people from their works ? Get ye to your burthens* : Which words seem to be directed, not so much to the elders of Israel, who might possibly go along with them, as to Moses and Aaron themselves ; and so the sense of the reproof will be, “ So far am I from granting the liberty which you desire for the people, that as a just punishment upon you for your seditious attempt, I command you also to go with the rest, to take your share in their burthens, and to perform the task which shall be required of you.” and that so cruel a tyrant did not proceed farther against them, must be ascribed to the mighty power of God, who governs the spirits, and restrains the hands of the greatest kings when he pleases. This seems to be a better account than what some of the Jewish fictions give us of it, viz. that when Moses and Aaron came into Pharaoh's presence, they were raised to a taller stature, than they had before ; had a splendor in their countenances, like that of the sun, and appeared with such majesty as quite struck him with terror and astonishment ; *Pool's Annotations, and Patrick's Commentary.*

them

A. M.  
2353, &c.  
Ant. Chris.  
1571, &c.  
from Exod.  
ch. i. to xiii.

them any more \* straw, and yet to exact the same tale of bricks from them without abatement.

This charge the task-masters, who were Egyptians, communicated to their under-officers, who were Hebrews :

And when the people, (being forced for want of straw, to wander all the country over to pick up stubble), had not time to make as many bricks as were exacted, these Hebrew officers were called to an account, and beaten. They, however, not well knowing from whence this unreasonable severity proceeded, whether from the royal edict, or the rigour of the task-masters, addressed the king himself, and laid their grievances before him in the most humble manner. But so far were they from receiving any redress, that the answer returned them was, “ That the King  
“ would have his edict executed, be it never so severe ;  
“ and would exact from them their full number of bricks,  
“ though he was resolved to allow them no straw.”

The mur-  
murs of  
the people,  
and Moses's  
uneasiness  
thereupon.

This answer was enough to run them to the utmost despair : And therefore, as they returned from the king, meeting Moses and Aaron, they discharged their grief and anger (though very unjustly) upon them ; telling them, “ That they had taken care to infuse an odium into the  
“ king against them, and given him a plausible handle to  
“ destroy them, which they wished in God might fall up-  
“ on their own heads.” These bitter expressions afflicted Moses to that degree, that he expostulated the matter with God, for suffering Pharaoh to be so exasperated against his people, and for having not in the least mitigated their afflictions, since the time that he first went to him.

His concern for the oppression of his brethren made him certainly forget the promise which God had given

\* What the use of straw was in making bricks, is variously conjectured. Some think it was of no other use than to heat the kilns wherein they were burnt ; others, who will have it that they were never burnt at all, imagine that it served only to cover them from the too intense heat of the sun, and that they might be baked gradually ; but as it is evident that they were burnt in kilns, the most probable opinion is, that straw was mixed with the clay, to make them more solid : For according to a passage in Lucilius, mentioned by Nonius Marcellus, straw was anciently employed to this purpose.

Nam laterem qui ducit, habit nil amplius unquam,  
Quam commune locum e paleis, cœnumque aceratum.

Sat. l. ix.

him,

him, and the perverseness of Pharaoh, which he had fore-  
told him : But notwithstanding this, God was pleased to  
give him fresh assurances, that now the time was come,  
wherein he would manifest his Almighty power, and exert  
the full force of the || name which he had taken upon  
himself,

A. M.  
2433, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1571, &c.  
from Exod.  
ch. i. to xiii.

|| The words of God upon this occasion, are,—*I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of EL-SHADDAI, the Almighty God ; but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them*, Exod. vi. 3. But how can this be, when, long before Moses's time, God is so frequently called by that name ? For did not the sons of Seth *call themselves by the name of Jehovah*, Gen. iv. 26. ? Did not Abraham swear, and lift up his hands to Jehovah, Gen. xiv. 22. ? Did not he call the place where he went to offer Isaac, *Jehovah jireh*, Gen. xxii. 14. ? Did not the Lord say unto him, *I am the God of Jehovah, that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees*, Gen. xv. 7. ? And when, in a vision, Jacob saw him stand before him, did not he say, *I am Jehovah, the God of Abraham, thy father, and the God of Isaac*, Gen. xxxviii. 13. ? These passages make it impossible for God not to be known to the patriarchs under that name : And therefore several learned writers upon this text have reprehended a fault in our translation, and would have the latter part of the verse to be taken interrogatively, thus, *By my name Jehovah was I not known unto them ?* If we take the sentence interrogatively, say they, every one will see, that it plainly intimates, that the Lord had revealed himself unto them by this name, which is agreeable to the Scripture-account of the patriarchs knowledge and worship of him ; but to take the words without the interrogation, and suppose them to intend, that the Lord who appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, was not known to them by his name Jehovah, cannot be reconciled to some very express passages in the book of Genesis ; unless we can suppose, that as Genesis was not written when God revealed this his name to Moses, Moses makes use of it by way of anticipation, because at the time when he wrote, the Jews commonly used it, tho' in the days when the patriarchs, whose lives he was giving some account of, lived, it was a thing utterly unknown. There is another way, however, of expounding these words, if by the name *Jehovah* we understand not the letters or syllables, but what is properly the import of it, viz. not only God's eternal existence, but his omnipotent power likewise, and unchangeable truth, which give being (as we may say) to his promises by the actual performance of them. That this is the sense of the word *Jehovah*, is apparent from several

A. M. himself, in the deliverance of his people from their bond-  
 2433, &c. age, and in the performance of the promises made to their  
 Ant. Christ. forefathers, by giving them the land, the rich and plenti-  
 1571, &c. ful land of Canaan, in possession. With this God appoint-  
 from Exod. ed Moses to acquaint the children of Israel, and to promise  
 ch. i. to xiii. them moreover, that he would make them his peculiar  
 people, and take them under his immediate protection; so  
 that in the event they should plainly see, that their deli-  
 verance and admission to the inheritance he had spoken of,  
 was effected by that God who is always faithful to his pro-  
 mises. But though Moses failed not to carry these tidings  
 to the people, yet such was their affliction of mind, upon  
 the increase of their servitude, that they gave little or no  
 attention to him.

He is order- God however, pursuing the ends of his providence,  
 ed again to commanded Moses to go again to the king, and demand  
 apply to the the release of his people; and when he endeavoured to  
 king, and the re- decline the office, upon pretence of the † impediment in  
 suit of it. his

sages in this very book of Exodus. Thus, chap. vii. 5. *And the Egyptians shall know that I am Jehovah; for behold, I will strike with the rod, that is in thine hand, upon the rivers, and they shall be turned into blood:* So that the meaning of the whole passage will fairly be,—“That though God gave Abraham  
 “Isaac, and Jacob, such demonstrations of his power as could  
 “not but convince them that he would certainly perform his  
 “promises; yet they did not live to see the accomplishment of  
 “them, which he was now going to set before the Israelites.  
 “They believed in these things, but they did not experimen-  
 “tally know them. They had dreams and visions indeed, but  
 “Moses was the first that wrought miracles and prodigies. By  
 “these he made the name of the Lord known unto the world.”  
 And therefore Maimonides well concludes from this place, that  
 the prophetic spirit of Moses was more excellent than that  
 which had been upon any before his time; *Pool's Annotations;*  
*Le Clerc's and Patrick's Commentaries;* and *More Nevoch.* part  
 2. cap. 35.

† The phrase in the text is, *uncircumcised in lips*; for, as among the Jews, circumcision of any part denoted its perfection, so uncircumcision was set to signify its defectiveness, or ineptitude to the purposes for which it was designed. Thus the prophet says of the Jews, that *their ear was uncircumcised*, and adds an explanation of it, because *they cannot hearken*, Jer. vi. 10. Again he tells us, that *the house of Israel were uncircum-*  
*cised*



his speech, which he might possibly think was the reason why his own countrymen did not hearken unto him ; and how then could he expect that Pharaoh should do it, in a matter so much to his loss ? God, to remove this objection, told him,—— + That there was no occasion for

A. M.  
2433, &c.  
Ant. Chris.  
1571, &c.  
from Exod.  
ch. i. to xlii.

*cised in the heart*, i. e. would not understand and learn their duty, Jer. ix. 26. And in like manner here, *uncircumcised lips* must mean a person that was a bad speaker, and wanted eloquence ; and what might possibly induce Moses to make use of this metaphor, rather than any other, might be the consideration of his having so lately neglected to circumcise his son. Some are of opinion, that the word *circumcision* carries in it an idea of something superfluous in the part, and that therefore Moses's tongue might be either too long, or too big for his mouth, and that this might occasion either an inelegance or hesitation in his speech : But the more probable opinion is, that he was what we call *tongue-tied*, which his parents, either in their fright might not perceive, or in the general hurry and destruction of the children, might not dare to send for a proper person to remedy, until it was too late. However this be, it is certain, that as circumcision was the first and greatest sacrament among the Jews, so uncircumcision was esteemed by them the greatest scandal and disgrace ; and therefore Moses perhaps thought it some disparagement to him, that he was not able himself to deliver his mind in an handsome manner to Pharaoh ; and therefore made mention of this again, to engage the divine Majesty to *circumcise his lips*, (as they term it), to remove this impediment in his speech as we have some reason to believe that he did ; *Pererius, Patrick's, and Le Clerc's Commentaries.*

+ God, to silence the objection which Moses had more than once made of his defectiveness in speech, tells him, *I have made thee a God to Pharaoh, and Aaron shall be thy prophet.* Exod. vii. 1. by which he does not only mean, that he had invested him with an authority to require of Pharaoh an obedience to his commands, and upon his refusal, to inflict such punishments on him, as none but God could inflict ; but that, in executing the commission he was putting him upon, there was no occasion for him to speak to Pharaoh himself. That he had appointed Aaron to do ; and therefore he might keep himself upon the reserve, and Pharaoh at an awful distance, just as God delivers his oracles to the people by the mediation of his prophets. Only there is one objection against the passage itself, which some imagine cannot be genuine, because Moses makes use of the word

A. M.  
2433, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1517 &c.  
from Exod.  
ch. i. to xiii.

for himself to speak unto Pharaoh, seeing he had constituted Aaron to be his interpreter; that he must not be discouraged at some few repulses; that Pharaoh, he knew, was a man of so obstinate a temper, that the more he was punished, the less he would relent, but that the less he relented, the more would his wonders be shown on him and his people; that to this purpose, he had invested him with the power of working miracles, which would make him justly terrible; and that therefore, when they came into Pharaoh's presence, and he demanded a proof of the truth of his mission, he should direct Aaron to cast his rod upon the ground, and it should immediately become a serpent.

The miracles which the magicians could imitate.

With these instructions, Moses and Aaron came again to the king, and repeated the demand of his dismissing the Israelites: Whereupon, when the king desired them to shew him some miracle, thereby to induce him to believe, that the God whom they spoke so much of had really sent them, Aaron threw down his rod, which was instantly changed into a serpent; but (to confront this miracle) the king sent for the magicians and forcerers of Egypt, and ordered them to try, if, by their magical arts, they could cause the like transmutation. They attempted, and succeeded: They changed their rods into serpents, as the other had done, but with this remarkable difference, that Aaron's rod swallowed up all the rods of the magicians, which was enough to have convinced the proud monarch of the superior power of the God of Israel, had not his heart been so averse to the thoughts of parting with the Hebrews, that he did not let this circumstance make any due impression upon his mind.

Some time after this, Moses and Aaron put themselves in the way of Pharaoh, as he was walking out to the

*Nabi*, for a prophet, which, in his days, must have been expressed by another: For so in 1 Sam. ix. 9. it is said, *that he who was now called Nabi, a prophet, was before that time called Roeh, a seer*; which seems to imply, that *Nabi* was not a word in use till Samuel's days. But this is very far from Samuel's meaning, whose plain sense is this,——That he who foretold things to come, or discovered secrets, was anciently called a seer, not a prophet; for a prophet heretofore signified only *an interpreter of the divine will*; but that now  
(in

the \* river Nile, and urging again the demand, they had made for the departure of their brethren, as a farther sign <sup>A. M. 2433, &c.</sup> that <sup>A. M. Christ. 1571, &c.</sup> <sup>from Exod. ch. i. to xiii.</sup>

(in Samuel's days) they began to apply the word *Nabi*, or prophet, to those who could reveal any secret, or foresee things to come; *Pool's Annotations*; *Le Clerc's*, and *Patrick's Commentaries*.

\* The river Nile has its fountain-head in the Upper Ethiopia, and proceeds from two springs about twenty paces distant from one another, and each of the bigness of a cartwheel. About three days journey from the fountain-head, the river grows wide, and deep enough to carry a vessel; and having received another river into its bosom, it pursues its course westward for about 25 or 30 leagues from its head, and then, winding about to the east, it falls into a great lake, which is probably that of Zaire. At its coming out of this lake, it makes several windings towards the south, waters the country of Alata, and from thence precipitates itself between rocks of 14 fathom high, with a terrible noise, and raises such thick vapours, that at a distance they may be taken for real clouds. After which, having watered several provinces to the east, it continues its course so far into the kingdom of Goiam, that it comes within a day's journey of its first source, and thence takes a tour round about, and runs towards Phezelo and Ombareo. Here it winds about again, and having from east to north crossed several kingdoms and provinces, it comes into Egypt at the cataracts, which are vast falls of water, which it makes from steep rocks of no less than an hundred feet high. From the top of these rocks the water falls with such violence that it makes a kind of arch, under which one may pass without being wet, and with such an hideous noise, as may be heard full three leagues off. At the bottom of these rocks, it returns to its usual gentle pace, with which it flows through the plains of Egypt, in a channel about a league broad, tho' modern travellers say much less. When it comes below Memphis, about eighty miles from Grand Cairo, it is divided into two arms, which made a kind of triangle, having the Mediterranean sea for its base; and, by reason of its figure, is by the Greeks called *Delta*. These two arms were formerly divided into five small ones; and from thence came the common phrase of *septemplexis ostia Nili*; but they are now so choaked up with sand, that they are scarce discernible. This is the only river in Egypt. and contains all the water the inhabitants have to drink, which made the turning it into blood an heavy judgment upon the people. The overflowing of the river (which most impute to the great rains which fall, and melt the snow in the

A. M.  
2433, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1571, &c.  
from Exod.  
ch. i. to xiii.

that God had really sent them, upon Aaron's stretching out his hand, and touching the waters of the river with his rod, all the waters of the land of Egypt were turned into blood, and continued so for seven days; so that \* the fish died, and the inhabitants had no water to drink, but were forced to dig in new places for some to allay their thirst. But Pharaoh, finding that his magicians did turn water into blood likewise, and supposing the thing on both sides to be equally performed by magical skill, was not convinced by the miracle, and so refused to let the Israelites depart.

When the seven days were expired, Moses and Aaron came again unto him, requiring the dismissal of the people, and withal assuring him, that if he did not grant their

the mountains of Ethiopia) is the cause of all the plenty and fruitfulness of the whole country; and therefore Plutarch, and several others tell us, that nothing was had in so much veneration among the Egyptians: That they adored and invoked it as the greatest of gods, not only under the name of *Osiris*, but of *Orus* and *Jupiter* likewise, and instituted in its honour the most solemn of their feasts; and therefore their conjecture, who think that Pharaoh went to pay his morning devotions to the river Nile, is much more plausible, than that of the Chaldee paraphrast, viz. that he went to observe divination upon the water as a magician, when, in all probably, his business was no more than to bathe himself, as the custom among the Egyptians was to do almost every day; *Calmet's Dictionary*; *Wells's*, and *Moll's Geographies*; and *Bedford's Scripture-chronology*, l. 3. c. 4.

\* Diodorus Siculus, in his description of Egypt, (l. i. p. 32.) informs us, that the river Nile abounded with all manner of fish, though later travellers tell us, that there are not at present many in it; whether this be attributed to the muddiness of its water, or to the havoc which the crocodiles, and other monsters of this river, may be supposed to make in it. But whether ancient or modern geographers are right in this particular, it is certain, that this putrefaction of the water, and slaying the fish, was a very heavy judgment upon the Egyptians, who abstained from the eating of most animals, whose liquor was generally water, and whose constant food was the fruits of the earth, and the fish of this river; *Le Clerc's Commentary*; and *Wells's Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. 2.

request,

request, they should bring a plague of † frogs upon all the land: and when the king seemed to set them at defiance, Moses ordered Aaron to stretch his rod again over the waters; upon doing of which there came up abundance of frogs, so as to cover the whole land of Egypt, and to swarm in their houses, their chambers, their beds, and the very places where their victuals were dressed: But here it also happened, that the magicians likewise performed the same, so that Pharaoh was not much influenced by this miracle. Only, as his magicians could not remove the frogs, he was forced to apply himself to Moses for relief, who, upon his address to God, had them all destroyed the next day, according to the time he had prefixed; but when they were gathered into heaps, their number was so great, that before they could well be disposed of, they infected the air, and made the whole land stink.

There were several other miracles wrought by Moses and Aaron in the like manner. The swarms of † lice A. M. 2433, &c. Ant. Christ. 1571, &c. from Exod. ch. i. to xiii. And those which they could not, which

† The river Nile naturally produces frogs; but so great an abundance appearing on a sudden, filling the country, and leaving the rivers and fields, to go into the cities and houses, was really miraculous. How they got into the cities and houses is not so hard a matter to conceive: For if expert generals, according to both ancient and modern history, have sometimes surprised an enemy by entering cities through the common sewers, with much less difficulty might the frogs, these armies of the divine vengeance, find a conveyance into the cities, which stood all upon the banks of the river, by aqueducts and subterraneous communications; and, being got into the cities, they might find apertures in the walls of the houses, which the inhabitants never perceived before; *Bibliotheca Bibl. in locum.*

+ Some will have the word *Cinnim*, which we render *lice*, to signify *gnats*. The Septuagint call them *Κνηστis*, but what kind of creatures these were, is not so certainly known. Others would have them to be a new species of animals, called anologically by an old name; or if they were lice, that they were such as had wings, and cruelly stung and ulcerated the Egyptians. But upon the supposition that they were no worse than common lice, this was plague enough to the Egyptians, who affected neatness to such a degree, that they bathed themselves every day, and some of them frequently shaved their bodies all over, for fear of such vermin. Those who pretend that these lice were a new species, make this a reason why the magicians could not counterfeit this miracle, because, tho' they could easily provide the

A. M.  
2433, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1571, &c.  
from Exod.  
ch. i. to xiii.

which the magicians could not imitate; the murrain, or mortality among their cattle, wherein the Israelites were exempted; † the plague of flies; † the boils inflicted upon the

the serpents, the blood, and the frogs, yet this sort of animal was now no where to be had; and therefore, as the organs of sight are more liable to be imposed upon than those of feeling, the magicians might impose upon the king, and the other spectators, with fantastical blood and frogs, but visionary lice could not vex and torment the body: So that now it wastime for the enchanters to desist, and to own their inability to mimic Moses any farther. But supposing, that what the magicians did in the three former miracles, was not illusion and imposition upon the senses, but reality, the true reason why they could proceed no farther was, that God Almighty had laid his restraint and prohibition upon the evil spirits, who had hitherto been subservient to them, that they might not assist them any longer; *Le Clerc's Commentary*; and *Bibliotheca Bibl. in locum*.

† The word *Arob*, which we render *fly* in general, is by the Septuagint called *Κυνόβια*, i. e. *dog-fly*, from its biting; for it fastens its teeth so deep in the flesh, and sticks so very close, that it oftentimes makes cattle run mad; and the congruity of this plague seems to be greater, because one of the Egyptian deities, which they called *Anubis*, bore the head of a dog. The Psalmist indeed tells us, that *God sent divers sorts of flies among them, which devoured them*, Psalm lxxviii. 45. So that according to him, it was not one particular kind, but all sorts of flies mingled together in one prodigious swarm or conflux. Some translate it *a mixture of beasts*, which they suppose went into Egypt to infest and destroy the country: But this is not so probable a construction, because the punishments hitherto inflicted were nauseous and troublesome, rather than mortal; though this plague of infinite numbers of small tormentors is so great a one, that God calls it *his army*, Joel ii. 25.; and that the Greeks thought fit (as Pliny, l. 10. c. 28. tells us) to have a god to deliver them from it, under the style of *Myiagros* or *Myiodes* even as *Beelzebub* signifies the *Lord or God of flies*; *Bochart, Hier. pt. 2*.

† The Hebrew word *Shechin* properly signifies *an inflammation*, which first makes a tumour or boil, (as we translate it), and thence turns into a grievous ulcer. Dr. Lightfoot indeed observes, that, in the book of Job, chap. ii. 7, 8. where the same word occurs, it signifies only *a burning itch*, or *an inflamed scab*; an intolerable dry itch, which Job could not scratch off with his nails, and was therefore forced to make use

the magicians themselves : The terrible thunder and lightning, † rain, and hail, which destroyed the fruits of the earth ; the plague of the † locusts, or grasshoppers, which

A. M.  
2433, &c.  
Anc. Chris.  
1571, &c.  
from Exod.  
ch. i. to x. ii.

use of a potsherd : But then he confesses that this Shechin here spoken of was more rancorous than that, having blains and ulcers that broke out with it, which Job had not. So that the Egyptians, according to this, must have been vexed with a triple punishment at once, (a punishment fitly calculated for the mortification of a delicate and voluptuous people), aching boils, nauseous ulcers, and a burning itch : And to this that commination of Moses to the people, in case they proved disobedient, does, without all peradventure, allude, *The Lord will smite thee with the botch of Egypt, and with the emroids, and with the scab, and with the itch, whereof thou canst not be healed;* Deut. xxviii. 27.

† This infection was the more terrible in Egypt; because, according to the account of Herodotus, (l. 3. c. 10.) a very rare thing it was to see any rain, and much more any hail, in that climate : And accordingly he mentions it as a kind of prodigy; that in the reign of Psammenitus, there happened to be a shower in Thebes, which was never known before in the memory of man, nor ever after, to the age wherein our author wrote. The Psalmist has given us a very poetic description of this judgment : *He destroyed the vines with hail, and the sycamore trees with frost : He gave up the cattle also to the hail, and their flocks to hot thunder-bolts,* Psal. lxxviii. 47, 48. And from the plain account of Moses, where he mixes thunder, hail, and fire together, Exod. ix. 23. the observation is obvious, that here were no less than three of the elements in confederacy against Pharaoh's obstinacy; the air in the thunder; the water in the hail; and the fire in the lightning, all jointly demonstrating and proclaiming, that the God of Israel was the God of nature.

† This is the creature which we properly call the grasshopper; and wonderful is the account which several authors give of them. Thevenot, in his travels, tells us, "That in that part of Scythia, which the Cossacks now inhabit, there are infinite numbers of them, especially in dry seasons, which the north-east wind brings over from Tartary, Circassia, and Mingrelia, which are seldom or never free from them; that they fly in the air all compact together, like a vast cloud, sometimes 15 or 18 miles long, and about 10 or 12 miles broad; so that they quite darken the sky, and make the brightest day obscure; and that wherever they light, they devour all the corn in less than two hours time, and frequently make a famine in

A. M. which devoured what escaped from the hail; and that of  
 2433, &c. thick † darkness, which covered all Egypt for three days,  
 Ant. Christ. while  
 1571, &c.  
 from Exod.  
 ch. i. to xiii.

“ the country. These insects, (says he, “ live not above six  
 “ months; and when they are dead, the stench of them so cor-  
 “ rupts and infects the air, that it very often breeds dreadful  
 “ pestilences.” God (as we hinted before) calls the locust, *the*  
*canker-worm, caterpillar, and the palmer-worm, his great army,*  
*which he sends* amongst a wicked and rebellious people, Joel ii.  
 25. And how proper the expression is, in relation to the locust  
 in particular, will appear from the account which Aldrovandus  
 and Fincellus gives us of these animals, viz. “ That in the  
 “ year of our Lord 852, an infinite number of them was seen to  
 “ fly over twenty miles in Germany in one day, in the manner  
 “ of a formed army, divided in several squadrons, and having  
 “ their quarters apart when they rested; that the captains  
 “ marched a day’s journey before the rest, and chose the most op-  
 “ portune places for their camp, that they never removed until  
 “ sun-rising, at which time they went away in as much order  
 “ as an army of men could do; that, at last, having done  
 “ great mischief wherever they passed, (after prayers made to  
 “ God), they were driven by a violent wind into the Belgick  
 “ ocean, and there drowned; but that, being cast by the sea  
 “ upon the shore, they covered 140 acres of land, and caused  
 “ a great pestilence in the country;” which is enough to shew  
 how dreadful a punishment this was, especially considering that  
 these locusts were such as were never known before, and yet  
 the ordinary locust (as Aristotle and Pliny have described it)  
 was an animal so fierce and formidable, that one single one  
 would kill a serpent, by taking it fast by the jaws, and biting it  
 to death; *Arist. Hist. animal. l. 5. c. 23.; Pliny’s Nat. hist.*  
*l. 11. c. 9. and Le Clerc’s Commentary.*

† The Septuagint, and most translations render it, *a dark-  
 ness which might be felt*, i. e. consisting of black vapours and ex-  
 halations, so condensed, that they might be perceived by the  
 organs of touch. But some commentators think, that this  
 is carrying the sense too far; since, in such a medium as this,  
 mankind could not live an hour, much less for the space of three  
 days, as the Egyptians are said to have done: And therefore  
 they imagine, that instead of a darkness that may be felt, the  
 Hebrew phrase may signify a darkness wherein men were groping  
 and feeling about for every thing they wanted. And in this  
 sense the author of the life of Moses certainly takes it: “ For  
 “ in this darkness (says he) they who were in bed durst not  
 “ get



while the lands of Goshen (where the Israelites lived) was enlightned as usual. All these miracles, performed by the word of Moses, did not a little perplex the king. He found, that all the power and learning of the magicians could not equalize them. Upon attempting one of them, they themselves confessed, that it was done by the finger of God; and in the case of another, they were equally sufferers in the common calamity: So that the king's heart was several times almost overcome. He offered the Israelites leave to perform their religious offices to their God, provided they would do it in Egypt; but their religion (as Moses told him) was so very different from the Egyptian, that were they to do what God required of them in Egypt, the inhabitants would \* rise up

A. M. 2433, &c.  
Ant. Christ. 1571, &c.  
from Exod. ch. i. to xiii.

Hereupon the king begins to relent.

“ get up; and such as their natural occasions compelled to get up, went feeling about by the walls, or any other thing they could lay hold on, as if they had been blind.” What it was that occasioned this darkness, whether it was in the air, or in their eyes; whether it was a suspension of light from the sun in that country, or a black and thick vapour, which totally intercepted it; there is reason to think, that the description which the author of the book of Wisdom gives us of their inward terrors and consternation is not altogether conjectural, viz. “ That they were not only prisoners of darkness, and fettered with the bonds of a long night, but were horribly astonished likewise, and troubled with strange apparitions: for while over them was spread an heavy night, they were to themselves more grievous than darkness;” *Wis. xvii. 2, 3, 21.; Le Clerc's Commentary: and Philo's life of Moses.*

\* The words in the text are, *Lo, shall we sacrifice the abominations of the Egyptians before their eyes, and shall they not stone us?* Exod. viii. 26. Where the interrogation, having in it the full force of an affirmation, makes the sense of the words to be this: “ If we should offer those creatures, which the Egyptians worship for gods, as the ox and the sheep, they doubtless will be affronted to see us sacrifice their gods to our God.” For that the Egyptians did look upon several animals with a sacred veneration, is evident from that known passage in the Satirist.

——lanatis animalibus abstinet omnis  
Mensa: nefas illic factum jugulare capellæ.

*Juven. sat. 15.*

A. M. against them, and stone them. The king, after this, offered that they might go out of the kingdom, provided 2433. &c. adult persons only would go, and leave their children Ant. Chris. behind, as pledges for their return; but to this Moses per- J 571, &c. emptorily replied, That none should be left behind; the from Exod. ch. 1. to xiii. young and the old should go together; which enraged Pharaoh so, that with some severe menaces, he ordered him to depart from his presence. However, as he found the plagues increase upon him, he came to a farther concession, and was willing that the people should go, but only that their flocks and their herds should be stayed, as rightly supposing, that this might be a means to accelerate their return: But Moses positively insisted, that all their substance should be taken with them, and not one hoof be left behind; whereupon Pharaoh grew so exceeding angry, that he charged them to be gone from his presence, and never attempt to see him more, for that, if he did, he would certainly put him to death.

Moses's last message to him. Moses, however, by the divine command, went once more to Pharaoh, with the severest message he had ever brought him; and represented to him, that at midnight God would strike dead the first-born of every family throughout all the land of Egypt, and that thereupon there should be such a dread, and terror among the Egyptians, that they would come to him in the most submissive manner, and beg of him to lead the people out of the land; and after that, said he, I shall go: which put Pharaoh into such a rage, that Moses, having no intention to incense and provoke him farther, turned away, and left him.

The institution of the passover. Four days before this, God had instructed Moses and Aaron to direct the people to prepare the passover, which was to be a feast in commemoration of their departure out of Egypt; because the night before they left it, the destroying angel, who slew the first-born of the Egyptians, passed over the houses of the Israelites, without doing them any harm, they being marked with the blood of the lamb, which was killed the evening before. And the injunction which Moses gave the people, was to this effect;—That † every family of Israel (or if the family was too little,

two

† Some learned men are of opinion, that God, in the institution of the passover, had respect to these impious rites, which either then did prevail, or in a short time were to prevail among the Egyptians, and other nations where the Israelites were to dwell.

two neighbouring families joining together) should, on the tenth day of the month, take a lamb or a kid, and shut it up until the fourteenth day, and then kill it; that the lamb was to be a male, not above a year old, and without any manner of blemish; that when they killed it, they should catch its blood in a vessel, and with a bunch of hyssop dipped in it, sprinkle the lintel and side-posts of the

A. M.  
2433, &c.  
Ant. Chris.  
1571, &c.  
from Exod.  
ch. i. to xiii.

dwelt. This they tell us, "That God appointed a lamb to be slain, and eaten, and the month Nisan or March to be the particular time of eating it, in contempt of the Egyptians, who at that time, when the sun first entered into Aries, began their solemn worship and adoration of this creature, and that celestial sign; that he forbade the people to eat the flesh of the paschal lamb raw, or sodden, to break its bones, or leave any fragments of it, because, in the profane feasts of Bacchus, it was a custom to eat the raw flesh of the victims, which they offered to that god, and to break all their bones; and in the adoration of the *Isis*, whom the Egyptians, and from them the Athenians, reputed goddesses, they boiled all their sacrifices, and carried constantly some part of them home, as a good preservative against misfortunes." But there is no need, one would think, for such elaborate explanations, when, considering the situation the Israelites were in, sorely oppressed by the Egyptians, and shortly to be released, and sent away with all speed, the nature and quality of the paschal sacrifice, as well as the manner of dressing and manner of eating it, may perfectly be accounted for. Thus it was to be a male, because a more excellent species than the female; *without blemish*, to render it acceptable to God; *under a year old*, otherwise it could not properly be called a lamb; and *set apart from the rest of the flock*, that it might be in readiness, when the people came in haste to offer it. *Roasted it was to be*, and *not boiled*, because roasting was the speedier way of dressing it; but *roasted thoroughly*, because the whole was to be eaten; and *the whole was to be eaten*, that none might be left for the Egyptians to profane. It was to be eaten *standing*, and *in haste*, and with other circumstances of men every moment expecting to begin their journey; *with bitter herbs*, to put them in mind of their cruel servitude; and *unleavened bread*, in memory of their deliverance from it, so suddenly, that they had not even time to leaven their bread for their journey; which is all that the Israelites understood, and all perhaps that God at that time intended they should understand by the directions which he gave them concerning this remarkable ordinance; *Spencer De rit.*

*Heb. tom, 1. l. 2. c. 4.*

A. M. outer door, and so not stir out of the house until next  
 2433, &c. morning; that, in the mean time, they were to eat the  
 Ant. Christ. lamb or kid, (dressed whole, and without breaking a bone  
 1571, &c. of it), neither raw nor sodden, but roasted, with unleavened  
 from Exod. bread, and bitter herbs; that if there was more than they  
 ch. i. to xiii. could dispense with, no stranger was to eat of it, and there-  
 fore they were to burn it; and, lastly, that the posture in  
 which they were to eat it was to be in a hurry with their  
 cloaths on, and their staves in their hands, as if they were  
 just upon the point of going.

And the oc- When every thing was thus in readiness for their de-  
 casion of parture, God, in the middle of the night, by his destroy-  
 the Israel- ing angel, † slew the first-born of every house in Egypt,  
 ites leaving from haste.

† The word *Bekor*, signifies sometimes a person of some *em-  
 nence*, or *excellence*, as well as the *first-born*: And therefore it  
 may not be an unreasonable supposition, that where a family  
 had no *first-born*, the principal or most eminent person was  
 smitten with death: Which is certainly better, than to ima-  
 gine, with some, both Jewish and Christian interpreters, that  
 the words of Moses are only applicable to an house that had a  
 first-born, or with St. Austin, that providence did so order it  
 at this time, that every house had a first-born. Since this how-  
 ever is the concluding judgment which God sent upon the E-  
 gyptians, it may not be improper here to inquire a little how  
 long Moses was in working all these miracles. According to  
 Archbishop Usher then, (who has concluded then all within the  
 space of one month), we may suppose, that about the 18th day  
 of the sixth month, was sent the plague of the *waters turned  
 into blood*, which ended seven days after. On the 25th came  
 the second plague of frogs, which was removed the day fol-  
 lowing, and on the 27th, that of the *lice*. About the 28th  
 Moses threatened the fourth plague of *flies*, and inflicted them  
 on the 29th. On the 1st of the next month, (which was after-  
 wards made the first month of the year), he foretold the fifth  
 plague of the *murrain*, and inflicted it the next, and on the  
 3d, the sixth plague of *boils*, which fell upon the magicians  
 themselves. About the 4th day, he foretold the seventh plague  
 of *thunder and hail*, and on the 5th inflicted it. On the 7th,  
 he threatened the eighth plague of *locusts*, and having sent  
 them the day following, removed them on the 9th. On the  
 10th, he instituted the feast of the passover, and brought up-  
 on Egypt the ninth plague of *darkness*, which lasted for three  
 days; and on the 14th, he foretold the tenth, *viz.* the destruc-  
 tion of all their *first-born*, which came to pass the night fol-  
 lowing. This seems to be a reasonable period of time; and  
 the

from the prince who sat upon the throne, to the meanest slave; but among the Israelites none was hurt, because the bloody mark upon the door-posts was a token for the angel not to strike there. At midnight there was a sudden outcry and confusion among the Egyptians: The dying groans of their children awoke them; and when they perceived that in every family, without exception, the first-born, both of man and beast, were dead, they came immediately to Moses, in a great fright and terror, and desired him to get the people together, and to take their flocks, and their herds, and all that belonged to them, and be gone, because they could not tell where such dreadful judgments would end. Moses had before-hand, according to God's order, directed the Israelites to borrow the Egyptians silver and gold vessels to a great value; and God had, at this time, disposed the hearts of the Egyptians to lend them every thing they asked for. The truth is, they were in a manner frightened out of their wits, and so urgent were they to have the Israelites gone, that they would not let them stay, so much as to bake their bread, but obliged them to take the dough, raw as it was, along with them, and bake it, as well as they could, upon the road: From whence it came to be a law, that during the whole eight days of the passover, no other bread than what was unleavened, was to be eaten.

A. M.  
2433, &c.  
Ant. Chriſt.  
1571, &c.  
from Exod.  
ch. i. to xiii.

### THE OBJECTION.

“THE services which Joseph did the crown of Egypt, were so many, and so very remarkable, that

the gradual increase of these judgments is somewhat remarkable. The four first plagues were loathsome, rather than fatal to the Egyptians; but after that of the *flies*, came the *murrain*, which chiefly spent its rage upon the cattle: The *boils* and *blains* reached both man and beast, though there was still a reserve for life. The *hail* and *locusts* extended, in a great measure, even to life itself; the first by an immediate stroke, and both consequently by destroying the fruits of the earth. That of *darkness*, added consternation to their minds, and lashes to their consciences; and when all this would not reclaim, at length came the decisive blow; first the excision of the first-born, and then the drowning of the incorrigible tyrant and all his host: *Great and marvellous are thy works, O Lord God Almighty! just and true are thy ways, thou king of saints!* Rev. xv. 3.

“one

A. M.  
2433, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1571, &c.  
from Exod.  
ch. i. to xiii.

“ one can hardly imagine, that a nation who owed their  
“ lives to him (a), as they themselves confess, or a king  
“ who was indebted to him for so large an augmentation  
“ of his revenue, should ever lose the remembrance of so  
“ able a minister. But allowing this to be a frailty in  
“ human nature, that we are unmindful oftentimes of our  
“ best benefactors; yet what reason could there be, why  
“ the Egyptians should, all on a sudden, take it in their  
“ heads to treat the Israelites so inhumanly, a company of  
“ poor harmless shepherds, who could give no molestation  
“ to any government: Or if it be in the nature of man  
“ to be cruel, why should a God of infinite mercy and  
“ compassion suffer his own people, for whom he profess-  
“ ed so particular a regard, to undergo so long, and so  
“ severe a servitude, when we read of no sins and provo-  
“ cations extraordinary on their parts to excite him to it?  
“ To repel violence and vindicate the oppressed are  
“ certainly acts of great generosity, but even this may  
“ not be done, to any high degree, without a proper au-  
“ thority. And therefore, when we find Moses killing an  
“ Egyptian, because he maltreated an Hebrew brother,  
“ we cannot but think that he transcended his commission;  
“ that he acted the part of a magistrate, when he was but  
“ a private man, and was therefore guilty of wilful mur-  
“ der, as himself seems to have been conscious, by bury-  
“ ing the dead body in the sand.

“ By all that appears in Moses’s writings, he seems to  
“ have had a competent knowledge in matters of religion;  
“ and yet it may justly raise our wonder, how he came, at  
“ the age of fourscore, to be so ignorant of the very  
“ name of God, as to inquire of him by what title he was  
“ to distinguish him, when he carried his message to the  
“ Israelites; nor does the title, or definition of *I am that*  
“ *I am*, which he makes God give of himself, and seems  
“ to carry in it a reproof to Moses’s question, convey, in  
“ the least, any positive or distinct idea of what the divine  
“ nature is.

“ Great and hazardous actions indeed are not to be  
“ enterprised without mature thought and deliberation;  
“ but when Moses was assured of the divine appearance,  
“ and that it was God, in reality, who was then speak-  
“ ing to him, it favours of perverseness and obstinacy,  
“ rather than an humility or diffidence of himself, to

(a) Gen. xlvii. 25.

“ frame so many idle excuses, in order to evade a service  
 “ which God was so desirous to employ him in. A. M.  
2433, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1571, &c.  
from Exod.,  
ch. i. to xiii.

“ The sign however, which God gave Moses of the cer-  
 “ tainty of his success, viz. That on the mountain, where  
 “ they then were, the Israelites, when released, should  
 “ come and worship him, was not so very satisfactory ;  
 “ because it referred him to an event a long while poste-  
 “ rior to his mission. Nor was his mission itself so very  
 “ pleasing to God, one would think, when the very next  
 “ news we have of him, is, that he meets Moses in the  
 “ inn, and threatens to slay him, which put the whole  
 “ family into a sad flutter, and made the good woman, to  
 “ save her husband's life, circumcise her son, though she  
 “ scolded all the while, and called him a *bloody husband*.

“ The truth is, Moses, in this part of the history, has  
 “ not so well consulted the honour and veracity of the  
 “ God from whom he speaks. When he comes to Pha-  
 “ raoh, he requests only the grant of *three days journey*  
 “ *into the wilderness*, in order to offer sacrifices to God ;  
 “ and yet it is apparent, that from the very first he was  
 “ meditating a total escape. When he speaks to the peo-  
 “ ple, to give them consolation under their afflictions, he  
 “ promises them a *land flowing with milk and honey*, which  
 “ denotes all manner of plenteous provision ; and yet it is  
 “ notorious, that not only Strabo has made it a stony and  
 “ barren country, but all modern geographers and travel-  
 “ lers have likewise given it a character that does not tend  
 “ at all to its advantage.

“ The conception which we have of God, is, that he  
 “ is a being of infinite goodness, justice, and wisdom,  
 “ who can do no cruel, no unrighteous, no weak, or self-  
 “ repugnant action ; can neither be the author or abettor  
 “ of any wickedness in us ; nor the cause or promoter of  
 “ any matter that derogates from his own glory and  
 “ greatness : And yet when we read of his hardening  
 “ Pharaoh's heart, we must allow it to be an inconsistency  
 “ with his goodness ; of his ordering the Israelites to spoil  
 “ the Egyptians, an infraction upon his justice ; and of  
 “ his permitting the magicians to do the like miracles  
 “ with his servant Moses, a diminution of his own power,  
 “ and in some measure a cancelling his own credentials :  
 “ For how shall we know that miracles are true, and really  
 “ wrought by the finger of God, when God himself im-  
 “ powers evil spirits, either to work exactly the same, or

A. M. 2433, &c. Ant. Christ. 1571, &c. from Exod. ch. i. to xiii.

“ to mimic them in so artful a manner, that the most curious and attentive eye shall not be able to discern the difference ?

“ Though, therefore, we can give no reason why Moses should be so very complaisant to Pharaoh, as to give him notice of the time when he intended to inflict or remove a plague; yet we can assign a very good one why Pharaoh should send for the magicians and force-rers to confront Moses : Nor is it a bad apology for his non-compliance with God’s command to release his people, that he saw some of the self-same miracles, as were pretended to be divine, very dextrously done, either by the fascination of some evil spirit, or by the mere power and force of magic.”

Answered, by shewing the revolution which happened in Egypt :

To account, in some measure, for the occasion of the sufferings of the Israelites in the land of Egypt, we must observe, that in the fifth year of Concharis, (whom Josephus, from Manetho, calls *Timeus*, and who, according to Syncellus, was the twenty-fifth king of the land of Tanis, or Lower Egypt), there came a numerous army of unknown people, and invaded Egypt on a sudden. They overran both the Upper and Lower Egypt; burned the cities, killed the inhabitants, and having in a little time subdued all before them, made one of their leaders, whose name was *Salatis*, their king; who, as soon as he was settled on the throne, laid the land under tribute, made its ancient inhabitants his slaves; and gave the possession of their estates to his own people. Who this *Salatis* and his followers, (who called themselves *pastors*, or *shepherds*) were, is not so easy a matter to discover. The most probable conjecture is, that they were some of the Horites, whom the children of Esau drove out of Seir, (a country which lay to the east and south of the Dead Sea), because the Horites were a people who lived by pasturage, and happened to be expelled their own country much about this time. Egypt indeed was a very flourishing kingdom, but so far from being famous for war, that we read of none of their exploits of this kind from the time of their first establishment to this very day. They consumed their time in ease, and wealth, and luxury; and therefore the Horites (if they were the Horites) might easily conquer them, and gain themselves a settlement in their kingdom, even as the Arcadians did in Thrace, and the Pelasgi, and afterwards the Trojans, in Italy.

However



However this be, the government of Egypt being by this means subverted, the protection and happiness which the Israelites enjoyed perished with it. This new king, as the Scripture calls him, knew nothing of Joseph, nor did he regard any establishment which he had made. He had forced his way into Egypt with his sword, and settled his people by conquest, in such a manner, and upon such terms as he thought fit: Only, as the Hebrews were a great and increasing people, inhabiting those parts which he most suspected, and fearing lest, if any invasion should happen from the east, or any insurrection among the ancient inhabitants, they possibly might join with them, and so endanger his new acquisition, he thought it a point of good policy to use all proper means to keep them effectually under.

One of the great mysteries in the dispensations of Providence, is, God's making choice of the children of Israel for his peculiar people, when it is so manifest (as Moses roundly tells them), that they were a stiff-necked nation, and (b) *had been rebellious from the very first day that he knew them.* (c) *God will be gracious to whom he will be gracious, and will shew mercy to whom he will shew mercy.* But upon supposition that the children of Israel did not behave so well during their abode in Egypt, that they neglected the worship of the true God, and complied too much with the idolatrous customs of the country, this will afford us reason enough, why God might suffer their sorrows to be multiplied, *and their enemies to ride over their backs.* (d) *He does not, indeed, afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men;* and therefore, we may presume, that this severe chastisement of his rod was to make them smart for some great and national defection; was to remind them of their sad degeneracy from the virtue of their ancestors; and so (in the phrase of the prophet), (e) *to look unto the rock whence they were hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence they were digged; to look unto Abraham their father, and unto Sarah that bare them.*

But even putting the case that they had not been thus culpable; yet, since (f) *whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth,* who can say, but that God might justly permit such calamities to befall a people whom he had adopted for his own, the more

A. M.  
2433, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1571, &c.  
from Exod.  
ch. i. to xiii.

And why  
God suffer-  
ed the Is-  
raelites to  
be distress-  
ed.

(b) Deut. ix. 24.

(c) Exod. xxxiii. 19.

(d) Lam. iii. 32.

(e) Is. li. 1, 2.

(f) Heb. xii. 6.

A. M.  
2433, *Ec.*  
Ant. Christ.  
1571, *Ec.*  
from Erod.  
ch. i. to xiii.

to exercise their virtue, and patience, and resignation to the divine will; (g) the more to keep up a distinction between them and the Egyptians, which a friendly usage might have destroyed; the more to prepare and make them willing to leave Egypt, whenever God should send them an order to depart; and the more to heighten the relish of their future deliverance, and to make them more thankful, more obedient to him, and his injunctions, upon every remembrance of that house of bondage, wherein they had suffered so much, and been so long detained?

Moses's  
truth as an  
historian.

Of all the writers of the histories of their own times, there is none to be compared to Moses in this regard, that he reveals his own faults and blemishes, which he might have easily concealed, and conceals many things recorded in other authors, which might have redounded to his own immortal honour. He might have concealed the near consanguinity between his father and mother, which, in after-ages, made marriages unlawful, though then perhaps it might be dispensed with. He might have concealed his murder of the Egyptian, and, for fear of apprehension, his escape into Midian. He might have concealed his aversion to the office of rescuing his brethren from their bondage; the many frivolous excuses he made, and the flat denial he gave God at last, till God was in a manner forced to obtrude it upon him. He might have concealed his neglect in not circumcising his son, which drew God's angry resentment against him, so that he met him, and would have slain him. He might have concealed some peevish remonstrances he made to God when Pharaoh proved obstinate, and refused to comply. Above all, he might have concealed the whole story of the magicians their working three miracles equally with him, and every other circumstance that seemed to eclipse his glory: But, instead of this, we may observe, that as he makes a large chasm in his life, from his childhood to his being forty years old, and from forty to fourscore; so he has left us nothing of the incomparable beauty and comeliness of his person; nothing of the excellency of his natural parts, and politeness of his education; nothing of his Ethiopian expedition, the conquests he made there, and the posts of honour which he held in the Egyptian court; nothing indeed of all the transactions of the preceding part of his life, but what the author to the Hebrews has taken care

(g) Sherlock on Providence.

to transmit, viz. (b) *that when he came to years, he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, chusing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.* So that here we have a signal evidence of the truth and honesty of our historian, that in the passages of his own life, he conceals such as an impostor would be fond to emblazon, and discovers others which any man of art and design would be glad to conceal; tho' even some of these passages, which at first sight may seem to deserve some blame, upon a farther inquiry, may be found to be excusable at least, if not to be justified.

Whoever was the author of the book of Job, it is certain, that he was a writer of great antiquity, and yet he makes it a part of the character of that righteous man, that he (i) *delivered the poor, when he cried, and the fatherless, and him that had no helper; that he brake the jaws of the wicked, and plucked the spoil out of his teeth.* If this may be thought to relate to Job, as a public magistrate only, there is a direction in the Proverbs of Solomon, which seems to be of a more general concernment; (k) *If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto death, and those that are ready to be slain; if thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not; doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it? And he that keepeth thy soul, doth not he know it? And shall not he render to every man according to his works?* If this be thought again not to affect Moses at all, as being at this time an inhabitant of Egypt; there was in Egypt likewise a law, (l) which perhaps at this time was in force, and obligatory upon all, viz. "That whoever saw his fellow-creature either killed by another, or violently assailed, and did not either apprehend the murderer, or rescue the oppressed if he could; or if he could not, made not an information thereof to the magistrate, himself should be put to death." Now the history tells us, that (m) *when Moses went out unto his brethren, he looked on their burdens, and spied an Egyptian smiting an Hebrew.* So that it is but supposing, that this Egyptian was one of the taskmasters (as the burdens here mentioned seem to denote) who so barbarously treated the Hebrews, and was now

A. M.  
2433, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1571, &c.  
from Exod.  
ch. i. to xiii.

The murder of the  
Egyptian  
justified.

(b) Heb. xi. 24, 25. (i) Job, xix. 12, 14. (k) Prov. xxiv. 11, 12. (l) Diodorus Siculus, l. i. p. 69. (m) Exod. ii. 11.

A. M.  
2433, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1571, &c.  
from Exod.  
ch. i. to xiii.

going to beat one of them to death ; and according to the law of the land (which seems indeed to be the law of all nations) then in being, he was obliged to interpose ; and if, upon his interposition, the Egyptian turned upon him, and assaulted him briskly, (which is no hard matter to imagine), he was obliged, in his own defence, to slay him.

(n) To complain to the magistrate in this case, and implore the assistance of the law, was to no manner of purpose. The whole civil power was lodged in such hands as had secret instructions from court to vex and ill-treat the Israelites ; and when matters were come to this crisis, that oppression ruled, and the government was turned into a mere latrocity, private force, upon any proper occasion, must be deemed lawful in all, but in Moses much more so, since he was either moved and animated thereunto by a divine impulse, or invested, before it happened, (as (o) St. Stephen's comment upon the place gives us reason to think he was so invested), with the title and office of *deliverer of the people of God*.

Why Moses  
desired to  
know God's  
name.

That the names both of persons and things were of the greatest importance to be rightly understood, in order to attain the truest knowledge that could be had of their natures, was the opinion both of Jews and Heathens ; and some of the earliest writers of the Christian church have speculated upon this subject, with so much philosophical subtilty, as to build thereon many foolish fancies, and ridiculous errors. It cannot be denied indeed, but that God, in giving some names that are recorded in Scripture, had respect to the nature and circumstances of the persons to whom they belonged ; and that, in imitation of him, men endeavoured, even from the beginning, to give names as expressive of the properties of the things named, as human wisdom could direct them ; And therefore, without troubling ourselves with what the ancients have offered concerning the science of names, we may from hence deduce the true reason why Moses desired to be informed, at this time more especially, what the name of God was.

If we consider the small advances which philosophy had made, we cannot imagine, that men at this time had a sufficient knowledge of the works of the creation, to be able thereby to demonstrate the attributes of God ; nor could they, by speculation, form proper and just notions of his nature. Some of them indeed, the philosophers of that

(n) Le Clerc's Commentary *in locum*. (o) Acts vii. 25.

age,

age; thought themselves wise enough to attempt these subjects; but what was the success? (p) *professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God.* After they had speculated never so long on any element, the fire, air, or water, the convex of the firmament, the circle of the stars, or the lights of heaven, not forming true notions of their natures, they were either delighted with their beauty, or astonished with their power, and so framing very high, but false estimates of them, they lost the knowledge of the work-master, and took the parts of his workmanship to be God.

A. M.  
2433, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1571, &c.  
from Exod.  
ch. i. to xiii.

Moses, indeed, might be a man of excellent parts; but we carry our compliment too far, if we think him not liable to have fallen into these, or perhaps more dangerous errors, had he endeavoured to form his notions of God, either from the Egyptian, or any other learning that was then extant in the world. Faith, or a belief of what God had revealed, was the only principle upon which he could hope rightly to know God; and this was the principle which Moses here desires to go upon. For as the revelation which God had hitherto made of himself was but short and imperfect; so Moses, by desiring to know God's name, desired that he might have some revelation of his nature and attributes vouchsafed him; for that the name of God does frequently signify the divine nature and attributes, is evident from several passages in Scripture.

When Moses desired to see God's glory, he obtained, that the name of the Lord should be proclaimed before him, and the proclamation was, (q) *The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin.* And, in like manner, Isaiah, prophesying what the Messiah should be, declares his name to be (r) *Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.* In both these places, and many more that might be produced to the same purpose, the name denotes the nature of God; and therefore the design of Moses, in asking God's name, was to obtain an information of the divine attributes, in order to carry a report of them to his brethren. And indeed, considering that Moses was the first that ever carried a message from God to man, it was natural for the Israelites to ask

(p) Rom i. 22, 23.  
(r) Isa. ix. 6.

(q) Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7.

A. M.  
2433, &c.  
Ant. Chron.  
1571, &c.  
from Exod.  
ch. i. to xiii.

The propriety and  
meaning of  
God's name.

him by what name, or peculiar attribute, he had made himself known unto him, so as to authorise him to speak to them, in such a manner as no man before had ever done; which question he could not pretend to answer, unless God by revelation thought fit to enable him; and therefore he desired to be confirmed (as far as the divine goodness would be pleased to discover) what name he would be called by, as knowing very well, that, by obtaining this, he might form proper notions of his nature and perfections.

And accordingly we may observe, that this great appellation, which God is here pleased to give of himself, expresses his incomprehensible nature in such open and proper characters, that St. Hilary (as he tells of himself) lighting on these words before he was a Christian, and as he was musing about God and religion, was struck with admiration, because he could think of nothing so proper and essential to God, as *to be*. God himself, however, chuses to express the word in the future tense, on purpose, (as some imagine), to shew, that he is the only being that can truly say, *I shall, or will be, what I am*; for as much as all other beings derive their existence from him, and may be deprived of that existence whenever he pleases.

What knowledge the wisest of the Heathen world might have of this incommunicable name of God, without the help of revelation, is a matter of great uncertainty. It is more than probable, that Plato's definition of a God, *viz. A being that is always, and had no beginning*, was borrowed from these words of Moses: But there is a passage in Plutarch, which mentions an inscription in the temple of Delphos, consisting of these letters EI, a contraction, as some imagine, of EIMI, *I am*, which (according to the opinion of (s) a great judge in those days) was one of the most perfect names and titles of the Deity, seeing it imported, that "Though our being is uncertain, precarious, temporary, and subject to change, so that no man can say of himself in a strict and absolute sense, *I am*; yet we may, with great propriety, give the Deity this appellation, because God is independent, immutable, eternal, always and every where the same:" For (l) *I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, the first and the last, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty*.

But all this would not work upon Moses to undertake the office to which God called him; and yet when we

(s) Ammonius.

(l) Rev. i. 8, 11.

come

come to consider his case, we cannot altogether accuse him of perverseness or obstinacy. About forty years before, he had felt some extraordinary motion in himself, and as he was then in the fervour of his youth, he took it for a certain indication, that God intended to make use of him as an instrument for his people's deliverance; but then he was a far greater man than now. The princess (if alive) who had adopted him for her son, supported his interest at court; or if dead, had in all probability left him a fortune sufficient to procure himself one. But now age had made him cool and considerate. The loss of his patroness had quashed all aspiring thoughts. A long habitude had perfectly reconciled him to an obscure course of life: and therefore, as one loth to be roused from his solitude, (u) *Who am I, says he, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?*

He had already experimentally known the ingratitude and dissingenuity of the Hebrews: (x) *When he supposed they would have understood, that God, by his hand, would have delivered them,* he voluntarily offered his service; but their rejection of him, when in the height of his power, upon so great an alteration in his circumstances, took away all hopes of success in so difficult an enterprise. So that the principal error which Moses incurred upon this occasion, was no more than a distemper incident to the generality of mankind, viz. the measuring of God by himself, and judging of events from the probabilities or improbabilities of second causes.

But there is another reason not to be dissimbled, which might possibly deter Moses from returning into Egypt, and that was the blood of the man for which he had fled into Midian, and his certain knowledge of the laws of that land, viz. (y) that "whoever killed another, whether he was bond or free, was not to escape with his own life." Just before God appeared to him in the bush, and had this discourse with him, we read, that (z) the king of Egypt died, that king; to wit, in whose reign he had slain the Egyptian, and who sought to apprehend him, that he might put him to death: But as Moses kept no manner of correspondence with Egypt, the news of this king's death might not have reached his ears, or if it had, he might reasonably think, that some surviving relation of the slain man might enter a process against him for the murder. So, that

(u) Exod. iii. 11.  
VOL. II.

(x) Acts vii. 25.  
S f

(z) Exod. ii. 23.

(y) Diodorus Si-

A. M. here he fell into a passion, which is hardly separable from  
 2433, &c. human nature, viz. the love of life, and dread of punish-  
 Ant. Christ. ment; and which in him was the more excusable, because  
 1571, &c. God as yet had not cleared his mind from the fear and  
 from Exod. suspicion it lay under.  
 ch. i. to xiii.

It must not be denied then, but that there were some tokens of human frailty in Moses's last refusal of the commission which was offered him; but then there is this to say in excuse, that the most excellent persons are the least forward to embrace the offers of great preferment. For if no authority (according (a) to Plato) is designed for the benefit of him that governs, but of those that are governed, no wise and considerate man will voluntarily take upon him the government of a people, but must either be hired or compelled to it: And therefore Moses, considering the great weight of the employment, out of a due sense of his own infirmities, declined it as long as he could. And though mention is made in Scripture of the (b) *Lord's being angry with him*, yet this anger could amount to no more than such a displeasure, as a father conceives at his child, when notwithstanding all that can be said and done to create in him a just confidence, he still continues bashful and diffident of himself.

The significance of the sign which God gives to Moses.

It may be thought perhaps by some a farther excuse for Moses's backwardness, or at least no great encouragement to his undertaking, that God makes the sign wherewith he would seem to ratify his promise, of a date subsequent to his commission: (c) *I will certainly be with thee, and this shall be a token unto thee, that I have sent thee: When thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain.* For how can a future event serve for a sign of the accomplishments of a present promise? The common solution of this difficulty is, — That God designed this for a token to Moses, in order to root out of his heart all remains of infidelity, which might perhaps be found in him, even after he had delivered the Israelites out of bondage; but this is a sense by no means allowable. For how can we suppose, that after God had brought out his people with an high hand, and a stretched-out arm, by making himself justly terrible to Pharaoh and all his court; by turning rivers of water into blood; by changing the day into night; by slaying all the first-born in Egypt; and by causing the king and his whole army to be swallowed

(a) De Repub. l. 1. (b) Exod. iv. 14. (c) Exod. iii. 12.



up in the same waves of the sea, which (d) were a wall on the right hand and on the left, and opened a way for his own people to pass: how can we suppose, I say, that this faithful servant of his should have the least doubt, whether this mighty deliverance was to be ascribed to providence or chance? Or if there was any farther occasion for tokens, why should a smaller than any of the foregoing be proposed? Or when proposed, why should it be presumed sufficient to produce an effect which others, much more considerable, were found incompetent to do?

A. M.  
2433, &c.  
Ant. Chris.  
1571, &c.  
from Exod.  
ch. i. to xiii.

To evade these questions, some of the Jewish doctors have devised a new partition of the words; and when God says to Moses, *This shall be a token to thee*, they think he means it of the bush, from whence he spake, *all in flames without consuming*, which was questionless token enough that God had sent him; and thereupon they make the subsequent words the beginning of a fresh sentence, and declarative of a farther purpose, for which God would bring forth his people out of Egypt, even that from that mountain, he might give them a law, which was to be the rule and directory of their religious worship and service. But there is no necessity for this subterfuge. when the difficulty may be fairly resolved, by distinguishing the promises of God into two kinds; those that depend on certain conditions, and those that have no conditions at all.

To be the messenger of the former kind of promises is exercising a glorious ministry; but then it is a ministry attended with danger. He upon whom God confers it, may live in perpetual fear of promising something without effect; because they to whom the promise is made, may forfeit it by not performing the requisite condition: But nothing can discourage the man to whom God has given a commission of the latter kind; because the infallibility of the event supports him against all the obstacles that can possibly arise.

Now to apply this to the case in hand. When God promises Moses a deliverance of his people, Moses might fear, that their impiety, or unbelief, might be a bar and obstruction to their deliverance; and therefore God, in order to cure him of this fear, endeavours to make him sensible that the promise he now gives him, was not indefinite and general, like those which depended on certain conditions; but that it was one of those whose accomplishment was de-

(d) Exod. xiv. 22.

A. M.  
2433, &c.  
Ant. Christ,  
1571, &c.  
from Exod.  
ch. i. to xiii.

creed in the divine councils, independent on any event, or any condition: And therefore he not only promises, but foretels, and particularises the nicest and minutest circumstances. He not only acquaints him, that his people shall be delivered, but he describes to him the exact place where, after they found themselves set at liberty, they were to pay their homage to their deliverer: And this detail is the token that God gives him of the certainty of the event.

To illustrate this by a parallel instance. When the armies of Sennacherib besieged Jerusalem, Hezekiah began to fear that they would take it: To secure him against that fear, Isaiah promises him an approaching deliverance. Hezekiah is afraid lest the sins of the people should stand between him and the divine goodness: To secure him against this apprehension likewise, and to convince him that the resolution God had taken to deliver his people, was irrefractive and infallible: *(e) This shall be a sign to thee, says he, ye shall eat this year such things as grow of themselves; and in the second year, which springeth of the same; and in the third year sow ye, and reap, and plant vineyards, and eat the fruit thereof.* To return to Moses.

Had this promise indeed been the only sign which God had given him, it might have administered some umbrage of suspicion; but when it was attended with several other signs and mighty wonders, it could not but be of great use for the confirmation of his faith in his present undertaking, since he knew it was as certain as if it had already been effected; because it proceeded from the mouth of the Almighty, whose promises, when absolute and unconditional, are always *yea and amen*.

Moses censured for neglecting to circumcise his son.

I know of few passages more difficult to be understood, than that which contains the adventure of Moses's family in the inn, *(f) where the Lord met him, and sought to kill him, until Zipporah took a sharp stone, and cut off the foreskin of her son, and cast it at his feet, and said, surely a bloody husband art thou to me.* Zipporah is commonly represented as a perverse and froward woman, who looked upon circumcision as a cruel and unnecessary ordinance; and therefore prevailed with her husband (who perhaps might be too indulgent to her in the case of her younger son) to omit it. But it ought to be considered, that, as she was a Midianitish woman, and descended from Abraham by his wife Keturah, she could not have any aversion to the rite

(e) 2 Kings xix. 29.

(f) Exod. iv. 24, 25.

of circumcision, in which she acquiesced in the case of her elder son Gershom, and in which she was so expert, that upon her husband's incapacity, she herself performed the operation upon the younger.

The Midianites might perhaps, in this respect, imitate their neighbours the Ishmaelites, who did not circumcise their children until they were thirteen years of age ; and for this reason, some have imagined, that Moses's son had not as yet undergone the operation : But Moses knew very well, that there was a limitation of time in the institution of the ordinance ; and therefore the more probable reason for this omission seems to be, that they were now upon their journey, when Zipporah was brought to bed, and that therefore they might think, that the danger of the wound to the infant, might excuse the deferring of his circumcision, as it excused the Israelites afterwards in the wilderness.

But as it does not appear that Moses lay under any necessity of taking his family, especially his wife with child, along with him ; so this omission of circumcising his son might be imputed to him as a greater fault than ordinary, because he may be supposed to have understood the will of God concerning this rite, more perfectly than any other man, and was, but just before, reminded of the benefit of that covenant, whereof this ordinance was a seal, and some part of which he was going now to take possession of.

But how absurd would it have been for Moses to be made a law-giver to others, when himself lived in an open violation of God's laws ? or to be appointed a chief ruler and instructor of the Israelites, to whom he was to inculcate the obligation of this ordinance, and on whom he was to inflict pains and penalties for their neglect of it, when himself was guilty of the same sin ? Nor was this omission only a great sin in itself, but a great scandal likewise to the Israelites, who, by his example, might very likely be led into the same miscarriage, and be tempted to suspect the call of a person who shewed such a visible contempt of God's law. As Moses therefore was a public person, and just invested with a commission from God, his disobedience to a known law was more enormous, his example might have done more mischief ; and therefore God's severity against him, either in afflicting him with some sudden sickness, or affrightning him with some terrible apparition, was necessary to remind him of his duty. And accordingly, whatever the means was, we find, that it brought to his wife's

A. M.  
2433, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1571, &c.  
from Exod.  
ch. i. to xiii.

A. M.  
2433, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1571, &c.  
from Exod.  
ch. i. to xiii.

wife's remembrance the neglect of their not having circumcised the child: but we injure her character, if we think that the words which she is made to utter upon this occasion, were any angry taunt or exprobaton to her husband, since (according to the exposition (g) of a very learned writer upon the text) they are not directed to him, but to her son; and are not the effect of any angry resentment, but a solemn form of speech made use of at the time of any child's circumcision.

His wife's  
conduct set  
right.

Several of the Jewish doctors tell us, that it was a custom of the Hebrew women to call their children, when they were circumcised, by the name of *Chaton*, i. e. *spouse*, as if they were now *espoused to God*: And to this custom the Apostle perhaps might allude, when he tells his Corinthians, (b) *I am jealous over you with an holy jealousy, for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ*. However this be, (i) *Zipporah*, who was an Arabian woman, might the rather make use of this term, and apply it to her son, because the Arabians, (whose language has a great affinity to the Hebrew, and who themselves, as descendents from Abraham, did all along use the rite of circumcision), make the word *Chaton* signify to *circumcise*, and *Chiten*, *circumcision*, (as manifestly appears in their translation of the New Testament), which can no otherwise be accounted for, than from this custom of calling a child *Chaton* when he is circumcised, even as we, because a child in baptism is made a Christian, use the word *christen* for to *baptize*.

If *Zipporah's* words then were directed, not to her husband, but the child whom she had just now circumcised, their proper meaning must be, *I, by this circumcision, pronounce thee to be a member of the church*: For the child, on the day of his circumcision, (says *Aben Ezra* upon this text), was used to be called *Chatan*, because he was then first joined to the people of God, and as it were espoused unto God. And if this be the sense of the matter, *Zipporah* was so far from expressing any angry resentment, or giving her husband any opprobrious language upon this occasion, that she only did the office of circumcising her son, when she perceived that the delay of it had given offence to God, and in doing that office, pronounced the words over him which used to be pronounced whenever that ceremony was duly performed.

(g) Mede's Discourse 14.  
(i) Mede, l. i. Discourse 14.

(b) 2 Cor. xi. 2.

This

This is an interpretation which not only the Septuagint and Chaldee paraphrast seem to countenance, but what most modern masters of Jewish learning have approved. And as it seems to clear the character of Zipporah, so may it receive some farther confirmation from the subsequent behaviour of the angel, who as soon as he saw the ceremony performed, and heard the solemn form pronounced over the child, (*k*) *Let Moses go, and did not slay him*; whereas, had the operation been done in the manner that some pretend, grudgingly, and of necessity with inward regret, and words of reproach to her husband, this (one would think) would have incensed the angel, either to have continued the punishment (be it what it will) upon Moses, or rather to have transferred it to his wife, who, upon this supposition, seems most justly to have deserved it.

A. M.  
2433, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1571, &c.  
from Exod.  
ch. i. to xiii.

Upon the whole therefore it appears, that the words of Zipporah were addressed to her son, and not her husband, and were the usual form of admission into the Jewish church; that it was at the child's feet that she laid the foreskin, and not threw it at her husband in anger, when she spake the words above-mentioned; and that, in this whole affair, there was neither any squabble between Moses and his wife, nor any indecent behaviour, or opprobrious language used by her,

It cannot be denied indeed, but that God, from the very first day that he appointed Moses to go to Pharaoh, intended to deliver his people from their captivity, and when once they were departed out of Egypt, that they should never return again; and yet they are directed to demand only to go *three days journey into the wilderness*. This was not the whole of what was intended; but Moses lay under no obligation to let so bitter an enemy as Pharaoh into his whole design. It is sufficient to absolve him from any imputation of dissingenuity, that he acted according to the instructions which God gave him; (*l*) and God certainly was not obliged to acquaint Pharaoh with all his mind, but only so far as he thought proper: And, for wise and good reasons, he thought proper to make the demand no higher at first, than *three days journey into the wilderness*, that by his denial of so modest a request, he might make his tyranny more manifest, and the divine vengeance upon him more just and remarkable.

No fallacy  
in Moses's  
demand.

(*k*) Exod. iv. 26.

(*l*) Pool's Annotations *in locum*.

A. M. 2433, &c. It must be acknowledged again, that the expression of *flowing with milk and honey*, when applied to any country, Ant. Christ. 1571, &c. like that of King Solomon's *making silver to be in Jerusalem like stones (m)*, is hyperbolical. It denotes very rich pastures and grounds which should feed cattle yielding abundance of milk, and which should produce great plenty of flowers and plants, for the bees to make honey. It represents indeed a general fruitfulness all the country over; for which Palestine, (according to the account of writers of no mean character), was certainly once famous, however it came into Strabo's head to disparage it. For (to mention an author or two of some note), Aristeus, who was there to bring the seventy interpreters into Egypt, tells us, that immense and prodigious was the produce and plenty it afforded of trees, fruits, pasture, cattle, honey, besides the spicery, gold, and precious stones, imported from Arabia. (n) Josephus describes the country, as it was in his time, *i. e.* in the time of our Saviour and his apostles, as most remarkably fruitful and pleasant, and abounding in the very choicest productions of the earth. Bochart, much later, and since the country has been inhabited by the Turks, lived in it for the space of ten years, and as he was particularly curious and diligent in informing himself in every thing, speaks the greatest things imaginable of the richness of its soil, and the choiceness of its products: And (to name no more) our own countryman Mr. Sandys, who, in the beginning of the last century, travelled through it, gives it the character of "a land adorned with beautiful mountains, and luxurious valleys; the rocks producing excellent waters, and no part empty of delight, or profit:" And certainly those who either were natives, or have sojourned a long time in a country, may be supposed to have a more perfect knowledge of it, than a foreigner; who lived at a distance, as Strabo did.

The truth is, if we consider of what a small compass the land of Canaan is, and yet what a prodigious number of inhabitants (both before and after the Israelites became masters of it) it maintained, we must conclude, it could not but deserve the character which the authors above cited have given us of it; and the barrenness and poverty of its soil, which some modern travellers seem to complain of, must be imputed either to its want of tillage and cultivation.

(m) 1 Kings x. 27. (n) Antiq. l. 5.; and Fuller's Pisgah-sight of Palestine.

tion, (which the Turks, its present inhabitants are utterly ignorant of), or to the particular judgement of God, who, for the wickedness of any nation, has frequently performed what he threatened to the Jews of old *(o)* *I will break the pride of your power, and I will make your heaven as iron, and your earth as brass, and your strength shall be spent in vain; for your land shall not yield her increase, neither shall the trees of the land yield their fruits.*

A. M.  
2433, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1571, &c.  
from Exod.  
ch. i. to xiii.

Several things are said in Scripture to be done by God, which are only permitted by him to come to pass in their ordinary course and procedure: And thus God may be said to harden Pharaoh's heart, only because he did not interpose, but suffered him to be carried, by the bent of his own passions, to that inflexible obstinacy which proved his ruin. That Moses, to whom God used these expressions concerning Pharaoh, understood them in this sense, is evident from many parts of his behaviour to him, and especially from his earnestly intreating him to be persuaded, and to let the people go. *(p)* Had Moses known, or ever thought that God had doomed Pharaoh to unavoidable ruin, it had been an unwarrantable presumption in him to have persuaded him to have avoided it: But that Moses, with all possible application, endeavoured to make an impression upon Pharaoh for his good, is manifest from this passage, *(q)* *glory over me, i. e. do me the honour to believe me, when I shall intreat for thee, and for thy servants*; wherein he makes an earnest address to Pharaoh, to induce him to be persuaded to part with the people, which he certainly never would have done, had he been satisfied that God himself had prevented his compliance, on purpose to bring him to ruin.

The hardening Pharaoh's heart not from God.

It is farther to be observed therefore, that not only in the Hebrew, but in most other languages, the occasion of an action, and what in itself has no power to produce it, is very often put for the efficient cause thereof. Thus in the case before us, *(r)* God sends Moses to Pharaoh, and Moses, in his presence, does such miraculous works as would have had an effect upon any other: But because he saw some of the miracles imitated by the magicians; because the plagues which God sent came gradually upon

*(o)* Levit. xxvi. 19, 20. *(q)* Shuckford's Connection, vol. 2. 1. 9. *(r)* Exod. viii. 9. *(r)* Le Clerc's Commentary.

A. M. him, and by the intercession of Moses, were constantly  
 2433, &c. removed; he thence took occasion, instead of being soften-  
 Ant. Christ. ed by this alternative of mercy and judgement, to become  
 1571, &c. more sullen and obdurate. When Pharaoh, (as the text  
 from Exod. tells us), *saw that the rain, and the hail, and the thunder*  
 ch. i. to xiii. *ceased, he sinned yet more, and hardened his heart.* The  
 mercy of God, which should have led him to repentance,  
 had a contrary effect upon him, and made him more ob-  
 stinate: "(s) For an hardened heart (as one expresses  
 " it) is neither cut by compunction, nor softened by any  
 " sense of pity. It is neither moved by intreaties, nor  
 " yields to threatenings, nor feels the smart of scourges.  
 " It is ungrateful to benefactors, treacherous to counsels,  
 " sullen under judgements, fearless in dangers, forgetful  
 " of things past, negligent of things present, and impro-  
 " vident for the future:" All which bad qualities seem  
 to have concentered in Pharaoh. For whatever might have  
 contributed to his obduration at first, it is plain, that in the  
 event, even when the magicians owned a divine power in  
 what they saw done, and were quite confounded when they  
 felt themselves smitten with the boils, and might thereupon  
 very likely persuade him to surrender, he is so far from  
 relenting, that he does not so much as ask a remove of the  
 plague. It was therefore entirely agreeable to the rules of  
 divine justice, when nothing would reclaim this wicked  
 king, when even that which wrought upon the ministers  
 of Satan made no impression upon him, to let his crime  
 become his punishment. and to leave him to *eat the bitter*  
*fruit of his own ways, and to be filled with his own devices.*

That the  
 Hebrews,  
 at their de-  
 parture, did  
 not rob the  
 Egyptians.

The Israelites, we own, did carry out of the land of  
 their captivity several things of great value, which they  
 had from the Egyptians: But then we are to consider, that  
 the word which our translators render *borrow*, does more  
 properly signify *to ask of one*; and what they render *to lend*;  
 is as literally *to give*. For the case stood thus between the  
 two nations. (t) The Egyptians had been thoroughly ter-  
 rified with what had passed, and especially with the last ter-  
 rible plague upon their first-born, and were now willing to  
 give the Hebrews any thing, or every thing, only to get  
 quit of them. They therefore bribed them to be gone, and  
 courted them with presents, so very profusely, as even to

(s) Vide Patrick's Commentary. (t) Scripture vindicated,  
 part 2.

impoverish



impoverish themselves. But for this the Israelites were not at all culpable, because they only accepted of what the others gave them, and what was freely given, they doubtless had a right to detain.

A. M.  
2433, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1571, &c.  
from Exod.  
ch. i. to xiii.

But suppose that the strict sense of the word was, that they really did borrow many valuable things of the Egyptians; yet it is a truth allowed on all hands, that God, who is the supreme Lord of all things, may, when he pleases, and in what manner he pleases, transfer the rights of men from one to another. Considering then, that God was now become the king of the Israelites, in a proper and peculiar manner; and considering farther, what insufferable wrongs the king and people of Egypt had done to this people of God, who were now become his peculiar subjects and proprietary lieges; this act of spoiling the Egyptians, (even in the harshest sense of the word), was, according to the laws of nations, more justifiable than royal grants of letters of mart, or other such like remedies, as kings are accustomed to make use of against other powers that have wronged their subjects, or suffered them to be wronged by those that are under their command, without making a proper restitution. In short, whatever the Hebrews took from the Egyptians, they took and possessed it by the law of reprisals, *i. e.* by virtue of a special warrant from the Lord himself, who was now become, not their God only, but their peculiar king.

\* That some compensation was due, in strict justice, from the Egyptians to the Hebrews, for the great services they

\* In the Gemarah of the Sanhedrim, there is a memorable story concerning the transaction. In the time of Alexander the Great, the Egyptians brought an action against the Israelites, desiring that they might have the land of Canaan, in satisfaction for all they had borrowed of them when they went out of Egypt. To this Gibeon Ben Kosam, who was advocate for the Jews, replied, that before they made this demand, they must prove what they alleged, *viz.* That the Israelites borrowed any thing of their ancestors: To which the Egyptians thought it sufficient to say, that they found it recorded in their own books. Well then, (says the advocate), look into the same books, and ye will find that the children of Israel lived four hundred and thirty years in Egypt; (Exod. xii. 50.) pay us then, said he, for all the labours and toils of so many thousand people, as you employed us all that time, and we will restore what we borrowed; to which they had not a word to answer; *Patrick's Com-*

A. M.  
2433. &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1571, &c.  
from Exod  
ch. I. to x li.

they had done them, is what can hardly be denied : But supposing this borrowing and lending between them had been without any such regard, yet if the Israelites acquired a right to these things afterwards, there was then no obligation for their making any restitution. Now, that they acquired such a right, is manifest from the Egyptians pursuing them in an hostile manner, and with a purpose to destroy them, after they had given them free liberty to depart ; by which hostility and perfidiousness they plainly forfeited their right to what they had only lent before. For this hostile attempt, (which would have warranted the Israelites to have fallen upon the Egyptians, and spoiled them of their goods), did certainly warrant them to keep them when they had them ; so that now they became the rightful possessors of what they had only upon loan, and could not have detained without fraud and injustice, before.

Thus, in what view soever we contemplate this fact, whether it be a voluntary donation made by the Egyptians, or an act of reprisal made by the Hebrews, or a deed of forfeiture which the former incurred by an unjust invasion upon the latter, the Hebrews will be found not so culpable as some would make them : Nor can we see where the pretended ill tendency of such a precedent can be, since it is allowed on all hands, that it is, in no case, to be followed, unless it be evidently commanded by the same divine authority.

Miracles indeed, we own, are the seals and attestations of God, to evidence the truth of any thing that he is desirous the world should believe ; but if magicians, by the assistance of evil spirits, have power to impose upon our senses, or to work such wonders, as seem altogether miraculous, we are left under a great uncertainty how to determine our judgement in this case : And therefore, to give a full solution to this part of the objection, we shall first premise something concerning the nature of magic, and how far its power may extend towards the operation of miracles ; thence proceed to inquire who the particular magicians were who pretended to oppose Moses, and upon

*mentary.* It is to be observed, however, that this passage in Exodus, which the advocate refers to, had respect to all the pilgrimages of Abraham and his posterity, from the time of his setting out from Charran in Mesopotamia, to this their departure out of Egypt, as we shall have occasion to shew very soon. Vid. p. 355.

what

what account it was that Pharaoh sent for them ; thence to consider whether the miracles they seemingly wrought, were real or fictitious, or, if real, why God permitted them to perform them ; and thence to examine whether this permission tended any way to prejudice the evidence of Moses's mission from God, or rather not to confirm it, seeing the difference between them and Moses, in this contest of working miracles, was so visible and conspicuous.

Those who have professedly treated of the magic art, have generally divided it into three kinds, natural, artificial, and diabolical. (u) The first of these is no other than natural philosophy, but highly improved and advanced, whereby the person that is well skilled in the power and operation of natural bodies, is able to produce many wonderful effects, mistaken by the illiterate for diabolical performances, even though they lie perfectly within the verge of nature. Artificial magic is what we call *legerdemain*, or *flight of hand*, whose effects are far from being what they seem. They are deceptions and impostures, the very tricks of jugglers, (as we corrupt the word *joculatores*), far from exceeding the power of art, and yet what many times pass with the vulgar for diabolical likewise. Diabolical magic is that which is done by the help of the devil, who having great skill in natural causes, and a large command over the air, and other elements, may assist those that are in league and covenant with him (in Scripture called *wizards*, *forcerers*, *diviners*, *enchanters*, *Chaldeans*, and *such as had familiar spirits*) to do many strange and astonishing things.

To deny that there ever were such men as these, is to slight the authority of all history ; and to guess at the probable rise and original of them, we may suppose it to be this,——(x) That God being pleased to admit the holy patriarchs into conference with him, the devil endeavoured to do the same ; and to retain men in their obedience to him, pretended to make discoveries of secret things ; and that when God was pleased to work miracles for the truth, he in like manner directed those who were familiar with him, how to invoke his help, for the performance of such strange things as might confirm the world in their error.

(u) Bishop Wilkins's *Treat of magic* ; and Edward's *Body of divinity*, vol. i. (x) Patrick's *Commentary in locum*.

M.A.  
2433, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1571, &c.  
from Exod.  
ch. i. to xiii.

Under which of these denominations, natural, artificial, or diabolical, the magicians, who set themselves in opposition to the servants of the Most High God, are to be ranked, we have no instructions from Scripture; but it seems highly probable, that neither would Pharaoh have called together those of the least capacity and repute, neither would the devil (as far as his power extended) have been backward to assist his votaries upon such a solemn and momentous an occasion as this.

Who the principal of these magicians were, our sacred historian makes no mention; but several, both Jewish and Heathen authors, (from whom (y) St. Paul without doubt borrowed their names), have informed us. that among the Egyptians they were called *Jannes*, and *Jamres*, which, to give them a Latin termination, would be *Johannes*, and *Ambrosius*, of whom Numenius (as he is quoted by Eusebius) (z) has given us this remarkable account, viz. "That they were the scribes in religious matters among the Egyptians; that they flourished in Egypt at the time when the Jews were driven from thence; that they did not give place to any body in the science of magical secrets; and for this reason were chose unanimously by all Egypt to oppose Museus, (so he calls Moses), a leader of the Jews, and whose prayers were very prevalent with God."

The several  
ways where-  
in the devil  
might assist  
them.

Now supposing that these, and whoever else accompanied them, acted from the highest principles in magic, there are two ways wherein we may imagine it in the power of the devil to be assistant to such persons as pretend to work miracles.

The *first* is, by raising false images and appearances of things; which may be done either by affecting the brain, or confusing the optic nerves, or altering the medium which is between us and the object. That he did some such thing as this to our blessed Saviour, when from the top of an high mountain he pretended (a) to *shew him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them in a moment of time*, is very plain from the convexity of the earth, which bounds the horizon, and admits of no such unlimited prospect; so that all he could be presumed capable of doing in this case (as our Saviour was not insensible what

(y) 2 Tim. iii. 8.  
(a) Matth. iv. 8.

(z) Præpar. Evan. l. 9. c. 8.

he did do) was to make fictitious representations of gay and magnificent things in the air.

*Secondly*, The other way wherein the devil may be supposed able to assist these magicians, is by making use of the laws of nature, in producing effects which are not above the natural power of things, though they certainly exceed what man can do. Thus to transport a body, with inconceivable rapidity, from one place to another; to bring together different productions of nature, which separately have no visible effect, but when united work wonders; to make images move, walk, speak, and the like; these may come within the compass of the devil's power, because not transcending the laws of nature, though we cannot discern by what means they are effected.

A. M.  
2433, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1571, &c.  
from Exod.  
ch. i. to xiii.

*Thirdly*, There is a farther supposition (*b*) of some learned men, *viz.* that under the divine permission, wicked spirits have a power to work real miracles, of which they perceive (*c*) some intimations given us in Scripture, and in the nature of the thing, no reasons to the contrary; and therefore the question is, whether what the magicians here performed, were real miracles or not?

Some learned writers have imagined, that there was not any real transmutation, when the rods of the Egyptian magicians were pretended to be changed into serpents, nor any real miracle exhibited, when the water was turned into blood, and the frogs produced; but that either the magicians played their parts well, as dexterous jugglers, or that they did it by their knowledge of some secret art; or that some dæmons assisted them, who by their power over the air, enabled them to \* deceive the sight of the beholders.

It

That their  
miracles  
were real.

(*b*) Stillingfleet's Orig. sacræ, p. 236; Le Clerc's Comment.  
(*c*) Deut. xiii. 1.; Matth. xxiv. 24.; 2 Thess. ii. 9.

\* The Mahometans, in the account they give us of these transactions, seem to think them legerdemain tricks, rather than any real miracles in the magicians; for they tell us, that Moses having wrought some miracles before the king of Egypt, which not a little surprised him, he was advised by his council to amuse him with fair hopes, until he had sent for some of his most expert forcerers from Thebais. Accordingly Sabour and Gadour, two brothers, renowned for their magic skill, were sent for; but before they came to Pharaoh's court, they went to consult the *manes* of their father about the success of their journey;

A. M. 2433, &c. Ant. Christ. 1571, &c. from Exod. ch. i. to xiii. It is to be observed however, that in the account which Moses gives us of the miracles performed by himself and Aaron, and of what the magicians did by their enchantments, he does not hint any manner of difference, as to the reality of the performances of either of them. In the case of their rods being turned into serpents, he does not say, that they made them to appear to be such, by a deception of the sight, but that *(d)* *they flung down every man his rod, and they became serpents*; and so of the other two miracles, which Moses exhibited, *that the magicians did so with their enchantments*. *(e)* Now, from the knowledge of natural causes and effects, which, by the help of experiment and philosophy, has of late been introduced, we may venture to say, that no effects like what these men pretended to accomplish by enchantments, can be produced by any or all the powers of nature. No art, no study of occult sciences, can enable a man really to change a rod into a living serpent. There are no enchantments, no rules in sorcery sufficient to make a living frog, or to change water into real blood; and to suppose that the magicians went about to impose upon Pharaoh, and the rest of the spectators, by mere artifice and slight of hand, was giving Moses and Aaron (whom we cannot but suppose inquisitive upon this occasion) the fairest opportunity

journey; acquainting him withal, that the two magicians which they were sent for to oppose, had a rod, which they turned into a serpent, and devoured all that made head against it: To which their fathers ghost answered, That if that rod turned itself into a serpent whilst they were asleep, they must never expect to prevail against them. However, this did not hinder them from appearing before Pharaoh, at the head of his other magicians, to the number (as some say) of 70,000. All these had prepared their rods, and cords filled with quicksilver, which being heated by the sun, imitated the winding of a serpent: but Moses's serpent soon destroyed them, to the great surprise of all the spectators: whereupon Sabour and Gadour renounced their profession, and embraced the religion of Moses, which gave Pharaoh such a disgust, that he had them both put to death, as holding secret correspondence with Moses; *Herbelot's Biblioth. orient. p. 648.* and *Calmet's Dictionary*, under the word *Jannes*.

*(d)* Exod. vii. 11, 12.  
vol. 2. l. 9.

*(e)* Shuckford's Connection,

imaginable

imaginable to detect the cheat, and expose them to the contempt and derision of the whole company.

Their only recourse, in this case, can be to the assistance of devils, deluding the company with false appearances of serpents, frogs, and blood : But let any one try to give a satisfactory account, how any magician could, by his power over the air, either by himself, or by the assistance of a dæmon, represent to the naked view of beholders, in opposition to a true miracle, serpents, frogs, and water, converted into blood ; nay, and so represent them, as that the fictitious appearance should not be distinguishable from the real, but should bear to be seen with them, at one and the same time, in the same light, in the same view, (for so the magicians rods turned into serpents certainly were, when Aaron's rods swallowed them) : I say, let any one try to give a reasonable account of this fancy, and he will quickly see, that he may more reasonably suppose the magicians able to perform a true and real transmutation, than to ascribe to them such imaginary powers, as this supposition requires, and which (if they could be conceived) can tend only to destroy the certainty of all appearances whatever.

If then the magicians could have no knowledge of any mystic arts, or powers of nature, whereby to work miracles ; if they could not deceive the spectators by any slight of hand, nor obtain assistance from evil spirits, sufficient to impose upon them by false appearances ; the consequence seems to be, that the miracles which they wrought were equally true with those which Moses and Aaron did. But then, as the magicians had no power inherent in themselves, they could not tell, even when they set about imitating Moses, what the success of their attempt would be. Their rods were turned into serpents, they saw, but how that was affected, they could not tell. Had they had any certain rules of art or science to work by, or any superiour help or assistance to depend on, they would at once have known what to attempt, and what not, and not have exposed themselves to scorn, by not being able to produce lice, as well as frogs. If what they did was by the agency of evil spirits, it is plain, that that agency was under the divine controul, and could go no farther than the God of Israel permitted it ; and the reasons of his permitting it might be these :

A. M.  
2433, &c.  
Ant. Christi.  
1571, &c.  
from Exod.  
ch. i. to xiii.

But not of  
their own  
producing.

A. M.  
2433, &c.  
Ant. Chris.  
1571, &c.  
from Exod.  
ch. i. to xiii.  
Why Pha-  
raoh sent  
for his ma-  
gicians, and  
why God  
suffered  
them to  
work won-  
ders.

The learned in Egypt thought, that miracles, prodigies and omens, were given by the planetary and elementary influences; and that students, deeply versed in the mysteries of nature, could cause them by art and incantation. Pharaoh might possibly be of this opinion; and therefore, seeing Moses do very strange things, and knowing that his magicians were great adepts in these sciences, he thought proper to send for them, in order to know whether the wonders which Moses wrought were the effect of the art of man, of the power of nature, or of the finger of God; for he seems to have argued thus,——If his magicians could perform what Moses did, Moses was such an one as they, and endeavoured to delude him with artificial wonders, instead of real miracles. Fit therefore it was, that these practitioners should be suffered to exert the utmost of their power against Moses, in order to clear him from the imputation of magic, or sorcery, which (considering the prevailing notions of that age) both Hebrews and Egyptians might have been apt to entertain, had not this competition happened, and his antagonists thereupon acknowledged the superiority of the principle by which he acted, in comparison of which, all their arts and knowledge of occult sciences availed nothing.

The Israelites, it must be owned, were a people of a very suspicious, diffident, and desponding temper. When Moses came to them with a message from God, at first they seemed to receive him gladly, and to rejoice at their approaching deliverance; and when he had shewn them the credentials which God appointed him to exhibit, it is said, *(f) that the people believed; and when they heard that the Lord had looked upon their affliction, they bowed their heads, and worshipped:* But within the space of a day or two, when they saw that every thing did not answer their expectation, but that their petition to an imperious tyrant was rejected with scorn; how is their tone changed to their very deliverers, and the blame of all their grievances laid upon them! *(g) The Lord look upon you, and judge, because you have made our favour to be abhorred in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of his servants, to put a sword into their hands to slay us:* And therefore, for the confir-

*(f)* Exod. iv. 31.

*(g)* Exod. v. 21.



mation of the faith of these wavering and uncertain people, it was highly necessary that this contest between Moses and the magicians should be permitted, that the disparity of persons acting by the power of God, and by the power of Satan, in such a contraposition, might be more conspicuous. A. M. 2433, &c. Ant. Christ. 1571, &c. from Exod. ch. i. to xiii.

And indeed what could more contribute to raise in the Israelites a confidence in God's promises, and a joyful hope of a speedy deliverance, than to see the great disparity between the opposers and maintainers of their cause? To see, I say, that though, by the divine permission, the magicians could change their rods into serpents, yet as a manifest token of superiority, Moses's rod devoured all theirs; though they could turn water into blood, yet it was above their skill to restore it to its former nature; though they made a shift to produce frogs, yet they were utterly unable to clear the Egyptian palaces and houses of them; though they did in short some things which only contributed to the calamities of Egypt, yet they could do no one thing to redress them, nor even to relieve themselves against the plague of the boils? So true, and so severe withal is that observation of the author of the book of Wisdom: (b) "As for the illusions of the art magic, they were put down, and their vaunting in wisdom was reproved with disgrace; for they who promised to drive away terrors, and troubles from a sick soul, were sick themselves of fear, and worthy to be laughed at."

But now Moses not only does such miracles as the magicians never pretend to do, (the storm and hail, the thunder and lightning, and thick darkness, &c. they never once attempted to imitate), but (supposing that Pharaoh might be addicted to astrologers, who fancied that all things here below might be governed by the motion and influence of the stars) he very frequently gives him the liberty to name the time when he would have any plague removed, that thereby he might know that God alone was the author of them, and that consequently there was no day or hour under so ill an aspect, but that he could prevail with him, at whatever moment he should assign, to rescue and deliver him.

Had Moses met with no opposition in working his miracles, Pharaoh had neither had so strong a convic-

(b) Wisdom, xvii. 7, 8.



go about weeping and groaning : That Moses's calling the God of heaven *Jao* or *Jehovah*, is mentioned (q) by Dio-  
 dorus Siculus : That the names of Jannes and Jambres, and the opposition they made against him, is preserved (r) in Eumenes, (s) Pliny, and (t) Apuleius ; and (to go no farther) that the Israelites departure out of Egypt, and settling in the land of Canaan, is (u) by Tacitus. who took it from some Egyptian authors, thus related : " The Hebrews were descended from the Assyrians, and possessing a great part of Egypt, led the life of shepherds ; but afterwards, being burdened with hard labour, they came out of Egypt, under the command of Moses, with some Egyptians accompanying them, and went through the country of the Arabians, into Palestine Syria, and there set up rites contrary to those of the Egyptians." So fully does the testimony of aliens tend to the confirmation of thy revelations, O God !

A. M.  
 2433, &c.  
 Ant. Christ.  
 1571, &c.  
 from Exod.  
 ch. i. to xiii.

## DISSERTATION V.

*Of the sacred chronology, and profane history, learning, religion, idolatry, and monumental works, &c. but chiefly of the Egyptians, during this period.*

**B**EFORE we enter upon the historical matters which are contained in this period ; between God's call to Abraham out of Mesopotamia, and the children of Israel's departure out of Egypt, it may not be improper to settle its chronology, and to take notice of some exceptions that may possibly be made to it.

Chronological differences settled.

The difference between the Hebrew, Samaritan, and Septuagint computations, in the former periods of time, ran wide ; and it was some part of our care, either to determine which was most probably in the right, or to reconcile the seeming opposition between them : But in this the variation is so small, that they seem almost unanimously to agree, that (x) from the promise made to Abraham, to his posterity's *exodus* out of Egypt, are 430 years, which (according to the learned Usher) may very properly be divided into two halves.

1. (y) From the time of the promise, when Abraham was in the 75th year of his age, to the birth of Isaac,

(q) Lib. 1. (r) Eusebius, l. 8. c. 8. (s) Lib. 30. c. 1.  
 (t) Apolog. 2. (u) Lib. 5. (x) Exod. xii. 40. (y) Gen. xii. 4. — xxi. 5.

are

A. M. are 25 years; (z) from the birth of Isaac to the birth of Jacob, 60 years; from the birth of Jacob to his descent into Egypt, with his whole family, 130 years; so that the whole of this division amounts to 215 years.

2433, &c.  
Ant. Chris.  
1571, &c.  
from Exod.  
ch. i. to xiii.

2. The other part of the division is thus reckoned up. Joseph, the son of Jacob, was 30 years old when he expounded Pharaoh's dreams: The seven years of plenty were run out, and (a) the third year of famine begun, when his father came down into Egypt: So that, by this time, Joseph was 39. Now, 39 years taken from the 110, which Joseph lived, will make the time which the Israelites had continued in Egypt, before Joseph's death, to be 71: And as (b), from the death of Joseph, to the birth of Moses, are precisely 64 years; so (c) from his birth, to the time of the Israelites departure are 80 years. The several articles of this division therefore, being put together, amount in like manner, to 215 years; and the two gross sums make exactly 430.

The history indeed tells us, that (d) *the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years*; but it does not therefore follow, that they dwelt in Egypt all that time. They came into Egypt with Jacob, A. M. 2298, and went out of Egypt, A. M. 2513; so that they lived in it just two hundred and fifteen years. Their sojourning therefore must not be limited to their living in Egypt, but be taken in a more general sense, and extended equally to the time of their living in Canaan; which, being added to the time of their continuance in Egypt, makes exactly the number of four hundred and thirty years.

That this is the sense of the divine historian, is manifest from the authority of the Samaritan text, which has the whole verse thus: *Now the inhabiting of the children of Israel, and their fathers, whereby they inhabited in the land of Canaan, and in the land of Egypt, were four hundred and thirty years*: Whereupon the learned Dr. Prideaux (e) has this observation, "That the additions herein do manifestly mend the text; they make it more clear and intelligible, and add nothing to the Hebrew copy, but what must be understood by the reader to make out its sense:" And upon this presumption

(z) Gen xxv. 26. (a) Gen. xlvii 4. (b) Compare Gen. xli. 46. with xlv. 6. (c) Exod, vii. 7. (d) Exod, xii. 40. (e) Connection, vol. 2. part. 1. l. 6. p. 600.

it may very reasonably be supposed, (f) that the ancient Hebrew text was, in this verse, the same with the present Samaritan, and that the words which the Samaritan has, in this place, more than the Hebrew, have been dropped by the negligence of some transcribers.

A. M.  
2433, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1571, &c.  
from Exod.  
ch. i. to xiv.

Again, in the promise which God makes to Abraham, he tells him, (g) *That his seed should be a stranger in a land which was not theirs; that there they should serve the inhabitants, and they afflict them for four hundred years; but that, in the fourth generation, they should return to Canaan again;* whereas four hundred years are not the number specified in the place just now examined, nor are four generations equivalent to the space of time wherein the Hebrews sojourned in strange countries. It is to be observed however, that both in sacred and profane authors, a common thing it is, to mention only the large sum, and drop the less, especially when (to preserve the exactness of chronology) the precise number is, in other places, inserted: And that though a generation does usually denote a term of an hundred years; yet taking the words to relate to the whole sojourning of the Hebrews, from their going into Canaan to their going out of Egypt, the odd number of 30 years may here be supposed to be omitted, to make it a round sum, as well as in the former sense; but then taking a generation to mean no more than one descent, the matter of fact is, that from the Israelites going down into Egypt, until the time of their leaving it, in some of the sons of Jacob, (particularly in Levi, who begat Cohath, and Cohath, Amram, and Amram, Moses, who conducted the people out of Egypt), there were no more than four descents.

Whether therefore we take the word *generation* to denote an *age of years*, or a *succession of lives*, there is plainly no incongruity in the expression; because (bating an odd number of thirty) Abraham and his posterity sojourned in a strange land for the space of four hundred years; and yet (allowing it to be meant of a descent of lives), at the Israelites return to Canaan, from the time of their going down into Egypt, several persons of the fourth generation were not extinct.

Egypt indeed was the most considerable nation with whom the Israelites had any intercourse during this pe-

The Egyptian history.

(f) Shuckford's Connection, vol. 2. l. 9. (g) Gen. xv. 13, 16.

A. M.  
2433, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1571, &c.  
from Exod.  
ch. i. to xiii.

riod: What dealings they had with the several parts of Canaan, will be best related when we come to treat of the history of that country. In the mean time, we cannot but lament our want of the ancient records of those times; which forces us, instead of a continued history, to present our reader with nothing but a jejune catalogue of the succession of the Egyptian kings, which, as far as they relate to our present purpose, we have thought proper \* to subjoin at the bottom of the page; and shall only take notice here

\* In the year of the world 1849, reigned in Thebais, or the Upper Egypt, Menes (whom the Scripture calls Mizraim) 62 years: In the year 1911, Athothes, 59 years: In the year 1970, Athothes II. 32 years: In the year 2002, Diabies, 19 years: In the year 2021, Pemphos, 18 years: In the year 2039, Tegar Amachus, 79 years: In the year 2118, Stoechus 6 years: In the year 2124, Gofermies, 30 years: In the year 2154, Mares, 26 years.

In the time of these flourished the Royal Shepherds in the Lower Egypt; and in the year of the world 1920, Salatis, the first pastoral king, reigned 19 years: In the year 1939, Beon, the second pastoral king, 44 years: In the year 1983, Apachnas, the third pastoral king 36 years: In the year 2020, Apophis, the fourth pastoral king, 61 years: In the year 2081, Janias the fifth pastoral king, 50 years and one month; and after these Herules Affis, 49 years and two months.

Then follow the Theban kings, in this order: In the year of the world 2180, Anoyphes, (who by Archbishop Usher, is named Tethmosis, and is said to have expelled the Royal shepherds), reigned 20 years: In the year 2200, Siricius, 18 years: In the year 2218, Cneubus Cneuris, 27 years: In the year 2245, Ravofis, 13 years: In the year 2258, Biyris, 10 years: In the year 2268, Saophis, 29 years: In the year 2297, Senfaophis, 27 years: In the year 2324, Mofcheris, 31 years: In the year 2355, Masthis, 33 years: In the year 2388, Pamnus Archadneis, (whom Usher calls *Ratholi*) 35 years: and in the year 2423, Apaxus Maximus, 100 years.

After the expulsion of the race of the Royal Pastors, in the year of the world 2205, Chebron succeeded to the kingdom of the Lower Egypt, and reigned 13 years: In the year 2218 Amenophis, 20 years and 7 months: In the year 2239, Ames, 21 years and 9 months: In the year 2261, Mephres, 12 years and 9 months: In the year 2273, Mispbrasmothosis, 25 years and 10 months: In the year 2299, Thmosis, 9 years and 8 months: In the year 2309, Amenophis II. 30 years and 10 months: In the year 2340, Orus, 36 years and 5 months:

here in particular, that A. M. 2084, when Abraham, and his nephew Lot, went down into Egypt, Tegar Amachus was then upon the throne; that A. M. 2260, when Joseph was born, Biyris was king, and when he was sold to Egypt, about 17 years after, Saophis had succeeded; that this Saophis was the prince whose dreams he expounded, and by whom he was promoted to great honour in the kingdom; that he died however before his dreams were accomplished, for it was A. M. 2298, that the first year of the famine began, when Senfaophis, (who was probably his son, and held Joseph in equal favour), swayed the sceptre; that this was the prince to whom Jacob and his sons, upon their coming down into Egypt, in the third year of the famine, were presented, and with whom Israel had the conversation above mentioned; that, A. M. 2369, when Joseph died, Masthis was king, by whom, and some of his successors, the Israelites were well treated, in remembrance of the services he had done the public, until there happened a revolution in the government, which some chuse to place about this time; that A. M. 2427, the Israelites began to be oppressed, and severely treated by Bamassies Miamun, in whose reign Moses was born, slew the Egyptian, and fled into Midian; that A. M. 2493, Amenophis succeeded his father in his kingdom and in his cruelty to the Israelites; but that, being compelled at last by the mighty hand of God to let them go, he, and all his army, in endeavouring to retake them, were, A. M. 2513, swallowed up in the Red-sea.

Salatis, and his successors, not only oppressed the Israelites, as we said before, but by the violence of their conquests, so terrified the ancient inhabitants of the land, that many persons of the first figure thought it better to leave their native country, than to endeavour to sit down under such calamities as they saw were coming upon them. Cecrops, about this time, departed from Egypt; and after some years travel in other places, came at length to Greece,

In the year 2376, Acenchres, 12 years and 1 month: In the year 2388, Rathotis, 9 years: In the year 2397, Acenchres 12 years and 5 months: In the year 2410, Acenchres II. 12 years and 3 months: In the year 2422, Acmais, 4 years and 1 month: In the year 2426, Ramestes, 1 year and 3 months: In the year 2427, Ramestes Miamun, 66 years and 2 months: And in the year 2493, Amenophis III. 19 years and 6 months, who is the last we meet with in this period.

M.A.  
2433, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1571, &c.  
from Exod.  
ch. i. to xiii.

and lived in Attica, where he was kindly received by Ac-  
tæus, the king of the country; married his daughter, and  
upon his demise succeeded to his throne; and thereupon  
he taught the people, (who were vagrant before), the use  
of settled habitations; restrained all licentious lust among  
them; obliged each man to marry one wife; and, in short,  
gave wise rules for the conduct of their lives, and the ex-  
ercise of all civil and religious offices. About thirty years  
after the death of Cecrops, Cadmus \* came, either direct-  
ly from Egypt (as some think), or rather from Phœnicia,  
(as others will have it), and with several people that fol-  
lowed his fortune, († of which some authors give us a  
strange

\* The true account of Cadmus is, — — That his father,  
whose name is unknown, was an Egyptian, who left Egypt a-  
bout the time that Cecrops came from thence, and obtained a  
kingdom in Phœnicia, as Cecrops did in Attica; and that his  
two sons, Phœnix and Cadmus, were born after his settlement  
in that country: And hence it came to pass, that Cadmus hav-  
ing had an Egyptian father, was brought up in the religion,  
and was well acquainted with the history of that country, which  
occasioned several writers of his life to account him an Egyp-  
tian; and at the same time, being born and educated in Phœ-  
nicia, he became master of the language and letters of the coun-  
try, and had likewise a Phœnician name, which has induced  
several others that have wrote of him, to conclude, with good  
reason, that he was a native of that country; *Shuckford's Con-  
nection, vol. 2. l. 8.*

† The account which Ovid (in his *Metamorphoses*, lib. 3.  
fab. 1.) gives us of this matter is, — That Cadmus's followers  
were all devoured by a serpent, which when Cadmus had killed  
and sown its teeth in the ground, there sprang up from them a  
number of armed men, who, as soon as they appeared above  
ground, fell a fighting one another, and were all killed, except  
five, who surviving the conflict, went with Cadmus, and helped  
him to build Thebes. And the mythologic sense of all this sto-  
ry, according to the conjecture of a learned author, is no more  
than this, — That when Cadmus came into Bœotia, and had  
conquered the inhabitants of it, it might be recorded of him in  
the Phœnician or Hebrew language (which anciently was the  
same), that he *Nashab Chail Chameish Anoshim, Noshbekim be  
Shenei Nachash*; but now there being several ambiguities in  
these words, where the vowels were not originally written,  
(*Chameish*, for instance, may signify *five*, as well as *warlike*;  
*Shenei*, *teeth*, as well as *spears*; and *Nachash*, *a serpent*, as  
well as *brass*;) a fabulous translator might say, *he raised a force*  
of



strange account), having expelled the ancient inhabitants, settled himself in Bœotia, and built Thebes.

Danaus was another considerable person, who about this time left Egypt, and came into Greece. He was originally descended from a Grecian ancestor, and being now at Argos, when the crown was vacant, he stood candidate for it against Galenor, the son of Sthenelus, and † by the superstition of the people, who were his electors, carried it. But of all the refugees who quitted Egypt much about this time, Belus, the son of Neptune, seems to be the most famous. He, with some Egyptian priests, went to Babylon, and there obtained leave to settle, and cultivate their studies in the same manner, and with the same encouragement that had been granted them in their own country.

The chief aim of the ancient astronomers seems to have been, to observe the times of the rising and setting of the stars; and the first and most proper places that they could think of for that purpose, were very large and open plains, where they could have an extensive view of the horizon, without interruption; and such plains as these were the observatories for many generations. But the Egyptians

*of five men, armed from the teeth of a serpent*; whereas the words should be rendered, *he raised a warlike force of men, armed with spears of brass*; and it is no wonder that the Greeks, who were so fond of disguising all their ancient accounts with fable and allegory, should give the history of Cadmus this turn, when the words in which his actions are recorded, gave them so fair an opportunity; *Shuckford's Connection, vol. 2. l. 8.*

† The dispute between Danaus and Galenor, concerning their titles to the crown, was argued, on both sides, for a whole day; and when Galenor was thought to have offered as weighty and strong arguments for his pretensions, as Danaus could for his, the next day was appointed for the further hearing and determining their claims, when an accident put an end to the dispute. For not far from the place where the people were assembled, there happened a fight between a wolf and a bull, wherein the wolf got the better. This was thought a thing not a little ominous; and therefore, as the wolf was a creature they were less acquainted with than the bull, they thought it was the will of the gods, declared by the event of this accidental combat, that he who was the stranger should rule over them; *Shuckford's Connection. vol. 2. l. 8.*

A. M. 2433, &c. Ant. Christ. 1571, &c. from Exod. ch. i. to xiii. had, for above three hundred years before the time of this Belus, invented a method to improve their views by the building of pyramids, from the top of which they might take a prospect with greater advantage; and therefore it is no improbable conjecture, that Belus taught the Babylonians the use of such structures, and might possibly project for them that lofty tower which was afterwards called by his name.

For this tower seems to have been an improvement of the Egyptian pyramids. It was raised to a much greater height; had a more commodious space at top, more useful and large apartments within; and yet was a less bulky building, and raised upon a narrower foundation: So that the contriver of this seems to have been well acquainted with the Egyptian pyramid, and its defects, and to have herein designed a structure much more excellent, which can be ascribed to none, with so great a shew of probability, as to the Belus we are now speaking of.

The learning of the Egyptians: That the Egyptians, in the early ages of the world, were very famous for wisdom and learning, is evident from many ancient writers, as well as the testimony of the Scriptures themselves; for when, among other things, to the honour of Moses, it is said, that *(b)* *he was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians*; and to magnify the knowledge of Solomon, we are told, that *(i)* *he excelled all the wisdom of Egypt*; we cannot but infer, that this nation, above all others, had gained a reputation, even for the invention of several useful sciences.

Their astronomy and geometry. The tillage of the ground made the study of astronomy absolutely necessary, in order to their knowing, from the lights of heaven, the times and seasons for the several parts of agriculture; and the nature of their country, overflowed every year by the Nile, and every year losing its land-marks, made it of continual use to them to study geometry; and (as a necessary handmaid to that) to make themselves expert in arithmetic.

It is not to be supposed however, that hitherto they had carried the study either of astronomy or geography to any great height. They observed the places of the stars, and the periodical motions of the planets. They kept registers of their observations for a long course, and took account of the weather and seasons that followed their several observations. They recorded the times of sowing and reaping

(b) Acts vii. 22.

(i) 1 Kings iv. 30.

this

this or that grain, and, by their long experience, became able prognosticators of the weather and the seasons; and excellent directors for the tillage of the ground; And in like manner, by their knowledge in geometry, they contrived very proper methods of marking out, and describing the several parts of their country, and were very careful no doubt in making draughts of the flow and ebb of their river Nile every year; but when it is considered, that the Egyptians did not as yet apprehend that the year consisted of more than 360 days; and that \* both Thales and Pythagoras, many ages after these times, made great improvements in geometry beyond what they had learned in Egypt; that Thales was the first who ventured to foretel an eclipse; and Eudoxius and Ptolemy, to reduce the heavenly motions into tables; we can hardly think, that either astronomy or geometry were as yet carried to any great perfection.

A. M.  
2433, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1571, &c.  
from Exod.  
ch. i. to xiii.

The science of physic is generally imputed to Æsculapius: which name was given to Sethorthrus (a king of Memphis, who stands second in the third dynasty of Manetho) for his great skill in that art: And though no great credit is to be given to † their boasted proficiency in chymistry,

Phy. 6c.

\* Thales, who travelled into Egypt for the sake of their learning, after his return home, sacrificed an ox to the gods for joy that he had hit on the method of inscribing a rectangled triangle within a circle; and Pythagoras no less than a whole hecatomb, for his finding out the proportion of the longest side of a right-angled triangle to the other two, which is no more than a common proposition of the first book of Euclid; and yet these two philosophers could not have the invention of these things from the Egyptians, unless we suppose, either that the Egyptians did not teach them all that they knew, or that the disciples concealed the thing, and vainly arrogated to themselves what, in strict truth, they had borrowed from their masters; *Diog. Laert. in Pythag. et Thalete,*

† Some modern assertors of the great antiquity of chymistry, tells us of a medicine used only by the Egyptian priests, and kept secret, even from most of the natives, that is of efficacy almost to do any thing but restore the dead to life again. This, say they, was the grand elixir, or chymical preparation, made with the philosophers stone, the invention of Hermes; by the help of which, the Egyptian kings were enabled to build the pyramids, with the treasures which their furnaces afforded them; but these fables are sufficiently confuted by the profound silence of all antiquity in this matter. They are indeed built upon suspicious authorities,

A. M.  
2433, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1571, &c.  
from Exod.  
ch. I. to xiii.  
Magic.

mistry, yet it is reasonable to believe, from their constant practice of dissections, that they could well fail of a competent knowledge in anatomy.

The science however for which they were most famous, and for which indeed they valued themselves most, was magic, though the whole structure of it had no other foundation, than a superstitious belief of the great influence which heavenly bodies are supposed to have upon this inferiour world. To this purpose they imagined, that the seven planets governed the seven days of the week; and pretended, that by a long observation of the motion of the celestial bodies, they had obtained the art of foreseeing future events. They believed, in short, that the sun, moon, stars, and elements, were endued with intelligence, and appointed by the supreme Deity to govern the world; and though they acknowledged that God might upon extraordinary occasions work miracles, reveal his will by audible voices, visions, dreams, prophecies, &c. yet they imagined also, that, generally speaking, prodigies were caused, oracles given, and visions occasioned in a natural way, by the observation, or influence of the courses of the heavenly bodies, or by the operations of the powers of nature; and therefore they conceived, that their learned professors could work miracles, obtain omens, and interpret dreams, merely by their skill in natural knowledge, which, tho' strange and unaccountable to the vulgar, was very obvious to persons of science and philosophy.

In later ages indeed, and when the Egyptians began to worship their departed princes, a notion prevailed, that spirits or dæmons, of a nature prior to men, were employed in the government of the world, and had their several provinces appointed them by God. To this honour they imagined that the souls of departed heroes and extraordinary persons were admitted; and for this reason they supposed, that they were not only endowed with powers far

thorities, uncertain conjectures, and allegorical interpretations of the fabulous stories of the Greeks, which these men will have to be chymical secrets in disguise; insomuch that they fancy that the golden fleece, which Jason fetched from Colchis, was only a receipt to make the philosophers stone; and that Medea restored Æson's father to his youth again, by the grand elixir; *Universal history*, l. 1. c. 3.; and *Wotton's reflections on ancient and modern learning*, c. 9.

exceeding

exceeding those of mortal men, but had likewise miracles, visions, oracles, and omens, submitted to their ministry and direction; and consequently in all their demands or exigencies of this kind; made them the objects of their incantations and prayers.

A. M.  
2453, &c.  
Anti-Christ.  
1571, &c.  
from Exod.  
ch. i. to xiii.

These were some of the chief arts and sciences (for their architecture, painting, sculpture, and mechanics of all kinds, for which they were so justly famous, we have but just room to mention) that flourished at this time among the Egyptians: And we come now to observe a little by what means it was, that this learning of theirs came to be preserved and transmitted to posterity.

The Egyptian language was certainly one of the most ancient in the world: For, considering its structure and constitution, (\* wherein it widely differs from all oriental and European languages), it must needs be an original, or mother-tongue, formed at the confusion of Babel. Their most ancient way of writing was by hieroglyphical figures\* of various animals, and plants, the parts of human

How they  
preserved  
their learn-  
ing.

\* For the Copts neither decline their nouns nor conjugate their verbs, (not even those of foreign extract), otherwise than by prefixing particles, sometimes of one or more syllables, and sometimes of a single letter, which denote case, gender, number and person, several of which are often joined together in one word, and the primitive word usually placed last; so that the difficulty of this language consists in the incredible combination of the words and particles, in the change of the vowels, in transposing the middle part of the word, and adding superfluous letters, which it requires no small labour and skill to distinguish; *Wilkins's Dissert. de lingua Coptica*, p. 120.

\* Of these there were three kinds among the Egyptians, which seem to have more or less art in them, according to the period of their invention. The first was, to make the principal circumstance of the subject stand for the whole. Thus, when they would describe a battle, or two armies in array, they painted two hands, one holding a shield, and the other a bow: when a tumult, or popular insurrection—an armed man casting arrows, &c.: when a siege—a scalding ladder. The 2d was, to put the instrument of the thing (whether real or metaphorical) for the thing itself. Thus an eye, eminently placed, was designed to represent God's omniscience: An eye and sceptre—a monarch: and a ship and pilot—the governour of the universe. The third was, to make one thing represent another, where there was perceived any quaint analogy, or similitude between

the

A. M.  
2433, &c.  
A. t. Christ.  
1571, &c.  
from Exod.  
ch. i. to xiii.

man bodies, and mechanical instruments; for in these things did the hieroglyphics both of the Ethiopians and Egyptians (whereof Hermes is said to have been the inventor) most certainly consist: but besides these, they made use likewise of literal characters, whereof they had two kinds, calling the one *the sacred letters*, in which their public registers, and all matters of an higher nature were written; and the other *the vulgar*, which every one made use of in their common business. But both these characters are at present lost, unless they remain in some old inscriptions, that are unintelligible, and cannot be deciphered.

Not only the Egyptians, but several other nations, used to preserve the memory of things by inscriptions on pillars. The columns of Hermes, upon which he is said to have wrote all his learning, are mentioned by several writers of good note; and from them, both the Grecian phi-

the representative and the thing properly intended. Thus the universe was designed by a serpent in a circle, whose variegated spots signified the stars; and the rising of the sun by the two eyes of a crocodile, because they seem to emerge from his head; a tyrannical king was represented by an eagle; and a cruel, or improvident parent, by an hawk. Thus, from the nature of the things themselves, or their resemblance to something else, from the principal circumstance of any action, or the chief instrument employed in doing it, hieroglyphics at first seem to have been invented. But whether their invention was prior to that of letters, has been matter of some debate among the learned; though one can hardly forbear thinking, that a picture-character (as hieroglyphics are) would scarce be intelligible, unless men could be supposed to delineate the forms and pictures of things more accurately than can well be imagined: But even if that were granted, they would at best have been but a very imperfect character, since they could only hit off the idea of things visible, and must therefore be defective in a multitude of signs to express the full meaning of a man's mind: For which reason some have supposed, that even the Egyptians themselves were wont to intermingle letters with hieroglyphics, to fill up and connect sentences, and to express actions more fully than pictures were found to do. These hieroglyphics were at first in common use, but in process of time were appropriated to sacred and religious matters, and wrote and understood by the priests only; Warburton's *Divine legation*, lib. 4.; and Shuckford's *Connection*, lib. 8.

losophers,

losophers, and Egyptian historians are supposed to have taken many valuable hints: But to these inscriptions succeeded the sacred books, which contained not only what related to the worship of the gods, and the laws of the kingdom, but historical collections likewise, yea and all kinds of miscellaneous and philosophical matters of any moment, which the priests or sacred scribes were obliged to insert in these public registers, in order to be transmitted to posterity.

A nation so renowned for their knowledge and learning, and who had such certain methods of preserving the traditions of their ancestors, might have kept the original religion, one would think, with more than ordinary purity; at least would not have run into the same excess of idolatry and polytheism, that other people at this time were so strangely addicted to: And yet, if we look a little into their history, we shall soon find more corruption of this kind among them than in any other nation. Some of their wiser sort, indeed, are said to have acknowledged one supreme God, the maker and ruler of the world, whom they sometimes called by the name of *Osiris*, or *Serapis*; sometimes by that of *Isis*; and at other times by that of *Neith*, on whose temple at Sais was the following remarkable inscription, *I am all that has been, is, or shall be, and my veil hath no mortal yet uncovered*. But though some parts of Egypt might at first be free from all idolatrous worship; yet when the humour once began to spread, it soon overran the whole kingdom. The heavenly luminaries were the first objects of profane adoration; and in Egypt, the sun and the moon went under the denomination of *Osiris* and *Isis*. After these the elements, and other parts of nature (such as *Vulcan*, meaning thereby *the fire*; *Ceres*, *the earth*; *Oceanus*, *the water*; and *Minerva*, *the air*, were admitted into the number of their deities.

But besides the celestial, they had terrestrial gods likewise; for most of their princes who had merited well of the people, were after their death canonized and invocated under the names of *Sol*, *Saturnus*, *Rhea*, *Jupiter*, *Juno*, *Vulcanus*, *Vesta*, and *Mercurius*; which, according to Diodorus, were the eight first hero gods which the Egyptians worshipped. Nay (and what is scarce credible) they came at last to give divine honours to several animals, and that with so great a variety and disagreement among themselves, that except some of the principal deities which

A. M. were honoured all the kingdom over, there was almost in every town or village a different god held in veneration in one place, and detested in the next, which often occasioned bitter animosities, and sometimes inveterate quarrels, and dangerous wars.

The reasons given for it;

Now the reason why the Egyptians adopted such a variety of animals into the number of their gods, was not so much from any consideration of their subserviency to human life, as from a certain similitude they perceived between them and the deity to whom they were devoted. Thus the hawk was made sacred to Osiris, as an emblem of the supreme deity, by reason of its piercing sight and swiftness; the crocodile and sea-horse were sacred to Typho; Anubis was said to be the dog-star, and the dog was sacred to him; the serpent or dragon was consecrated to Nephthe; and other suitable animals to their respective gods: Nor is the conjecture \* of our learned countryman (a) at all to be rejected, viz. That the use of the hiero-

\* This conjecture the learned author of the Divine Legation of Moses abundantly confirms: For having enumerated the several things that might give occasion to brute-worship among the Egyptians; such as, 1. A grateful sense of the benefits received from animals: 2. The considering these animals as symbols of the divine nature: 3. The notion of God's pervading, and being present in all things: 4. The Egyptian use of asterisms, or denoting constellations by the name of animals: 5. The doctrine of metempsychosis, or human souls transmigrating into the bodies of animals: And, 6. The invention of some Egyptian king or other, for his private ends of policy. All these causes or occasions, I say, our author having examined and refuted, carries the point somewhat farther than the learned Marsham; and concludes, That the true original of brute-worship among the Egyptians, was their use of symbolical writing; for which he assigns a further reason, viz. That when the use of writing by letters (as much more commodious than the other) came generally to prevail, the priests still continued the hieroglyphic characters in their works of science and religion; and as the other grew abusive and obsolete to the vulgar, to make them more sacred, the priests in a short time were the only persons that could read them, and then, to make them more sacred and mysterious, gave it out, that the gods themselves were the inventors of them, which might easily induce a deluded people to worship the very creatures (as having something extraordinary in them) which their gods had thought proper to delineate; *lib.* 4.

(a) Sir John Marsham, Can. chron. p. 38.

glyphical



glyphical figures of animals might introduce this strange worship which the Egyptians in process of time came to pay them. For as those figures were made choice of according to the respective properties of each animal, to express the qualities and dignities of the persons they represented, which were generally their gods, princes, and great men, the people became gradually accustomed to these figures which they used to place in their temples as the images of their deities; and from hence it is not absurd to imagine, that they came at length to pay a superstitious veneration to the living animals themselves.

-A. M.  
2433, &c.  
Ant. Chris.  
1571, &c.  
from Exod.  
ch. i. to xiii.

But whatever might be the reason or inducements to this kind of idolatry, nothing was so remarkable in the Egyptian religion, as the preposterous worship which that nation paid to animals, such as the cat, the dog, the ibis, the wolf, the crocodile, and several others which they had in high veneration; not when they were alive only, but even after they were dead.

and the absurdity thereof.

Whilst they were living, they had lands set apart for the maintenance of each kind, and both men and women were employed in feeding and attending them. The children succeeded their parents in the office, which was so far from being declined, or thought despicable among the Egyptians, that they gloried in it as an high honour; and wearing certain badges to distinguish them at a distance, were saluted by bending the knee, and other demonstrations of respect.

If any person killed any of these sacred animals designedly, he was punished with immediate death; if involuntarily, his punishment was referred to the discretion of the priests; but if the creature slain was a cat, an hawk, or an ibis, (whether the thing was done with design or no), † the person was to die without mercy, and sometimes with-

† Herodotus gives us an instance of this in a Roman, who happening accidentally to kill a cat, the mob immediately gathered about the house where he was, and could neither by the entreaties of some principal men sent by the king, nor by the fear of the Romans, with whom they were then negotiating a peace, be prevailed on to spare his life. And (what may seem still more incredible) it is reported, that at a time when there was a famine in Egypt, which drove the inhabitants to such extremity, that they were forced to feed on one another, there was no one person accused of having tasted of any of these sacred animals; *Universal history*, l. 1. c. 3.

A. M.  
2433, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1571, &c.  
from Exod.  
ch. i. to xiii.

out any formal trial or process. The extravagant worship which they paid to some of these animal deities, (as to the bull at Memphis; the goat at Mandes; the lion at Leontopolis; † the crocodile at the lake Moeris; and to many others at different places), exceeds all belief. For they were kept in consecrated inclosures, and well attended on by men of high rank, who, at great expence, provided victuals for them, which consisted of the greatest dainties. Nor was this all: For these creatures were washed in hot baths, anointed with the most precious ointments, and perfumed with the most odoriferous scents. They lay on the richest carpets, and other costly furniture; and (that they might want nothing to make their lives as happy as possible) they had the most beautiful females of their several kinds (to which they gave the name of concubines) provided for them.

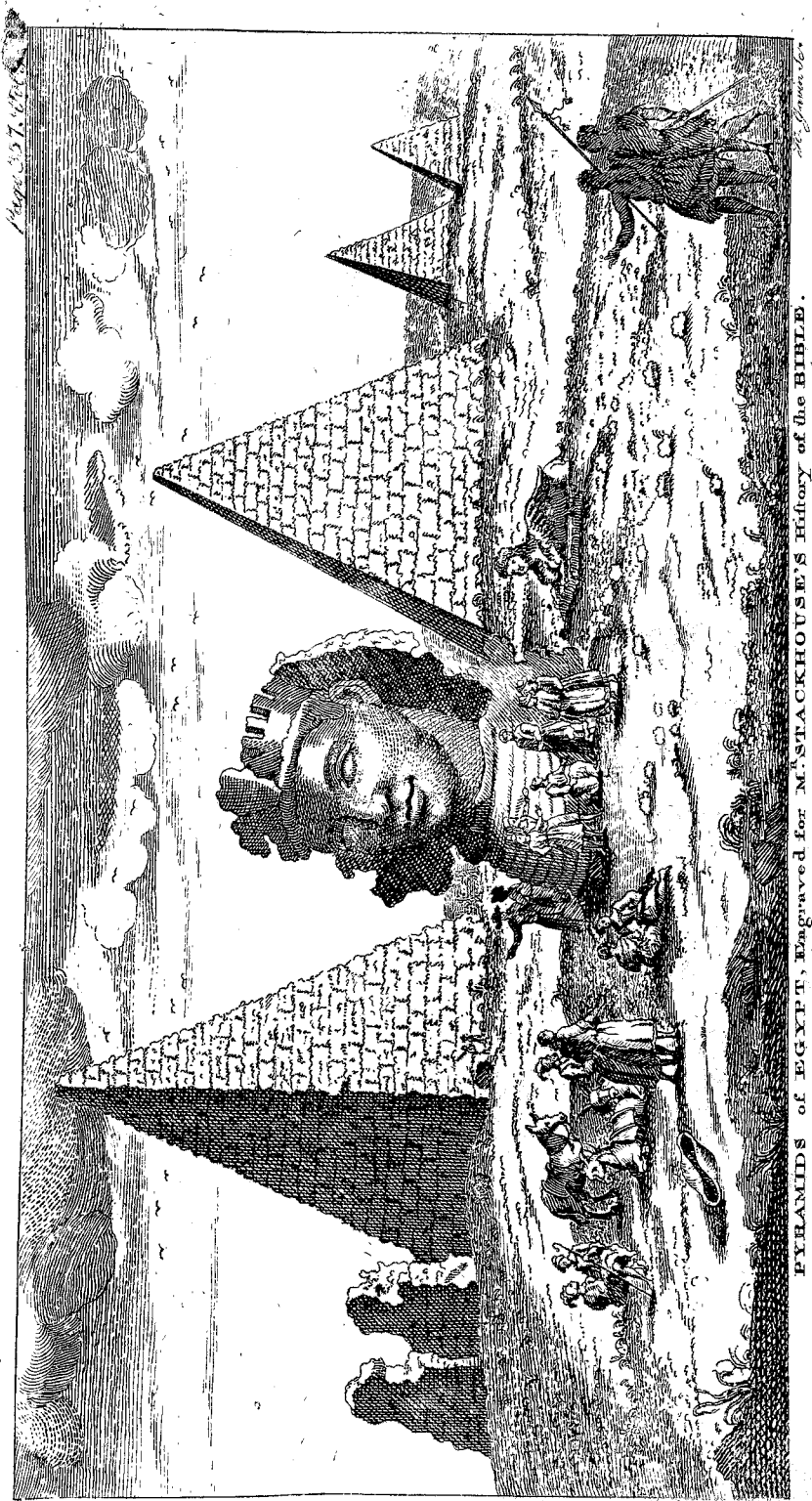
When any of these animals died, the Egyptians lamented them, as if they had been their dearest children, and frequently laid out more than they were worth in their burials. If a cat died in any house, all the family shaved their eyebrows; and if a dog, their whole body; and thus putting themselves in mourning, they wrapped the dead body up in fine linen, and carried it to be embalmed; where being anointed with oil of cedar, and other aromatic preparations to keep it from putrefaction, it was buried with great solemnity in a sacred coffin. So true is that reflection (1) of the apostle, and with regard to these Egyptians certainly it was made, that *though they knew God, yet they glorified him not as God; but changed the glory of God into the image of four-footed beasts, and his truth into a lie; and worshipped and served the creature, more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever.* Amen.

† The crocodile seems to be the last animal to which mankind could be tempted to pay divine adoration: But that this might be done with more safety, one of these creatures was trained up to be tame, and familiar for the purpose, and had his ears adorned with strings of jewels and gold, and his forefeet with chains. He was fed with consecrated provisions at the public charge; and when strangers went to see him, (which often happened out of curiosity), they also carried him a present of a cake, dressed meat, and wine, or a drink made with honey, which was offered to him by the priests; and when he died, his body was embalmed, and buried in a sacred coffin at Arsinoe; *Herodotus*, l. 2. and *Strabo*, l. 17,

(1) Rom. i. 21, 23, 25.

Before





Page 337. 4868.

Pyramids of Egypt, Engraved for M<sup>r</sup> Stackhouse's History of the Bible.

Before we leave Egypt, the sacred historian seems to re-  
mind us to take a view of some of the monumental works  
that are found there, and which having been built within  
the compass of the period we are now upon, may well be  
presumed to be the product of some of the burthens and  
hard labour which the Egyptian kings laid upon the Israel-  
ites.

A. M.  
2433, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1571, &c.  
from Exod.  
ch. i. to xiii.  
Their mon-  
umental  
works and  
structures.  
The pyra-  
mids.

† The pyramids were justly reckoned one of the won-  
ders of the world, and there is more of them now remain-  
ing, than of all the other fix, which have been so much  
celebrated. Not far from the place where Memphis once  
stood, there are three of these structures at no great di-  
stance from each other; two of which are shut up, but  
the third, which is the largest, and stands open for the in-  
spection of travellers, we shall here describe, as a probable  
specimen of all the rest.

It is situate on a rocky hill, (which, in a gentle and ea-  
sy ascent, rises 100 feet), in the sandy desert of Libya,  
about a quarter of a mile from the plains of Egypt. Its  
basis is generally supposed to be an exact square, and every  
side, (according to those that have been as careful as possi-  
ble in its mensuration), about 693 English feet: So that  
the whole area of it contains 480,249 square feet, or  
something more than eleven acres of ground. Its altitude,  
if measured by its perpendicular, is 481 feet, but if taken  
according to the inclination of the pyramid, as it ascends,  
it is exactly equal to a side of its basis.

The ascent to the top of this structure is by degrees,  
or steps, which run round the whole pyramid in a level,

† It is a common opinion, that the word *pyramid* is derived  
from the Greek *Pyr* or *Pur*, *fire*; and that these structures were  
so called from their shape, which ascended from a broad basis,  
and ended in a point, like a flame of fire. Others, whose opi-  
nion Vossius seems to approve, say that the name comes from  
the word *Pyros*, which in the same language signifies *wheat*,  
because they suppose them to have been the granaries of the  
ancient Egyptian kings. But a late writer, versed in the Coptic  
tongue, has given us another etymology from that language,  
wherein *Pouro* signifies a *king*, and *Mis*, a *race* or *generation*;  
and the reason why the Pyramids had this name given them,  
was as he tells us, because they were erected to preserve the  
memory of the princes (who were their founders) and their fa-  
milies; *Wilkins's Dissert. De ling. Copt. p. 108.*

and

A. M.  
2433, &c.  
Ant. Chris.  
1571, &c.  
from Exod.  
ch. 1. to xliii.

and if the stones were entire on every side, would make a narrow walk. The first of these steps is near four feet in height, and three in breadth; but the higher one ascends, they proportionably diminish. They are made of massy and polished stone, so very large, that the breadth and depth of every step is one single stone; but as the weather has, in many places, worn these steps, this pyramid cannot be ascended without some difficulty. According to the computation of most modern travellers, the steps are 207 or 208 in number, which end \* on the top. in an handsome platform, covered with nine stones, (besides two that are wanting at the corners), of 16 or 17 feet square, from whence you have a pleasant prospect of Old Cairo, and the adjacent country.

On the 16th step from the bottom of this pyramid, there is a door or entry of three feet and an half in height, and a little less in breadth, through which you ascend insensibly, much about 76 feet, and then come to another passage, which very probably is of the same dimensions with the first entrance, but is so choaked up with the sand, which the wind blows in, that it is no easy matter for a man of any bulk to squeeze himself through it. Having passed this straight however, you meet with nothing deserving observation, till on the left hand you enter a passage which leads into a gallery 16 feet high, and 162 feet long; a very stately piece of work indeed, and not inferior either in curiosity of art, or richness of materials, to the most sumptuous and magnificent buildings! The stone of which this gallery is built, is a white polished marble, very evenly cut into large tables, and jointed so close, as hardly to be perceived by the most curious eye: But what adds a grace to the whole structure, though it makes the passage the more slippery and difficult, is the acclivity or rising of the ascent, which however is not a little facilitated by certain holes made in the floor, about six hands breadth from one another, into which a man may set his feet, whilst he

\* On this platform Proclus supposed that the Egyptian priests made their astronomical observations: But it is far from being probable that these structures were designed for observatories, and it is scarce to be conceived, that the priests would take the pains to ascend so high, when they might make the same observations with more ease, and as much certainty below, having as free and open a prospect of the heavens, and over the plains of Egypt, from the rock whereon it was built, as from the pyramid itself; *Universal History*.

holds

holds by a bench of marble, which runs all along the gallery, with one hand, and carries his light in the other.

As soon as you come to the end of this gallery, you enter another square hole, much of the same dimensions with the former, which brings you into two little rooms, lined with a rich kind of speckled marble; and thence you proceed into the chamber of the tombs or sepulchres, which is very large and spacious, 32 feet long, 16 feet wide, and 19 feet high. This room stands, as it were, in the heart and centre of the pyramid, equidistant from all the sides, and almost in the midst between the basis and the top. The floor, the sides, and the roof of it are all made of vast and exquisite tables of Thebaic marble, which, if they were not sullied with the steam of torches, would certainly appear very bright and shining. From the top to the bottom of the chamber, there are about six ranges of this stone, which being all sized to an equal height, run very gracefully round it. The roof is flat, and consists but of nine stones, whereof seven, in the middle, are each four feet wide, and 16 feet long, but the other two, which are at each end, appear not above two feet broad a-piece, because the other half of them is built into the wall. The stones lie athwart, over the breadth of the chamber, with their ends resting upon the walls on each side.

At the end of this glorious room stands an empty tomb, 3 feet and an inch wide, and 7 feet 2 inches long; the stone which it is made of is the same with the lining of the room, a beautiful speckled marble, above 5 inches thick, and yet, being hollow within, and uncovered at the top, whenever it is struck, it sounds like a great bell: Which is just such a wonder as the surprising echo that is heard in this place, and (as some travellers tell us) will repeat the same sound some ten or twelve times together. The figure of this tomb is like an altar, or two cubes finely set together. It is cut smooth, and plain, exquisitely finely polished, but without any sculpture or engraving. It is not to be doubted, but that the tomb was placed here before the pyramid was finished; and one reason for its want of ornaments may be what the inhabitants of the country tell us, *viz.* That it was built for the sepulchre of a king who was never buried in it; and the common opinion is, that it was the same Pharaoh, who, by the just judgement of God, was drowned in the Red-Sea.

A. M.  
2433, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1571, &c.  
from Exod.  
ch. i. to xiii.

These

A. M. 2433, &c. Ant. Christ. 1571, &c. from Exod. ch. i. to xiii. These are the principal things that have been observed of this pyramid : only, (to give us a still fuller idea of the vastness of its structure), Pliny has taken care to inform us, that it was 20 years in building ; that 37,000 men were, every day, employed in the work ; and that 1800 talents were expended upon them merely for radishes and onions. Which last article may seem incredible perhaps to those that were never in the country ; but when it is considered, that this is the ordinary food of the common people, and that almost all those who were employed in raising these great piles, were slaves and mercenaries, who besides bread and water, had nothing but radishes and onions, there will be no occasion for any surprise or wonder at the largeness of this account.

The labyrinth.

A building of the like date, and not of inferior grandeur, was the labyrinth which stood in the Heracleotic Nome, or province, near the city of Arsinoe, and not far from the Lake Moeris. The design of this structure seems to have been both for a Pantheon, or universal temple for all the gods that were worshipped by the several places of Egypt ; and also for a general convention-house, for the states of the whole nation to meet, and enact laws, and determine causes, of great importance : And therefore it is said by some to have been built at the common charge of the twelve kings, who, in those days, reigned all at once in Egypt, as a monument of their magnificence, and a place for their sepulture.

To this purpose Herodotus (*m*) tells us, that each province or Nome had, in this building, a distinct hall, where its principal magistrates used to meet ; that these halls were vaulted, were surrounded with pillars of white stone finely polished, and had an equal number of doors opposite to one another, six opening to the north, and six to the south, all encompassed by the same wall ; that there were three thousand chambers in this edifice, fifteen hundred in the upper part, and as many under ground ; and that he viewed every room in the upper part, but was not permitted by those who kept the palace, to go into the subterraneous part, because the sepulchres of the holy crocodiles, and of the kings, who built the labyrinth, were there. What he saw there, as he reports, seemed to surpass the art of man. So many ways out, by various passages, and infinite returns, afforded a thousand occasions of wonder, as he passed from a spacious hall to a chamber, from thence to a

(*m*) Lib. 2.

private.



private closet, then again into other passages out of the closet, and out of the chambers, into more spacious rooms; where all the walls and roofs were not only encrusted with marble, but richly adorned likewise with figures of sculpture.

A. M.  
2433, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1571, &c.  
from Exod.  
ch. i. to xiii.

To this description of Herodotus, others add, that this edifice stood in the midst of an immense square, surrounded with buildings at a great distance; that the porch was of Parian marble, and all the other pillars of the marble of Syene; that within it were the temples of the several deities, and galleries to which one ascended by 90 steps, adorned with many columns of porphyry, images of their gods, and statues of their kings, of a monstrous size; that the whole edifice consisted of stone, the floors were laid with vast tables, and the roof looked like one continued field of stone; that the passages met and crossed one another, with so much intricacy, that it was impossible for a stranger to find his way, either in or out, without a guide; and that several of the apartments were so contrived, that upon opening the doors, there was heard within a terrible noise of thunder.

Such was the strength of this wonderful building, that it withstood, for many ages, not only the rage of time; but that of the inhabitants of Heracleopolis, who worshipping the Incheumon, or water-rat, the mortal enemy of the crocodile, (which was a peculiar deity of Arsinoe) bore an inconceivable hatred to the labyrinth, which was the sepulchre, as we said, of the sacred crocodiles, and therefore assaulted and demolished it, tho \* there are some remains  
or

\* The remains of this noble structure are thus described by our author. "The first thing you see is a large portico of marble, facing the rising sun, and sustained by four great marble pillars, but composed of several pieces. Three of these pillars are still standing, but one of the middle ones is half fallen. In the middle is a door, whose sides and entablature are very massy; and above is a frieze, whereon is represented an head with wings, stretched out along the frieze, and several hieroglyphics underneath—Passing thro' this portico, you enter into a fine large hall, above 40 feet high, all of marble. The roof consists of twelve tables of marble, exquisitely joined, each 25 feet long, and three broad, which cross the room from one end to the other; and as the room is not arched, but flat, you cannot but be struck with admiration at the boldness of its architecture, since it is scarce conceivable, how it could continue so many ages in a position so improper to support so prodigious a weight. At the

A. M.  
2433, &c.  
Ant. Chris.  
1571, &c.  
from Exod.  
ch. i. to xiii.  
Joseph's  
well.

of it still to be seen, which retain manifest marks of its ancient splendour.

One building more, supposed to be the work of this period, though, according to modern accounts, it still stands firm and entire, is the well of the patriarch Joseph. It is entirely hewn out of a rock, in a kind of an oval or oblong form, being eighteen feet wide, twenty-four long, and in the whole, two hundred and seventy-six deep. The depth is properly divided into two parts, which we may call the upper and the lower well; and to each of these there is a wheel, which being turned round by two oxen in each place, draws up the water by a long chain, to which are fastened several leathern vessels, that fill and empty themselves alternately as the wheel goes round.

To go down to the second well (as we call it) which is but 15 feet long, and nine wide, there is a stair-case of so easy a descent, that some say the oxen which draw the water below, are every day drove down and up it; though others report, that they are let down, and drawn up upon a platform. However this be, it is certain that the stair-case turns twelve times round the well, (for which reason the Arabs call it *the well of the winding stair-case*), and of these turnings, six have eighteen steps each, and the other six have nineteen, which make two hundred and twenty-two steps in all: And to secure you from falling, as you go down, you have, on the left hand, the main rock,

“ of this hall, over against the first door, there is a second portico, with the same ornaments as the first, but less, by which  
“ you enter into a second hall, not so big as the first, but covered with eight stones. At the end of this room, strait forwards, there is a third portico, still less than the second, as  
“ well as the hall, into which it leads, though it has sixteen  
“ stones to roof it; and at the end of this third hall, there is  
“ a fourth portico set against the wall, and placed there for  
“ symmetry only, and to answer the rest. The length of these  
“ three halls is the whole depth of the building, in its present  
“ condition. It was on the two sides, and especially under  
“ ground, that the prodigious number of rooms and avenues,  
“ mentioned by the ancients, were built.——What is now  
“ remaining of it seems to be no more than a fourth part of  
“ the inner edifice, which in all probability, had four fronts,  
“ and twelve halls answering to them: The rest are decayed  
“ by time, or demolished by design, as appears from the prodigious ruins which are to be seen all around it;” *Lucas’s Voyages, tom. 2. p. 18.*

and

and on the right, some of the same rock left, which serves both as a wall to the well on the inside, and on the other side as a wall to the stair case, which, at convenient distances, has windows cut in it, that convey the light down from the mouth of the well.

A. M.  
2433, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1571, &c.  
from Exod.  
ch. i. to xiii.

When you go down to the lower well, (which has likewise a stair-case, but neither so wide, nor so deep as the other, and no parapet on the side of the well, which makes the descent dangerous), it is here that you see the oxen at work, turning the wheel, and drawing the water from a spring at the bottom, about eight or nine feet deep, which water passing through a pipe into a large cistern, is from thence drawn up again by two other oxen which turn the wheel above; and so from a reservoir at the top of the well, the water is conveyed into all the apartments of the castle of Grand Cairo, which (by the by) as Thevenot tells us, both for strength and beatty, is one of the finest palaces he ever saw; a work not unworthy the Pharaohs and Ptolemies who built it, and what comes not behind the pomp and magnificence of the pyramids.

There are some other buildings in this place, such as Joseph's hall, Joseph's prison, Joseph's granaries, &c. which the inhabitants ascribe to that patriarch, as they do indeed every fine piece of antiquity: But as there is little or no probability, that any of these came under the period we are now upon, we must refer the reader, who is minded to satisfy his curiosity in this matter, (n) to the authors who have purposely treated of them; and shall only take notice farther, that the great Selden, in his *Arundel Marbles*, reckons the fabulous stories of Greece, such as the flood of Deucalion, the burning of Phaeton, the rape of Proserpine, the mysteries of Ceres, The story of Europa, the birth of Apollo, and the building of Thebes by Cadmus, together with the fables of Bacchus, Minus, Perseus, Æsculapius, Mercury, and Hercules, to have fallen out under this period; and it is certain that (o) the learned Spanheim makes several ancient kingdoms, as that of the Argives, the Cretans, the Phrygians, the Ethiopians, the Phœnicians, the Midianites, Cananites, Idumæans, and Nabatheans, either to have been founded, or to have flourished in this time. But as these, and other Heathen nations, had no historian or

(n) Vide Della Valle, Thevenot, Le Bruyn, Lucas, Marco Grimani, &c. travels; and Wells's Geography of the Old Testament, vol. 2. (o) Vid. Hist. Vet. Test. col. 310.

A. M. chronologer of their own, and the Greeks, who undertook  
 2433, &c. to write for them, for want of a certain knowledge of  
 Ant. Chris. their affairs, have stuffed their accounts with the rapes and  
 1571, &c. robberies of their gods : We thought it more proper to  
 from Exod. stop here, than to enter into a barren land, where the coun-  
 ch. v. to xiii try for a long way lies waste and uncultivated ; or if per-  
 chance any fruit is to be seen, like the famed fictitious  
 apples about the banks of the Dead Sea, it crumbles at the  
 very first touch into dust and ashes.

*The END of the THIRD BOOK.*





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T H E  
H I S T O R Y  
O F T H E  
B I B L E.

\*\*\*\*\*  
B O O K I V.

Containing an account of things from the Israelites  
Departure out of Egypt to their Entrance into  
the Land of Canaan ; in all, 40 Years.

\*\*\*\*\*  
C H A P. I.

*From their Departure to the Building of the Tabernacle.*

The H I S T O R Y.

**W**HEN the Israelites set out from Egypt, they A. M.  
made Rameses, the chief city of Goshen, the <sup>2513, &c.</sup>  
place of their general rendezvous ; and from <sup>Ant. Chrisf.</sup>  
thence, on the fifteenth day of the first month, they <sup>1491, &c.</sup>  
travelled about ten or twelve miles to Succoth, where <sup>from Exod.</sup>  
they made a stop, and reviewed their company, which con- <sup>ch. xiii. to</sup>  
sisted of six hundred thousand persons, besides children <sup>xxxiv. 24.</sup>  
and strangers : for strangers of several nations having seen <sup>The Isra-</sup>  
the wonders which were wrought for their deliverance, <sup>lites set for-</sup>  
left Egypt at the same time, with a purpose to accompany <sup>ward from</sup>  
their fortunes. <sup>Rameses,</sup>  
<sup>and arrive</sup>  
<sup>at Succoth,</sup>

While the sense of their deliverance, and God's judge-  
ments was fresh in their minds, Moses was commanded to  
let the people know, that ~~when~~ they came to be settled in  
the

A. M. 2513, &c. Ant. Christ. 1491, &c. from Exod. ch. xiii. to xxxiv 24. the land of Canaan, the first-born both of man and beast in remembrance of God's having spared their first-born when he destroyed the Egyptians, should be set apart and dedicated to him; and as Joseph, dying in the faith of this their deliverance, had laid an injunction upon his brethren, whenever they should go from thence, to carry his bones out of Egypt; so Moses † took care to have the coffin, wherein he had lain embalmed for above an hundred and forty years, not left behind.

Are thence guided by the pillar of a cloud (as afterwards all along) to Etham.

† From Succoth their nearest way to Canaan was certainly through the country of the Philistines; but for fear that

† The Jews tell us, that upon the Israelites departure out of Egypt, every tribe took care to bring along with them the bones of the ancestor of their family: but tho' they are not always to be credited in matters of this nature, and Josephus does not seem to have dreamed of any such act of filial piety, or else he would in all probability have recorded it; yet St. Stephen (Acts vii. 15, 16.) seems to allude to some such tradition among them, when he tells us, "That Jacob and the fathers went down into Egypt, and were carried over into Sychem, and laid in the Sepulchre which Abraham had bought of the sons of Emmor;" *Universal history* l. i. c. 7.

† It is somewhat difficult to make out the geography of the places where the Hebrews encamped, between their parting from Rameses, and their arrival at the Red-sea; but the account of those who have wrote upon the subject is,—That though there are two places named *Rameses*, which are a little differently pointed; yet are they but one and the same, or at the most, that they differ only in this, that the one was the province, and the other the chief city of it; that *Succoth*, not far from Rameses, in the way to the Red-sea, had its name from *the tents* (for so the Hebrew word signifies) which the Israelites pitched here, as we find upon the like occasion another place between Jordan and the brook Jabbok, so named; that Etham lay on the confines of Egypt and Arabia Petræa, not far from the Red-sea, and gave the denomination to the wilderness adjacent: that *Pi-hahiroth*, which in our English, and some other translations, is rendered as one proper name, is by the Septuagint made part of it an appellative, so as to signify *a mouth*, (for so the word *Pi* may mean), or narrow passage between two mountains, lying not far from the western coast of the Red-sea: that *Magael* was probably *a tower or castle*, (for the word carries that signification in it) upon the top of one of these mountains, which might give denomination to the city which (as Herodotus informs us) lay not far distant from it; and



that a people unaccustomed to war should, in case of any opposition, repent of their deliverance, and take it into their heads to return into Egypt, God ordered them to take their rout along the coasts of the Red-sea; and for their greater encouragement and security, himself undertook to guide and direct them, both in their marches and encampments, by the wonderful appearance of a cloud, in the form of a large column, which shaded them from the heat of the sun by day, and in the night-time became a pillar of fire, or a bright cloud, to supply the sun's absence, and illuminate their camp. By this means they were enabled, upon any occasion, to march both day and night: and under this auspicious guide, proceeding from Succoth, they came to Etham, (which gives name to the wilderness on whose borders it is situated), and there they incamped.

In the mean time the † king of Egypt had information brought him, that the Israelites, instead of returning to his

A. M.  
2513, &c.  
Ant Christ.  
1491, &c.  
from Exod.  
ch. xiii. to  
xxxiv. 24.

And thence  
to Pi-hahiroth.

and that *Baal Zephon* was by some learned men thought to be an idol set up to keep the borders of the country, and to hinder slaves from making their escape. *Baal* indeed, in the Hebrew tongue, signifies *Lord*; and hence the name is generally applied to the eastern idols; and the word *Zephon* is thought to be derived from the Radix *Zapah*, to watch or spy; and from hence it is conjectured, that this idol had its temple on the top of some adjacent mountain, and that the sacred historian particularly takes notice of it, to shew how unable it was (whatever opinion the Egyptians might have of it) to hinder the Israelites from going out of Egypt. There is but small certainty, however, to be gathered from the etymology of words; and therefore the authority of Eusebius should preponderate with us, who makes it not an idol, but a town, standing upon the northern point of the Red-sea, where the ancients, especially the Jews, think that the Israelites passed it, and where there stands to this day a Christian monastery; *Patrick's* and *Calmet's Commentaries*; his *dissertation on the passage of the Red-sea*; and *Wells's Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. 2.

† It is not unlikely, that some of the mixt multitude (Exod. xii. 38.) which went along with the Israelites, observing this alteration in their rout, and not being able to perceive the reason of it, might forsake them, and returning to Pharaoh, inform him, that they had lost their way, and were intangled among the mountains: or (what is more likely) some spies, which Pharaoh had upon them, seeing them leave the way to Horeb, where they desired to go three days journey, in order to offer sacrifices, concluded that they never intended to return to E-

A. M. his dominions, were attempting their escape into the de-  
 2513, &c. serts of Arabia, by the cape of the Red-sea: And there-  
 Ant. Christ. fore grieving at the loss of so many useful slaves, and sup-  
 1491, &c. posing that by speedy marches he might overtake and re-  
 from Exod. cover them, he mustered up what forces he could, and for  
 ch. xiii. to the greater expedition, a considerable quantity of \* cha-  
 xxxiv. 24. riots and horsemen, and with these \* put himself upon the  
 pursuit

gypt, but were running quite away, and might therefore bring Pharaoh the news thereof (as we may suppose) upon the 18th day; *Patrick's Commentary*.

\* Josephus, who loves to magnify matters, when they tend to the glory of his countrymen, as well as conceal what would occasion their disgrace, tells us, that the Egyptian army consisted of 600 chariots, 50,000 horse, and 200,000 foot: but how so large a number could be raised in so short a time, or what need there was of so vast an armament against a weak and defenceless people, is hardly conceivable. As therefore we may presume that the haste which the Egyptians were in, lest the Israelites should get out of the streights wherein they were intangled, or make their escape some other way, before they came up with them, made them pursue them with chariots and horsemen for the greater expedition; so we may observe, that the chariots they employed in this pursuit, are called *chosen chariots*, which most interpreters imagine to be such as were armed with scythes, which being drawn with horses, and filled with men, who threw darts and spears, and other offensive weapons from them, could not but make a strange havoc wherever they came; and the number which the Scripture mentions, under proper captains, who might have the direction of them, was enough to destroy all the Israelites, being worn with hard bondage, wearied with marching, destitute of arms, strangers to war, and now incamped in a very disadvantageous situation; *Josephus's Antiquities*, l. 2. c. 15.; *Almsworth's Annotations*; and *Howell's History*.

\* "Of all the infatuated resolutions (to use the words of the learned Dr. Jackson, l. 10. c. 11.) that either king or people adventured on, the pursuing the Israelites with such a mighty army, after they had so intreated and urged them to leave their country, may well seem, to every indifferent reader, the most stupid that ever was taken:" and so indeed the author of the book of Wisdom, chap. xix. 3. justly censures it. "For whilst they were yet mourning," says he, "and making lamentation at the graves of the dead, they added another foolish device, and pursued them as fugitives, whom they  
 " had

pursuit. But God, who well understood what measures were taking in Pharaoh's court, instead of suffering the Israelites to march round the point of the † Red sea, as they probably intended, ordered them to advance along the coasts

A. M.  
2513, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1491, &c.  
from Exod.  
ch. xiii. to  
xxxiv. 24.

“ had intreated to be gone.” But how much soever it was that the Egyptians had suffered for detaining the Hebrews; yet now, that they were gone, they possibly might be of the same mind with the Syrians, (1 Kings xx. 23.), who fancied, that the God of Israel might not be alike powerful in all places; or, if he was, they might nevertheless think, that Moses's commission extended no farther than the meridian of Egypt; or that, if it did, it might however have no power over mighty hosts and armies. They knew, at least, that the Israelites, as we said, had no skill in military matters, no captains of infantry, no cavalry at all, no weapons or engines of war; whereas, they were well furnished and equipped with every thing of this nature: And, upon these and the like presumptions, it was that they became fool-hardy, and desperately resolute, either to bring back the Israelites to their slavery, or to be revenged upon them for all the losses they had sustained, and the penalties they had suffered; *Patrick's Commentary*.

† The Red sea, called by the antients *Sinus Arabicus*, and now *Gulfo de Mecca*, is that part or branch of the southern sea which interposes itself between Egypt on the west; Arabia-felix and some part of Petrea, on the east; while the northern bounds of it touch upon Idumea, or the coast of Edom. *Edom*, in the Hebrew tongue, signifies *red*, and was the nickname given Esau for selling his birth-right for a mess of pottage. The country which his posterity possessed was called after his name, and so was the sea which adjoined to it; but the Greeks, not understanding the reason of the appellation, translated it into their tongue, and called it *ῥεῦθρὰ θάλασσαν*; thence the Latins, *Mare rubrum*, and we, *the Red sea*. The Hebrews call it *the sea of suph*, or *flag*, by reason of the great abundance of that kind of weed, which grows at the bottom of it; and the Arabs, at this day, name it *Bahr el Chalfem*, vi. e. *the sea of Clyfona*, from a town situate on its western coast, much about the place where the Israelites passed over from the Egyptian to the Arabian shore. But as the word *Clyfona* may denote a *drowning* or *overflowing with water*, it is not improbable that the town built in this place, as well as this part of the sea, might have such a name given it, in memory of the fate of the Egyptians, who were drowned herein; *Wells's Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. 2.

A. M. of it, until they came to Pi-hahiroth, which lies between  
2513, &c. Migdol and the sea, and there to encamp.  
Ant. Christ. 1491, &c.

By this time Pharaoh and his army were come up with  
from, Exod. them; and when the Israelites perceived themselves hem-  
ch. xiii. to med in on every side, with the sea in their front, huge  
xxxiv. 24. mountains on their flank, and the Egyptian army in the rear,  
The Egyp- they began to despair of any means of escape, and to cla-  
tians pursue mour against Moses for having induced them to leave Egypt,  
them. and for bringing them into the wilderness to be sacrificed.  
Moses, however, being apprised of God's design, instead  
of \* resenting their reproaches, endeavoured to comfort  
them, by giving them assurance, that God himself would  
certainly fight for them, and by his almighty power bring  
matters to such an issue, that these very Egyptians, of

\* The words which Moses makes himself speak upon this  
critical occasion, (Exod. xiv. 13, 14.) discover a wonderful  
spirit and bravery; and it is no bad comment, which the Jew-  
ish historian has given us of them. " Put the case, (says he)  
" that you had deposited some great trust in the hands of a  
" person that had hitherto managed all well and wisely for  
" you, might not you reasonably depend upon that man for the  
" same care and kindness, and in the same case too over again?  
" What a madness is it for you to despond then, where God  
" himself has taken you under his protection, and of his  
" own free bounty, performed ever thing by me that can con-  
" tribute to your freedom and security? Nay, the very diffi-  
" culty of the case you are in, is an argument to inflame  
" your hope, rather than discourage it. He hath brought you  
" into this distress, on purpose to shew his power and kindness  
" in bringing you out again, even to the surprise and admira-  
" tion of yourselves, as well as your enemies. It is not God's  
" time to interpose with his almighty power in small matters,  
" but in great and trying calamities: When all hope of hu-  
" man help fails us, that is the season for him to work out the  
" deliverance of those who cast themselves upon him. And  
" therefore fear nothing, so long as you have him for your  
" protector and defender, who is able to raise the lowly and  
" oppressed, and to lay the honour of their persecutors in the  
" dust. Be not afraid of the Egyptian armed troops, neither  
" despond of your lives and safeties, because you are at pre-  
" sent locked up between the sea and the mountains, and have  
" no visible way in nature to come off; for the God whom  
" you serve, is able to level all these mountains, and lay the o-  
" cean dry. His will, in fine, be done;" *Josephus's Antiqui-  
ties*, l. 2. c. 15.

whom

whom they were so much afraid, should not one of them live to molest them any more.

With these comfortable words, he ordered them to advance towards the sea side; and, as they were advancing, the miraculous cloud (we were speaking of) removed from the front to the rear of the Israelites camp, and so turning its dark side towards the Egyptians, made them incapable of knowing what they were about; while, by its bright or fiery side, which it turned to the Israelites, it gave them a sufficiency of light, and kept the two camps from joining that night.

As soon as the Israelites came to the brink of the sea, Moses waved his sacred rod, and immediately a strong east wind blew, and drove the waves back from the land, and, by dividing the waters, which stood suspended, as it were a wall, on each hand, made a dry and safe passage for the Israelites, until they had gained the other shore. The Egyptians, in the mean while, never suspecting but that they with their chariots and horsemen might safely follow, where they saw the Israelites go on foot, entered after them into the midst of the sea: But, about break of day, they began to see their error, and \* their whole army in the utmost confusion. Their chariots were some of them broken, others ran into quick-sands, and others cast off their carriages; so that, perceiving the hand of God against them, they were turning about, and offering to flee, but all

A. M.  
2513, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1491, &c.  
from Exod.  
ch. xiii. to  
xxxiv. 24.

They pass  
the Red sea,  
where the  
Egyptians  
are all lost.

\* The expression in the text is, that *God troubled the host of the Egyptians*; and, to enforce the strength of this expression, the Jewish historian tells us, that before God let loose the waves upon the Egyptians, fierce winds and tempests, storms of hail and rain, terrible thunderings and lightnings, and whatever else could make their condition horrible, were sent down upon them from above; and therefore it is not without good reason, that these words of the Psalmist have been applied to this occasion: *The waters saw thee, O God, the waters saw thee, and were afraid; the depths also were troubled: The clouds poured out water, the air thundered, and thine arrows went abroad: The voice of thy thunder was heard round about, the lightning shone upon the ground, the earth was moved, and shook withal. Thy ways is in the sea, and thy paths in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known:* Whereupon it follows, *Thou ledest thy people like sheep, by the hand of Moses and Aaron*; Josephus's Antiquities. l. 2.; and Psal. lxxvii. 16, &c.

A. M.  
2513, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1491, &c.  
from Exod.  
ch. xiii. to  
xxxiv. 24.

in vain. As soon as the Israelites were all landed, Moses, by the divine command, stretched out his rod again over the sea: Whereupon the roaring waves break loose from their invisible chain, and come rushing upon Pharaoh and his army, and overwhelm them all; while the Israelites, beholding with wonder and amazement, the carcasses and rich spoils of their enemies thrown upon the sea-shore, began, at least seemingly, to fear God, and to reverence his servant Moses; who, to celebrate this joyful deliverance, having composed a triumphant hymn, wherein he extols the greatness of God's power, and his amazing mercy to his people displayed upon this occasion, divided the company into two great choirs; and setting himself and his brother Aaron at the head of the men, and his sister Miriam with a timbrel in her hand at the head of the women, they sung and played alternately, and, in the height of their joy, intermixed dances.

The water  
of Mar h  
made sweet  
for them.

But notwithstanding all these thankful acknowledgments of God's goodness, scarce had the Israelites travelled three days from the Red sea into the wilderness of Shur, before their excessive thirst, and want of water, put them all out of patience: And when, in a short time, they met with some, (at a place which is called *Marah*), it proved so \* bitter, that they could not drink it; This disappointment

\* The word *Marah*, in the Hebrew language, signifies *bitterness*; and it was from the taste of the waters that the place received its name. That there are several fountains of bitter water not far from the Red sea, at some small distance from the city Arsinoe, is attested by Strabo, Diodorus, and most modern travellers; but then the question is, Whether it was by the miraculous power of God, or by the natural virtue of the wood to which Moses was directed, that these bitter waters were at this time made sweet? The author of that excellent book called *Ecclesiasticus* seems to be of the latter opinion: For having treated of the honour and esteem due to a physician, he adds, "The Lord has created medicines out of the earth, and he that is wise will not abhor them. Was not the water made sweet with wood, that the virtue thereof might be known?" *Eccles. xxxviii. 5*. But, notwithstanding the authority of this writer, we have reason to think, that there was no tree in these parts of this virtue, because, had its virtue once been known, there is no question to be made, but that others, as well as Moses, would have made use of it to the same purpose; but that the writers who make mention of these bitter waters,

ment inflamed their thirst, and exasperated their murmurings against Moses, till, by the divine direction, he made use of the wood of a certain tree, which, as soon as it was thrown into the water, changed its offensive quality, and made it sweet.

From Marah they went, and encamped at † Elim, where there were twelve wells of water, and a good quantity of palm or date trees, and here they continued for some time. From hence they removed towards the wilderness of Sin; but, before they entered it, the supposed scarceness of provisions made them begin to distrust God, and to repent, from their very hearts, that they had suffered themselves to be decoyed from the plenty they enjoyed in the land of Egypt, into a barren wild waste, where they could have no other prospect but to die with hunger: And therefore, to convince these murmuring people of his almighty power and providence, God was pleased to inform them, that he would take care to supply them with food from heaven; which accordingly came to pass. For that

A. M.  
2513, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1491, &c.  
from Exod.  
ch. xiii. to  
xxxiv. 24.  
And man-  
na given  
them from  
heaven.

waters, would have told us, at the same time, of a tree or trees growing hard by, which had a medicinal quality to correct the taste of them; but since we meet with nothing of this kind, we may reasonably suppose that the author of Ecclesiasticus, (a book of modern composition in comparison of Moses's writings), speculating in that chapter upon the medicines which God had provided for man's use, offered this hint purely from his own fancy, and without any authority for it; and consequently we may conclude, that the correction of the quality of this water is to be ascribed, not so much to the virtue of the wood, as to the power of God, who used it rather as a sign to the Israelites than as an instrument to himself in doing it; *Le Clerc's Commentary*; and *Paul's Annotations*; and *Shuckford's Connection*, vol. 2. lib. 10.

† In remarking the several stations of the Israelites, from the Red-sea until they came to the mount Sinai, we must observe, that Moses does not set down every place where they incamped, (as he does in Numbers, chap. xxxiii.), but only those where some remarkable thing was done; that Elim, where they were now incamped, was esteemed a pleasant and fruitful place, at least in comparison of the desert and barren parts about it; and that the desert of Sin, which was their eighth station, and Rephidim their tenth, lay at equal distances in their way to the holy mountain; *Well's Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. 2.

A. M. 2513, &c. Ant. Christ. 1491, &c. from Exod. ch. xiii. to xxxiv. 24. very evening he caused † quails to fall among them in such great quantities, as quite covered their camp; and, on the next morning, as soon as the dew was gone, there lay upon the ground a little white round thing, much in the shape of a coriander seed, which, when the people saw, they were struck with admiration, and said one to another, ‡ *What is this?* And from thence they gave it the name of *manna*.

This

† The word which we render *quail*, according to the confession of the Jews themselves, is of uncertain signification, and may denote a *locust* as well as a *quail*; But what should rather incline us to the latter acceptation, is that Passage of the Psalmist, (lxxxviii. 27.) where he tells us, that *God rained flesh upon them, as thick as dust, and feathered fowls, like as the sand of the sea*; which cannot, with any tolerable propriety, be applied to insects. But here we must remember, that this was done in the middle of April, when these birds are known to fly out of Egypt cross the Red-sea in vast quantities; so that the sum of this miracle will consist, not so much in the prodigious number of them that fell in the Israelites camp, as in God's directing them thither, and in that very evening too, according to his promise, and his servant Moses's prediction; *Universal History*, l. i. c. 7.

‡ Our translation, and some others, make Moses fall into a plain contradiction, in relating this story of the manna, which they render thus: *And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, it is manna, for they wist not what it was*, Exod. xvi. 15.; whereas the Septuagint, and several authors both ancient and modern, have translated the text according to the original, *The Israelites seeing this, said one to another, What is this? For they knew not what it was*: For we must observe, that the word by which they asked (*What is this?*) was, in their language, *Man*, which signifies likewise *meat ready prepared*; and therefore it was always afterwards called *Man* or *Manna*. Various are the conceits which the Jewish writers have entertained concerning the taste of this manna, and some of them not unlikely have been borrowed from the author of the book of Wisdom, where he tells us of manna, *that it was able to content every man's delight, agreeing to every taste, and attempering itself to every man's liking*; Wis. xvi. 20, 21. Whereupon some have affirmed, that it had the taste of any sort of fish or fowl, according to the wish of him that eat it, but these are idle fancies; what we know of certainty is this, — That here, in Exodus, Moses tells us, that its *taste was like wafers made with honey*, and in Numbers, he says, that the cakes made of it had the *taste of fresh oil*, chap. xi. 8. so that we may conjecture, that

it



## Chap. I. from the Israelites departure from Egypt, &c. 375

This was the bread which the Israelites were to eat for the space of forty years ; and therefore God was pleased to give these special directions concerning it.——That it was to be gathered by measure, an homer for every head, according to the number of each family ; but this direction some persons slighting, and gathering above the proportion that was allowed them, found their quantity miraculously lessened, while the more moderate had theirs increased : That it was to be gathered fresh every morning, and all that was gathered consumed that same day ; which precept some persons likewise neglecting, and keeping a part of it until the next morning, found that it was putrefied and stunk : That, on the seventh day, (which was the † Sabbath), there was none to be found ; and therefore, on the sixth, they were to gather a double portion, which being laid up, according to God's direction, against the ensuing day, was never once known to corrupt : And that to perpetuate the memory of this † miraculous bread, wherewith

A. M.  
2513, &c.  
Ant. Chris.  
1492, &c.  
from Exod.  
ch. xiii. 10  
xxxiv. 24.  
God's directions  
concerning  
it.

it had a sweetness, when gathered, which evaporated in the grinding, and baking. It tasted like honey, when taken off the ground, but the cakes made of it were as cakes of bread kneaded with oil ; *Essay for a new translation* ; and *Shuckford's Connection*, vol 3. l. 10.

† This seems to be the first time that the *rest on the seventh day* was solemnly appointed. God indeed, from the very first, intended to preserve the memory of the creation in six days, by appointing the seventh day to be kept holy ; but when, before the flood, men grew so wicked as to neglect the thoughts of God, they very little regarded the distinction between this day and others ; and, after the flood, the dispersion of mankind very much blotted it out of their minds, as it did many other good things. In the family of Abraham, we may presume, the remembrance of it was preserved, tho' not with such a strict abstinence from all labour, as was afterwards enjoined ; and therefore we read nothing of their resting from their travels upon that day, before their coming out of Egypt. The truth is, they were kept under such severe servitude, and day and night so pressed by their task-masters to hard labour, without intermission, that all observation of the Sabbath was, very likely, laid aside ; but when God brought them out of slavery, he renewed his commandment for it, with this addition, (in memory of the Egyptian bondage), that they should rest from all manner of labour upon that day ; *Patrick's Commentary*.

† Whether this manna had those extraordinary qualities in it or no, which some imagine, it must be allowed to be truly miraculous,

A. M. 2513, &c. Ant. Chris. 1491, &c. from Exod. ch. xiii. to xxxiv. 24. They murmur again for want of water, and are miraculously supplied.

wherewith God had fed their forefathers in the wilderness so long, an homer of it should be put up in a pot, and reposed in the ark of the covenant within the sanctuary. From the desert of Sin, the Israelites had not advanced many days journey towards Horeb, till coming to Rephidim, and finding no water there, they fell into their old way of distrusting God's providence, and murmuring against Moses; but on this occasion they seemed to be more mutinous and desperate than ever. It was in vain for Moses to endeavour to persuade them to be patient for a little, and wait God's leisure. His words did but inflame, and carry them to such an height of rage, that they even threatened to stone him; so that he was forced to have recourse to God, who was soon pleased to dissipate his fears, by promising to signalize that place by a miraculous supply of water, as he had lately done another by a miraculous supply of food. Taking therefore the elders of the people, (who might bear testimony to the fact), along with him, Moses, as he was commanded by God, went to a certain rock on the side of Mount Horeb, (which was distinguished from all the rest by the divine appearance resting upon it), and no sooner had he smitten it with his rod, but water in abundance gushed out at several places, and, joining in one common stream, † ran down to the camp at Rephidim. This station however,

miraculous upon the following accounts. 1. That it fell but six days in the week. 2. That it fell in such prodigious quantity, as sustained almost three millions of souls. 3. That there fell a double quantity every Friday, to serve them for the next day, which was their Sabbath. 4. That, what was gathered on the first five days, stunk, and bred worms, if kept above one day; but that which was gathered on Friday, kept sweet for two days. And lastly, That it continued falling while the Israelites abode in the wilderness, but ceased as soon as they came out of it, and had got corn to eat in the land of Canaan; *Universal history*, l. 1. c. 7.

† It was this same water which served the Israelites, not only in this incampment of Rephidim, and in that of mount Sinai, but in their other incampments likewise, perhaps as far as Cadish-Barnea. For the Jews have a tradition, that as these waters were granted for the sake of the merits of Miriam, Moses's sister; so they happened to fail, as soon as she died; and hence it is, that at the incampment of Cadish Barnea, which was soon after the death of Miriam, we find the people falling into murmurings again for want of water. St. Paul, speaking of this miraculous rock, which he makes the type of Jesus

ever, because it was so infamous for the mutiny of the people, and their distrust of God, Moses, (as a caution and remembrance to them for the future), thought proper to have called *Maffah* and *Meribah*, which signify *temptation* and *contention*.

A. M.  
2513, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1491, &c.  
from Exod.  
ch. xiii. to  
xxxiv. 24.

While the Israelites continued at Rephidim, they were alarmed by the approach of an army of Amalekites, who were just upon their heels, and ready to fall upon them. Hereupon Moses ordered Joshua, a valiant young man who who was always about him, to draw out a party of the choicest men in the camp, against next morning, and to give the Amalekites battle. When the next morning came, Moses, attended by Aaron and Hur, went to the top of an eminence, from whence they might have a view of the field of battle; and as the two armies were engaged, so it was, that while Moses held up his hands to God in prayer, and in one of them his wonder-working rod, the Israelites prevailed; but when, through weariness, his hands began to drop, the Amalekites had the better; which Aaron and Hur perceiving, set him down upon a stone, and supported his hands on each side, until the going down of the sun, in which time the Amalekites were quite routed, and put to the sword.

They defeat  
the Ama-  
lekites.

This good success, in their first martial enterprize, gave the Israelites great encouragement; and the action indeed was so very remarkable, that, to transmit it to posterity, Moses was ordered to record it in a book, for Joshua's future instructions, and to offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving: Whereupon he raised, upon the spot, an altar which he

Jesus Christ, tells us, that *it followed them*, 1 Cor. x. 4. And from hence some have inferred, either that the streams which gushed out of the rock, formed themselves into a kind of river, which followed them through all their incampments, or that they carried the rock itself in a cart, like a great tun always full, and always open to those who had an inclination to drink. But these are idle fictions, drawn from words that are not to be understood in a literal sense; what we may learn of certainty from modern travellers is,——That at the foot of the Mount Horeb, there is still to be seen a brook of water, but as for the rock itself, which is a vast large stone standing separate by itself, there is no water that now runs from it, though there are, at present, twelve holes or mouths, as it were, from whence the water did flow heretofore; *Calmet's Dictionary*, under the word *Rephidim*; and *Morizan's Voyages*, l. i. c. 1.

A. M. 2513, &c.  
Ant. Christ, 1491, &c.  
from Exod. ch. xiii. to xxxiv. 24.

Jethro visits Moses, and advises him to appoint deputies under him.

called *Jehovah Nissi*, the Lord is my banner, as never doubting but that God, who had commanded him to denounce † incessant war against the Amalekites, would not fail to crown it with success.

The defeat of the Amalekites opened a way for the Israelites to Mount Sinai, where God at first appeared to Moses in the burning-bush, and not far from the place where his father-in-law Jethro dwelt; † who having heard what mighty

† The Amalekites were a people descended from Amalek, the son of Eliphaz, the son of Esau, by a concubine, Gen. xxxvi. 12. And the ground of their enmity against the Israelites is generally supposed to have been an innate hatred, from the remembrance of Jacob's depriving their progenitor, both of his birth-right and blessing. Their falling upon them, however, and that without any provocation, when they saw them reduced to so low a condition by the fatigue of their march, and the excessive drought they laboured under, was an inhuman action, and justly deserved the defeat which Joshua gave them: But then the reason why God thought fit to denounce a perpetual war against them, is to be resolved into this,—That knowing the Israelites were pre-ordained by God to be put in possession of the land of Canaan, they came against them with an armed force, in hopes of frustrating the designs of providence concerning them. And this is the reason which Moses himself assigns for this declaration of war; *because his (i. e. Amalek's) hand is against the throne of God, (i. e. against God himself) therefore the Lord will wage war against him from one generation to another*, Exod. xvii. 16. The injury done the Israelites was not so much, as the affront offered to the Divine Majesty; and therefore God threatens utterly to extirpate the designers of it; *Universal History*, l. 1. c. 7. and *Patrick's Commentary*.

† When it was that Jethro came from Midian to visit his son-in-law Moses, whether immediately after the fight with the Amalekites, as it is here set down, or some time after, when the Israelites were better settled, is a matter much controverted amongst interpreters. The Jews are generally agreed, and to them do some other great names (as well as the learned Usher and Selden) assent, that this visit happened after the promulgation of the law, in the first year of their coming from Egypt, and in the month Tifri (say the Jews) above three months after God gave Moses the second tables; though others will have it to have been in the second year. It seems reasonable to think, however, that Jethro would take the first opportunity to visit Moses, and to bring him and so near relations together, when once he had heard the

mighty things God had done for him and the people he conducted, took his daughter Zipporah, Moses's wife, and the two sons Gershom and Eliezar, which he had by her, and brought them to the Israelitish camp: Where, after mutual salutations and embraces, Moses entertained him with a particular account of every thing that had befallen him during his absence; and in return, Jethro, who was a devout man, offered up solemn praises to God, and joined with Moses, and the rest of the elders of Israel, in sacrifices, and such holy rejoicings, as were thought proper upon this occasion.

A. M.  
2513, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1491, &c.  
from Exod.  
ch. xiii. to  
xxxiv. 24.

While Jethro staid in the camp, he could not but perceive the great weight of business, in hearing complaints, and determining differences among so numerous a people, which Moses must necessarily labour under; and therefore he gave him advice, to substitute under him a certain number of officers, men of parts, and men of courage, such as *feared God, and hated covetousness*, to be rulers, some over thousands, some over hundreds, some over fifties, and some over tens, with proper authority for them to hear, and determine † all such matters, as they were

the news of their departure from Egypt, and passing the Red sea: Which he (as a borderer upon the wilderness) could not long be a stranger to. It is to be observed farther, that had the law been given before Jethro's arrival in the Israelitish camp, Moses could hardly have escaped saying something of the most remarkable passage of all others, God's glorious appearance upon Mount Sinai, and the decalogue which he pronounced from thence: Whereas all that he relates at this meeting, is, what God had done to Pharaoh and the Egyptians; in what manner he *had delivered his people*, and *what travail had come upon them by the way*; which comprehend their passage of the Red sea, their want of water and bread, their engagement with the Amalekites, and, in short, whatever we read in the foregoing chapters. But of the most momentous thing of all, we find him making no mention, nor Jethro, in the congratulations which he gives him, taking any manner of notice; which we can hardly suppose would, on either side, have been omitted, had they been prior to this interview; nor can we conceive, for what reason Moses should place the account of this interview in immediate succession, had it not followed the fight with the Amalekites; *Patrick's Commentary*.

† The words of the text are, *Every great matter they shall bring to thee, but every small matter they shall judge*, Exod. xviii. 22. And from hence some have imagined, that there

A. M. 2513, &c. Ant. Christ. 1491, &c. from Exod. ch. x ii to xxxiv. 24, were able; but where causes were too difficult for their decision, these to refer to him; which, in the event, as he told him, would prove a great ease and advantage both to himself and the people: And this advice of his, as soon as he saw put in execution, Jethro took leave of his son-in-law, and returned into his own country.

It was three months after their departure out of Egypt, when the Israelites came, and incamped in the wilderness of Sinai, before the mount of God: And they had not been long there, before God called Moses to come up to him on the mount, and there charged him to remind the Israelites of the many wonders he had had wrought in their favour; and that, (notwithstanding their frequent murmurings and distrust of his providence), if, for the future, they would become obedient to his laws, he would still look upon them as his peculiar people, a favourite nation, and a royal priesthood.

God pronounces the ten commandments from Mount Sinai. Upon his descent from the mount, Moses made a report to the elders, and they to the people, of the gracious message which God had sent them; which, as soon as the people heard, they promised, in return, all possible obedience to the divine commands. With this answer of the

were several sorts of causes, that might not, at first, be brought before inferior courts, and these they make to be four. 1. All sacred matters, or things relating to God and religion. 2. All matters of equity, where the rigour of the law was to be mitigated. 3. All capital cases: And, lastly, all such cases as the rulers of thousands referred to Moses. What the other rulers referred to him, was indeed properly under his cognizance, because it supposed an incapacity in them, either for the want of some law, or a non-agreement among themselves, to determine it; but where nothing of this happened, they had a full power to judge finally. Neither was it the people (when a cause was thought intricate) that were to bring it primarily before Moses, but when any such difficulty arose, as they were not able to surmount, the Judges (as Moses himself directs them, Deut. i. 17.) were the persons that were to order the appeal to him: *Bring it to me* (says he) *and I will hear it*; which shews, that the cause had been before the bar of inferior courts before, only they were not skilful enough to determine it. So that the words in the text do not intimate, that there were some causes which the other judges might not try, if they were able; but only where the causes were heard, and they incompetent to decide them, these they were to refer to Moses; *Patrick's Commentary*.

people's

people's Moses ascended the mountain again, and received a command from God, that all the people should purify themselves, and be in readiness against the third day; for that within three days, || he would come down upon the mountain, and make a covenant with them. In the mean time, he gave him strict charge to set boundaries about the foot of the mountain, which none might adventure to pass, under the severest penalties: And when he had thus done, and the people had prepared themselves, according to the divine injunction, on the third day they saw, early in the morning, the mountain surrounded with a thick cloud, out of which proceeded such terrible thunder and lightnings, as filled them with horror and amazement.

A. M.  
2513, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1491, &c.  
from Exod.  
ch. xiii. to  
xxxiv. 24.

The signal for the people to approach the mountain, was upon the first sounding of the trumpet; and therefore, as soon as it began. Moses brought them out of the camp, as near to the mountain as the barrier would permit, and there they observed the whole top of Sinai covered with fire and smoke, while the foundations of it

|| It must be observed here, as also in other places of the like nature, that the Scripture, suiting itself to man's common way of speaking and thinking, assigns such things to God, as are only proper to the effects. Thus it is said that God *descended on the mountain*, because he made his presence more visible there by sensible and surprising effects: And, whereas it is said by the protomartyr, St. Stephen, (Acts vii. 53.) *that the Jews received the law by the disposition of angels*; and by St. Paul to the Galatians, iii. 19. *that the law was ordained by angels in the hand of a Mediator*; there is in these, and the like passages, no contradiction between the New and Old Testament, which assigns all this dispensation to God himself. For though it was God who descended (in the sense we have explained it) upon the mount, yet the angels, these courtiers of heaven, attended him, and made up his train; and though he himself pronounced the law, yet the thunder and lightnings, and noise resembling the sounding of a trumpet, which were preparatory to such pronounciation, may not improperly be ascribed to the ministry of angels. The intent, however, of these passages in the New Testament, is only to oppose the gospel to the law in this respect, viz. that when God gave the law, he was surrounded with an awful host of angels; but when our Lord delivered the gospel, he was clothed in our flesh, and adapted himself to our weakness; *Howell's History of the Bible*; and *Millar's Church-history*.

seemed

A. M. 2513, &c.  
 Ant. Christ.  
 1491, &c.  
 from Exod.  
 ch. xiii. to  
 xxxiv. 24.

seemed to tremble and shake under them. \* In the midst of this dreadful scene, the trumpet was heard to sound louder and louder, claps of thunder, and flashes of fire were more and more ingeminated, till, all on a sudden, every thing was hush and silent, and then God was heard from

\* Of all the descriptions that I ever read, there is no one seems to me so awful and tremendous, as this descent of God upon mount Horeb, and the amazing phenomena that attended it. The pomp pretended to by Pagan deities, even when set off with the grandeur of poetry, and the magic of numbers, is uncouth, ridiculous, and profane. The procession of Bacchus, as it is described by Ovid, (lib. 3.) is neither more nor less than a downright drunken riot, or the brutal pastime of a disorderly country-wake. The boisterous expedition of Neptune, even as it is painted by the great master Homer, (Iliad 13.), seems to represent nothing more august than the roaring of London-bridge, or a rabble of sea monsters frisking in a storm: Nay, that very famous speech of Jupiter, (Iliad 18.), where he maintains his supereminence, by shaking Olympus with his imperial nod, and menacing his refractory offspring, in case they should rebel, tho' it certainly be embellished with the utmost force of words, and stretch of art, is at the best but a lame and imperfect copy, in the main strokes of it, from the native majesty of this unlaboured prose, in the 19th chapter of Exodus. It must be owned, however, that our English poet Milton, has in several places described the usual display of the divine Majesty, in a very magnificent manner.

—————Clouds began

To darken all the hill, and smoak to rowl  
 In dusky wreaths, reluctant flames, the sight  
 Of wrath awak'd: Nor with less dread the loud  
 Ethereal trumpet from on high 'gan blow,  
 At which command the powers militant,  
 That stood for heaven, in mighty quadrate join'd  
 Of union irresistible, mov'd on  
 In silence their bright legions, to the sound  
 Of instrumental harmony.—————

Again, He on his impious foes right onward drove,  
 Gloomy as night: Under his burning wheels  
 The stedfast empyrean shook throughout,  
 All but the throne of God.—————

And again, He ended, and the sun gave signal high  
 To the bright minister that watch'd: He blew  
 His trumpet, heard an Oreb since perhaps  
 When God decended, and perhaps once more  
 To sound the general doom.—————

Paradise Lost, lib. 6. and 11.  
 the



the midst of the fire and smoke (which still continued) to pronounce the law of the decalogue, or \* ten commandments, which is indeed a complete system of the moral part of the Jewish institutes, and in few but significant words, comprehends their duty to God, to their neighbour, and to themselves.

A. M.  
2513, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1491, &c.  
from Exod.  
ch. xiii. to  
xxxiv. 24.

In the mean time the people, astonished at what they saw and heard, removed farther off; and as soon as the divine voice had ceased speaking, came to Moses, and, in the height of their fear and surprise, besought of him, that, for the future he would speak to them in God's stead, and whatever he enjoined them they would obey, because they were conscious, that were they to hear his dreadful voice again, they should certainly die with horror and astonishment. This motion, as it bespoke their reverence and respect, was not displeasing to Moses; and therefore he assured them, that all this wonderful scene was not exhibited to them with a design to create in them any slavish fear, but a filial confidence, and submission to such laws as the divine wisdom should hereafter think fit to enjoin them: and with these words he went up to the mount again, where (in addition to the decalogue) he received from God several other laws, both ceremonial and political, which seem to have been calculated with a wise design to preserve the people in their obedience to God, to prevent their intermixture with other nations, and to advance the welfare of their commonwealth, by securing to all the members of it a quiet enjoyment of their lives and properties.

With this body of laws, which were all that God for the present thought fit to enjoin, Moses returning from the mount, erected an altar to God, and offered burnt-sacrifices and peace-offerings upon it; and having caused the contents of this new covenant to be read to all the people, and exacted a solemn promise from them, that they would keep it faithfully, he confirmed this covenant, by sprinkling the altar, the book, and the people with the blood of the

Gives the  
Israelites  
other pre-  
cepts,  
and makes  
a covenant  
with them.

\* These ten commandments, as contained in the 20th chapter of Exodus, are so very well known, that there is no occasion here for the repetition of them: And in what manner they are to be disposed of in the two tables, whether four are to be placed in the first, and six in the second table, (which is the common distribution), or an equal number, is to be appropriated to each table, (as Philo and his followers among the Jewish Rabbins contend), is not a question of moment enough to be discussed in this place.

victims

A. M.  
2513, &c.  
Ant. Chriſt.  
1491, &c.  
from Exod.  
ch. xliii. to  
xxxiv. 24.

viſtims which were ſlain upon this occaſion; and then ordered twelve pillars to be raiſed, according to the number of the twelve tribes, as a ſtanding monument of this alliance between God and them.

As ſoon as Moſes had made an end of this ceremony, he took Nadab, Abihu, and ſeventy of the elders of Iſrael ſome part of the way towards the mountain, where (without incurring any hurt) they were vouchſafed a proſpect of the divine preſence, and where, having committed the care of the people to them, he took Joſhua along with him, and went up higher to the top of the mount, where he continued for the ſpace of forty days.

Moſes receives inſtructions concerning the tabernacle.

Here it was that God, calling him nearer to himſelf, and into the cloud where he then reſided, inſtructed him in what manner the tent or tabernacle, wherein he intended to be worſhipped, was to be made. He deſcribed to him the form of the ſanctuary, the table for the ſhewbread, the altar of frank-incenſe, the altar for burnt-offerings, the court of the tabernacle, the baſon to waſh in, the ark, the candleſtick, and all the other ſacred utenſils. He gave him the form of the ſacerdotal veſtments, and taught him how the prieſts were to be conſecrated: What part of the oblation they were to take, and in what manner the perpetual ſacrifice was to be offered. He named the two chief men, Bezaleel, of the tribe of Judah, and Aholiah, of the tribe of Dan, who were to be the builders of the tabernacle; and having recommended a ſtrict obſervation of the Sabbath, he gave him the two || tables of ſtone, wherein with his own hand

|| Who was the firſt inventor of letters, and what nation had the invention ſoonest amongſt them, is variously diſputed by the learned. The invention ſeems to be a little too exquisite to have proceeded from man; and therefore we have, not without reaſon, (vol. I. p. 356.), derived its original from God himſelf, who might teach it Adam, and Adam his poſterity. As to particular nations, however, ſome ſay that the Phœnicians, others the Ethiopians, and others again that the Aſſyrians, had the firſt invention of them, but upon better grounds, it is thought by Eusebius, (in his præp. Evan. l. 18.) that Moſes firſt taught the uſe of letters to the Jews, and that the Phœnicians learnt them from them, and the Grecians from the Phœnicians. The matter whereon men wrote, in ruder times was different; ſome on the rinds of trees, others on tiles, and others on tables; which laſt was chiefly in uſe among the Jews;

hand, at least by his own direction, were written the ten great commandments, which were the sum and substance of the moral law. A. M. 2513, &c. Ant. Christ. 1491, &c.

While Moses was conversing with God on the mount, and Joshua waiting for his return, the people in the camp, who by reason of his long absence began now to give him over for lost, assembled themselves in a riotous manner about Aaron's tent, and demanded of him to make them some Gods to go before them. The demand was astonishing, and such was his weakness, and want of courage, that instead of expostulating the matter with them, he tamely submitted to their request; nay, he contributed not a little to their idolatry, by ordering them to bring a sufficient quantity of their golden ornaments, which when he received from them, † he tied in a bag, and thereof made them from Exod. ch. xiii. to xxxiv. 24. The people in the mean time make them a golden calf.

Jews; and probably from this example given them by God. The instrument wherewith they wrote, was not a pen, but a kind of engraver, made of iron or steel, called a *stylus*, which was sharp at one end, for the more convenient indenting, or carving the character, and broad at the other, for the purpose of scraping it out. To perpetuate the memory of any thing, the custom of writing on stone or brick was certainly very ancient, and (as Josephus, in the case of Seth's pillars, tells us, *Antiq. l. 11.*) elder than the time of the flood. The words of the decalogue, spoken by God himself, were such as deserved to be had in everlasting remembrance; and therefore God was willing to have them engraved upon durable matter; but then the question is, Whether it was God himself, with his own finger, as we say, or some other person from God's mouth, who wrote them. In Exodus xxxiv. 27, 28. we are told, that *the Lord said unto Moses, Write thou these words; for after the tenor of these words have I made a covenant with thee, and with Israel; and that accordingly he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant; even the ten commandments.* Now since it is a common form of speech, that what a superior commands to be done, that he does himself; the meaning can be no more, than that the words of the decalogue were written by the hand of Moses, but by the direction and dictation of God; *Howell's*, and *the Universal history*.

† The words in the text are these, — *All the people brake off the golden ear-rings which were in their ears, and brought them unto Aaron, and he received them at their hands, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it into a molten calf,* Exod. xxxii. 2, 3, 4. But here seems to be a great mistake in most versions, as well as our own, and what but few critics and

A. M. 2513, &c. Ant. Christ. 1491, &c. from Exod. eh. xiii. to xxxiv. 24. them a molten calf. Nor was this all, for seeing them so highly delighted with their new made god, he set it upon a pedestal, in full sight of the camp, built an altar before it, and appointed the next day for a solemn festival, which was begun with offering of sacrifices to it, and concluded with feasting and dancing, and all † kinds of noisy mirth. God,

expositors have yet espied. For it may very well be asked, who taught Aaron to engrave, or how could this idol be engraven so soon, since it is said that Aaron presented it to the people on the morrow? If the custom of engraving molten work was then known, how comes it, that we hear nothing of it even in Solomon's time, since it may be presumed, that the furniture of Solomon's temple was wrought with much more art than the figure of Aaron's calf? The whole foundation of this mistake seems to lie in the ambiguity of the Hebrew word *Tfour*, which sometimes signifies *to fashion*, and sometimes *to bind or tie*, and of the word *Chereth*, which signifies a *graving tool*, and sometimes a *sack or bag*, 2 Kings v. 23. And therefore the nature and circumstances of the thing here spoken of might have directed the translators to think of putting the great quantity of ear-rings, which were brought to Aaron, into a bag: Which would have prevented the incongruity that the Geneva version has incurred, of engraving the calf before it was molted; for so it runs, *he fashioned the ear-rings with a graving tool, and made a molten calf of them*; Essay for a new translation.

† The words in the text are, (Exod. xxxii. 6.) *the people sat down to eat, and to drink, and rose up to play*; and from hence some have supposed their sense to be, that after the Israelites had eaten of the sacrifices offered to this new idol, and drank very plentifully, they committed fornication, after the manner of Heathen worshippers, and as in after ages they were induced to do in the case of Baal-peor, Numb xxv. 1, 2. It cannot be denied indeed, but that those sacrificial feasts among the Heathens were usually attended with drunkenness and lasciviousness, which generally go together; and that the word which we render *play*, is the same which Potiphar's wife makes use of, when she tells her husband, that his Hebrew slave came in to *mock her*, i. e. *to violate her chastity*; but since there is no intimation of this in the story, but only of their singing and dancing, it is hardly presumable, that they could become so very profligate the very first day of their setting up idol-worship. Much more reasonable is it therefore, to suppose, that all this merriment of theirs was in imitation of the Egyptians, who,

God, in the mean time, who knew what had passed in the camp, acquainted his servant Moses, that the people whom he had brought out of Egypt had so soon forgot their promises and engagements, that at that very time they had made them a molten image, and were worshipping a golden calf; a defection so provoking, that he threatened to extirpate the whole nation of them, but at the same time, promised to make him the father and founder of a nation as numerous, and more powerful than these ungrateful rebels were. But so far was Moses from seeking his own interest in their destruction, that he threw himself at the feet of the Lord, and interceded for their pardon with so much importunity, that having obtained a kind of promise of it, he took the tables, and his servant Joshua with him, and so hastened down from the mount.

As soon as they were come to the bottom, Joshua hearing the noise which the people were making, expressed his apprehensions, that possibly there might be some alarm or engagement in the camp; but Moses, who knew what had happened, told him, that the noise seemed to be an indication of joy, rather than of war; and as they drew near, and saw the golden calf, and the people singing and dancing about it, Moses, for indignation, throwing down the tables he had in his hands, brake them in pieces; and then, taking the idol-calf, he put it in the fire, and melted it, and so † reducing it to powder, and mixing

who, when they had found out their god Apis, (whereof this golden calf was designed for an emblem), were used to bring him in solemn pomp to Memphis, the royal city, with children going before in procession, and all the company singing a song of praise to the deity; *Patrick's Commentary*.

† This action of Moses, in melting, grinding, and pounding this golden idol, in order to make the people drink it, is by some thought contrary to our present philosophy, and the account which alchymists give us of the nature of gold. Nothing is more commonly received than the notion that gold cannot be destroyed; and yet the royal academy at Paris have a burning glass, that will vitrify it in an instant, by evaporating all the sulphur of it, which crackles, and flies up in a thick smোক, whilst the glass that remains can never be reduced into any other form. That gold can be reduced into a fine powder, every gold-beater can inform us; and who can tell, but that Moses might have some particular secret for doing this, which

A. M. 2513, &c. Ant. Christ. 1491, &c. from Exod. ch. xiii. to xxxiv. 24.

mixing the powder in water, (to make them more sensible of their folly in worshipping that for a god which was to pass through their bodies), he made them drink it up.

After this, Aaron was called to give an account how he came to indulge the people in this idolatrous humour ; but all the excuse that he could make turned upon their tumultuous, and his timorous temper, which compelled him to comply with their demand. But Moses's business was, to take vengeance on the idolaters ; and therefore, turning from his brother Aaron, he called such to his aid as had not been guilty in the late rebellion ; and seeing some of the tribe of Levi adjoin themselves to him, † he appointed them to take their swords, to go through the camp, and, without any respect to age or quality, friendship or consanguinity, to kill all the ring-leaders of this idolatrous defection, and their adherents ; which the Levites accordingly executed ; so that at this time there were about three thousand persons slain. Nor did the Levites, in consideration of this their laudable zeal and obedience, go long unrewarded : For, upon the institution of the priesthood,

we know nothing of ? By the help of a file, however, he might grate it into a dust, as fine as flour that is ground in a mill. But the Rabbinical reason for his giving the people this gold powder to drink, viz. that he might distinguish the idolaters from the rest, (because as soon as they had drank, the beards of the former turned red), is a little too whimsical to be regarded ; *Universal History*, l. i. c. 7.

† This may be thought too hazardous an undertaking, and, for a few Levites to kill 3000 of the people, impracticable ; but as they had God's warrant for what they did, and knew at the same time how timorous guilt is apt to make men, they might be confident that none would have courage to oppose them. Before that Moses called any avengers to his assistance, the text tells us, that *he saw that the people were naked, for Aaron had made them naked to their shame*, Exod. xxxii. 25, where if by *nakedness* we are (with some expositors) to understand their want of *arms*, which they had laid aside, that they might be more light and nimble to dance about the idol, it is plain, that the Levites might have less trouble in slaying such a number of people, loaded with liquor perhaps, and (as it usually happens in the conclusion of a festival) weary with dancing and sports, and without any weapons about them to make resistance ; *Patrick's* and *Le Clerc's Commentary*.

they

they were appointed to the honour and emoluments of that office, though in subordination to that of Aaron and his posterity. A. M. 2513, &c. Ant. Christ. 1491, &c.

The people, in the mean time, having seen this dreadful example on the delinquents, were not in a little fear and consternation. But Moses, the next day, contented himself with reproofing them for their ingratitude and extreme folly, and at the same time, promised them that he would go up to the mount again, and try † how far his prayers would prevail with the divine mercy, to avert the punishment which they justly deserved. To shew, however, how highly they had offended God by their wicked apostacy, he took a tent, and pitching it out of the camp at a good distance, he called it *the tabernacle of the congregation*, whither the cloudy pillar, (to let them see that God would no longer dwell among them), immediately repaired; and whither Moses, whenever he wanted to consult the divine oracle, was wont to resort. Nor was it long after this, that God, (to comfort and encourage him under all the fatigue that he had with an obstinate people), granted his request, and shewed him as much of his glory as his nature was able to bear, and gave him fresh orders to prepare two other tables of stone, and to come up again to him on the mountain all alone. Moses accordingly, early next morning, repaired to the mountain, with the two tables, and having prostrated himself before God, implored of him to pardon the sins of his people; which God graciously condescended to do, and withal to make a farther covenant with them, upon condition that they would keep his commandments; would

from, Exod. ch. xiii. to xxxiv. 24. His intercession for the people, and receiving from God fresh tables of the law.

† Moses indeed was by lineage and descent of the tribe of Levi, which though it forfeited the primogeniture and regalia by being concerned in the blood of the Shechemites, was nevertheless dignified with the priesthood, which gave him a right of approaching God, as an intercessor for a rebellious and backsliding people. Aaron, in strictness, was both the high-priest and his elder brother, but besides that, he, by his imprudent compliance in the business of the golden calf, had, at this time, not only forfeited the honour of mediation, but stood himself in need of an atonement: There seems to be something in the character that is given of Moses's singular meekness, that might intitle him to the spirit of intercession, and make the younger, in his office, be preferred before the elder; *Bibliotheca Bibl. append. of the occas. annot.*

A. M. observe his Sabbaths, his passover, and other appointed fe-  
 2513, &c. stivals; and would not worship the gods of the Canaanites,  
 Ant. Christ. nor make any alliances with the people of the country.  
 1491, &c.  
 from Exod.

ch. xli. to  
 xxxiv. 24.

### The OBJECTION.

“ THE kindness of God to the Israelites, in giving  
 “ them the possession of the land of Canaan, was  
 “ very remarkable; but since he intended it at first, why  
 “ did he delay it so long? *Hope deferred makes the heart*  
 “ *sick*, says Solomon; and to be forty years in executing  
 “ what might have been done in forty days, is hardly con-  
 “ sistent either with the wisdom or goodness of God. Be-  
 “ tween Egypt and Canaan, (if we may believe \* Philo),  
 “ there is not above three days journey; and therefore it  
 “ looks a little strange and unaccountable, that God should  
 “ not march his people directly thither, and settle them  
 “ at once, rather than lead them aside into a barren wil-  
 “ derness, and there carry them in a wild-goose chase for  
 “ the space of almost half a century, always pestered  
 “ with their complaints, and forced to feed them at the  
 “ expence of miracles. It can hardly be thought, from  
 “ the tenor of their history, but that his particular pro-  
 “ vidence attended them wherever they went: (a) As  
 “ miracles however are not to be multiplied without a ma-  
 “ nifest necessity, there is no reason for our thinking that  
 “ God himself went before them during their travels in  
 “ the wilderness, in a *visible pillar of fire and smoak*, since  
 “ the whole matter (which the Jews makes so much boast  
 “ of) might be no more than a kind of ambulatory bea-  
 “ con, or a huge portable fire, under the direction of a  
 “ proper officer, and in a fit machine, highly elevated on  
 “ a pole, which was carried before the first line of the  
 “ camp, and from thence could be seen by all the rest,  
 “ This was a customary practice in waste and desolate coun-  
 “ tries, for the conveniency of travelling; and therefore  
 “ we may suppose, that the Israelites, when they entered  
 “ the wilderness, in conformity to other nations, made  
 “ use of the same expedient; and that to some such port-  
 “ able fire as this, whose flame, but not its smoak, might  
 “ be very far seen by night, and whose smoak, but not its  
 “ flame, might be perceived at a great distance by day, all

\* De vita Moïsis, l. i. p. 627.

(a) Toland's Hodegus.



Chap. I. from the Israelites departure from Egypt, &c. 391

“ the strange things which are said of the different phases  
 “ of this pretended miraculous pillar, may with great fa-  
 “ cility be referred.

A. M.  
 2513, &c.  
 Ant. Chris.  
 1491, &c.  
 from Exod.  
 ch. xiii. to  
 xxxiv. 24.

“ Moses, no doubt, in fundry respects, was no mean  
 “ politician ; and therefore he could not but know, that  
 “ the pretence of a divine revelation would give his laws a  
 “ better sanction among the people, and so, to prepare the  
 “ way, he devised the terrible scene of God’s descending  
 “ upon mount Sinai, and abiding there in sinoak, and  
 “ thunderings, and lightning, while himself went up to re-  
 “ ceive his will, but prohibited all the rest (except his  
 “ brother Aaron, who was let into the mystery), (b) un-  
 “ der the penalty of immediate death, to approach the  
 “ mountain: For had they been permitted to do this, the se-  
 “ cret had been soon found out, and the miracle spoiled,  
 “ which, in all probability, (c) was nothing more than a  
 “ vulcano, or irruption of fire out of the top of the  
 “ mountain, whereof he knowing the cause, took the ad-  
 “ vantage, and palmed it upon the people for the tremen-  
 “ dous presence of God, attended with his hosts of angels.

“ And indeed, considering the nature of the laws which  
 “ he delivered to the people, we have small reason to sup-  
 “ pose that God had any hand in them ; since they are  
 “ many of them absurd and ridiculous, some contrary to  
 “ common justice, and others nothing else but Egyp-  
 “ tian rites revived. For even in the moral part of them,  
 “ what can be more unrighteous, than (d) God’s *visiting*  
 “ *the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third*  
 “ *and fourth generation* ? In the political, what more un-  
 “ just, than the setting up asylums for every rogue and  
 “ ruffian to flee to ? What more cruel, than the *lex tali-*  
 “ *onis*, or a permission to take revenge in cold blood ?  
 “ what more ridiculous, than to prohibit men’s sowing  
 “ maslin, or wearing linsley-woolfey, or gravely to decree,  
 “ that an ox and an ass should not be yok’d together ?  
 “ And, as for the ceremonial, (e) the Urin and Thum-  
 “ mim, the ark and cherubims, the High priest’s vest-  
 “ ments, and almost every ordinance in the worship of  
 “ the tabernacle, are manifestly borrowed from the Egyp-  
 “ tians.

(b) Exod. xix. 12, 13. (c) Nicholl’s Conference with a  
 Theist, p. 273. (d) Exod. xx. 5. (e) Spencer De legibus  
 Heb. lib. 3.

A. M.  
2513, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1491, &c.  
from Exod.  
ch. xiii. to  
xxxiv. 24.

“ Moses perhaps knew better, and wrote only according to the conceptions of the vulgar, whom he purposed to keep in ignorance ; or otherwise we cannot but say, that he discovers gross notions of God, (when *(f)* he talks of his *face*, his *back-parts*, and his *covering him with his hand* ; and when he wishes *(g)* to be blotted out of the book that God had written, (which some suppose to mean his eternal damnation), he seems to be absolutely profane and irreligious, devoid of all fear of God, as well as all sense of danger in a future state.

“ The less reason we have to wonder, that we find Aaron, his brother and companion in this affair, and who was now left regent in his absence, so easily complying with the impious request of the people, and instead of remonstrating to the idolatrous motion, with his own hands making them an idol, and with his own mouth proclaiming a festival in honour of it : But why should he think of a calf above all other creatures, to be an hieroglyphic of the Deity, or why the people, who had seen so much of the handy-work of God, should be so overjoyed at the setting up the figure of so stupid an animal to be the object of their worship, may justly raise our astonishment and admiration.”

Answered  
by shewing  
that the mi-  
raculous  
cloud was  
no machine  
of human  
contrivance.

That in the deserts of Arabia, and such extended plains (for there were no cities, rivers, or mountains for landmarks), it was a general custom, before the invention of the compass, to carry fire before armies, in order to direct their march ; and that (notwithstanding the present use of the compass) the guidance of fire is practised among the caravans in the east, and by the great number of pilgrims who go every year from Grand Cairo in Egypt, to Mecca in Arabia, cannot, by any one that is acquainted either with ancient or modern history, be denied : And had the sole intent of the cloudy pillar been to guide and conduct the Israelites in their journies, there might have been more grounds for asserting, that it was a mere machine of human contrivance, and had nothing miraculous or supernatural in it. But when it shall appear, that this pillar of a cloud was of much greater use to the children of Israel, than barely to conduct them ; that in it resided a superiour power, upon whom the name and attributes of God are conferred ; that from it proceeded oracles, and directions what the people

(*f*) Exod. xxxiii. 20 &c.

(*g*) Chap. xxxii. 32.

were

were to do, and plagues and punishments, when they had done amiss; and that to it are ascribed such motions and actions, as cannot, with any propriety of speech, be applied to any natural fire; it will from hence, I hope, be concluded, that this guidance of the cloud was a real miracle; its substance quite different from that of portable fire preceding armies; and its conductor something more than a mere man.

The first mention that is made of this phænomenon, is in the thirteenth chapter of Exodus, where Moses, describing the rout which the Israelites pursued, tells us, that they (b) took their journey from Succoth, and incamped at Etham, at the edge of the wilderness, and the Lord went before them, by day, in a pillar of a cloud, and, by night, in a pillar of fire: And what we are to understand by the Lord, that went before them, we are advertised in another place; (i) Behold I send my angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee unto the place, which I have prepared: Beware of him, and obey his voice; provoke him not, for he will not pardon thy transgression, for my name is in him; i. e. my name Jehovah, which is the proper and incommunicable title of God. Another place wherein we find this pillar of a cloud mentioned, is in the 14th chapter; (k) and the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed, and went behind them, and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them, and it came between the camp of the Egyptians, and the camp of Israel, and was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light to these. There is, in the same book, another place where this pillar is taken notice of; and that is, in the 33d chapter, where God, being highly offended at the people's impiety in making the golden calf, refuses to conduct them any longer himself, and proposes to depute an angel to supply his place: (l) When the people heard these evil tidings they mourned;—and it came to pass, as Moses entered into the tabernacle, the cloudy pillar descended, and stood at the door of the tabernacle, and the Lord talked with Moses. All the people saw the cloudy pillar at the tabernacle door, and they rose up, and worshipped every man at his tent door. We have occasion to mention but one place more, and that is in the 16th chapter of Numbers, where the people murmured for the loss of Korah and

A. M.  
2513, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1491, &c.  
from Exod.  
ch. xiii. to  
xxxiv. 24.

(b) Numb. xxxiii. 5, 6. (i) Exod. xxiii. 20, 21. (k) Ver. 19, 20. (l) Chap. xxxiii. 4, etc.

A. M. 2513, &c.  
Ant. Chris. 1491, &c.  
from Exod. ch. xiii. to xxxiv. 24.

his company: (m) *And it came to pass, that when the congregation was gathered against Moses, and against Aaron, they looked towards the tabernacle of the congregation, and behold the cloud covered it, and the glory of the Lord appeared, and Moses and Aaron came before the the tabernacle of the congregation; and the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Get you up from among the congregation, that I may consume them, as in a moment, and they fell upon their faces; and Moses said unto Aaron, take a censer, and put fire therein from off the altar, and put on incense, and go quickly into the congregation, and make an atonement for them, for there is wrath gone out from the Lord, the plague is begun.* Now, from a bare recital of these passages, we cannot but observe, that the Israelites pillar made quite another appearance than any combustible matter, when set on fire, and carried upon a pole, can be supposed to do; that in this pillar resided a person of divine character and perfections, and therefore called *the Lord, the angel, the angel of the Lord, and the angel of his presence, &c.*; that this person was invested with a power of demanding homage and observance, of both punishing and pardoning transgressions, and to whom, even Moses and Aaron, (as well as the rest of the congregation), might fall down on their faces, and pay obeisance, without the imputation of idolatry. The whole tenour of the narration, in short, seems to denote, that every one in the congregation looked upon the pillar as something awful and tremendous, and the person residing therein above the rank and dignity of any created essence: and therefore the most general opinion is, that he to whom these divine appellations, divine powers, and divine honours are ascribed, was the eternal Son of God, with a troop of blessed angels attending him in bright and luminous forms; and who, either by the display or contraction of their forms, could make the cloud they inhabited either condense or expand itself, either put on a dark or radiant appearance, according as the great Captain of their host signified his pleasure. For to suppose that mere fire, without any supernatural direction, could appear in different forms at the same time, with darkness to one sort of people, and light to another, is a thing incongruous to its nature.

For how many purposes this miraculous pillar might serve the Israelites, it would be presumption to determine;

(m) Numb. xvi. 42, &c.

but

but this we may say with safety, — That besides its guiding them in their journey, (*n*) it was of use to defend them from their enemies, that they might not assault them; of use to cover them from the heat of the sun in the wilderness, where there were few trees, and no houses to shelter them; and of use to convey the divine will, and to be, as it were, a standing oracle whereunto they might resort upon all occasions. In this cloud, we are told expressly, that (*o*) the Lord appeared from the tabernacle; from this cloud, that (*p*) he called Aaron and Miriam to come before him; and out of this cloud again, that he sent forth the express of his wrath, as well as the tokens of his love, among the whole congregation: And therefore this cloud could, at that time, be nothing else but the vehicle of God, as we may call it, or the place of his majestic appearance. Nor is the conjecture improbable, that that from this very instance the poets first took the hint of making their gods descend in a cloud, and arrayed with a bright effulgency.

A. M.  
2513, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1491, &c.  
from Exod.  
ch. xiii. to  
xxxiv. 24.

However this be, it is certain, that the Jews were persuaded of the divinity of their guide; otherwise they would not have expressed such undissembled sorrow and concern, upon hearing the news of his intention to leave them: Nor could Moses, with all his authority, have ever prevailed with them to wander so long in the wilderness, exposed to so many dangers and hardships, had they been satisfied, that it was no more than a man, with some fire, elevated upon a pole, that was their conductor. It may be allowed indeed, that a multitude of such fiery machines might be of service to an army in a march; but the thing is utterly inconceivable, how a company of six hundred thousand men, besides women and children, and no small number of associates, together with all their cattle, could receive any great benefit from only one of these, which at a moderate distance, would diminish into a small light, and at a larger be quite lost; or every moment, was in danger of being blown aside by the wind, or extinguished by the rain.

The Scriptures every where represent the Israelites going out of Egypt with a high hand, marching in a regular order, and (*q*) *covered by God, in the day, with a cloud, and led, all the night through, with a light of fire*; but

(*n*) Patrick's Commentary. (*o*) Deut. xxxi. 13. (*p*) Numb. xii. 5. (*q*) Psal. lxxviii. 14. and cv. 39.

A. M.  
2513, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1491, &c.  
from Exod.  
ch. xiii. to  
xxxiv. 24.

a sufficient company of link-boys, placed in a regular order, to illuminate each column as they moved, would have certainly been of more use, and made a much better appearance, than this pretended mixture of smoke and flame smothering, from an iron-pot, at the end of a long pole. For, from my heart, I cannot conceive what manner of comparison there can be between the dark, fuliginous smoke arising from a culinary fire, and the glorious, heavenly, and bright appearance of (r) *that burning pillar of fire, which*, (as the author of the book of Wisdom expresses it), *was both a guide of their unknown journey, and an harmless fun to entertain them honourably.*

Why God  
led the Is-  
raelites a-  
side, thro'  
the wilder-  
ness.

The Scripture indeed assigns but one reason for God's conducting the Israelites by the way of the wilderness (which was so much about) to the land of Canaan, and that is,—an apprehension that the Philistines (through whose country they were to go) being a bold and warlike people, would, in all probability, have disputed the passage with them, which the others, destitute of arms, (as they were), and having their spirits broken with a long servitude, were in no condition to make good : But as the Almighty Power of their conductor was sufficient to make them superior to all such obstacles, we may well suppose that a farther end which the Divine Providence might have herein, was to manifest his glory and goodness, by his constant attendance upon them in this luminous appearance, and by the many wonderful works which he did, to oblige them to his service.

According to the course of the country, Moses might have marched the people a much shorter way ; but then, we had heard nothing of the *angel of God's presence* visibly preceding them ; nothing of his dividing the sea to facilitate their passage ; nothing of his overwhelming their enemies in those very floods, which to them were a kind of wall on each side ; nothing of his drawing out rivers of water from the stony rock ; nothing of his (s) *sending down manna upon them, and giving them food from heaven ;* nothing of his *raining flesh, as thick as dust, and feathered fowls, like as the sand of the sea ;* nothing of his amazing descent upon Mount Sinai, when, in the lofty words of the Psalmist, (t) *he bowed the heavens, and came down, and it was dark under his feet ; he rode upon the cherubims,*

(r) Wisd. xviii. 3.  
xviii. 9, &c.

(s) Psal. lxxviii. 24, &c.

(t) Psal.

and

and did fly; he came flying upon the wings of the wind; he made darkness his secret place, his pavilion round about him with dark water, and thick clouds to cover him: there went a smoky out of his presence, hail-stones, and coals of fire, so that the earth trembled and quaked, the very foundations also of the hills shook, and were removed. The wilderness in short was the scene which God had made choice of for the display of his almighty power and goodness: There it was, that he laid bare his arm, as he calls it, to the Israelites; that every day he took care of their meat and drink, and indeficiency of their cloathing; and had he not detained them there so long, he had not been so kind: It may be considered farther, that before this people were to be admitted into the possession of the inheritance which God had promised them, all matters were to be adjusted between him and them; and to this purpose laws were to be given, ordinances instituted, and covenants sealed; but a work of this importance could no where be so commodiously transacted, as in the retirement of the wilderness. Here it was that God, in the bush, talking with Moses, gave it as a token of his promise, that the people, after their deliverance, should come to mount Horeb, and (u) there worship him; and fit it was that such an engagement on God's part should now receive its accomplishment. And since it was no more than requisite, that a nation designed for such peculiar favours from God, should be held some time in a state of probation, before they were admitted to it, and until the people, whom they were appointed to reject, had filled up the measure of their iniquity, and were ripe for extirpation; therefore it is, that Moses calls upon them (x) to remember all the way, which the Lord their God led them, for these forty years, in the wilderness, to humble them, and to prove them, and to know what was in their hearts, whether they would keep his commandments or no.

These commandments, it must be owned, were delivered to the Israelites with all the ensigns of horror, which the Psalmist so lately quoted has described; but that there is no ground to suspect any deceit in this wonderful occurrence, is manifest from Moses's dealing so openly with the people in this matter, and suffering them to go up into the mountain, after the Lord had departed from it.

(u) Exod. xiii. 12. (x) Deut. viii. 2.

A. M. 2513, &c.  
Ant. Chris. 1491, &c.  
from Exod. ch. xiii. to xxxiv. 24.

A. M.  
2513, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1491, &c.  
from Exod.  
ch. xiii. to  
xxxiv. 24.

(y) *When the trumpet soundeth long, they shall come up to the mount.* This is the signal which God himself gives them; whereas, had there been any fallacy in the phænomenon, Moses would have debarred them from going up for ever. And therefore, as we need not doubt but that several upon this signal went up, we cannot but think, that the cheat would have soon been discovered, had there been any marks of a natural irruption of fire discernible upon the top of the mountain.

Those who give us an account of vulcanos, or burning mountains, do all agree in this, (as the nature of the thing indeed seems to require it), (z) that on their tops they have always an open mouth, (which the ancients called *crater*), through which they belch out their flames; and that after the fire is expended, it will still appear in the form of a monstrous gap, even unto the end of the world. And therefore, since all travellers, both ancients and modern, who have taken an accurate survey \* of the mount Sinai,

(y) Exod. xix. 13. (z) Nicholl's Conference, part 2. p. 279.

\* The mountains of Sinai and Horeb are promiscuously used by the sacred historian, by reason of their contiguity; and yet it is certain, that they are two different places. Sinai (which the Arabians at this day call *Tor*, or *the Mountain*, by way of eminence, or otherwise, *Gibel Moufa*, the *Mount of Moses*) stands in a kind of peninsula, formed by two arms of the Red-sea, one of which stretches out towards the north, and is called the *Gulf of Golsom*; the other towards the east, and is called the *Gulf of Elan*, or the *Elanitish Sea*. Sinai is at least one third part higher than Horeb, and of a much more difficult ascent; whose top terminates in an uneven and rugged space, capable of containing about 60 persons. Here (as we said) is built the little chapel of St. Catharine, where it is thought that the body of this saint rested for 330 years, but was afterwards removed to the church which is at the foot of the mountain. Not far from this chapel issues out a fountain of good fresh water, which is looked upon as miraculous, because it is not conceivable how water can rise from the brow of so high a mountain. Horeb is to the west of Sinai, so that at sun-rising the shadow of Sinai entirely covers Horeb. At the foot of this mount there is a fountain, which supplies water to the monastery of St. Catharine; and about six paces from it, they shew us a stone about four or five feet high, and three broad, which, as they tell us, is the very same from whence Moses caused the waters to gush out. It is of a spotted grey colour, stands by  
itself,



Sinai, could never discern the least appearance of any such gap, but on the contrary, a continued surface, whereon there stands at present a little chapel of St. Catharine ; all this supposed contrivance of Moses, to make a natural vulcano pass upon the people for the majestic presence of God upon the sacred mount, can be deemed no other than a crude, nonsensical fiction, wherein the lovers of infidelity are fond to shew their ignorance, as well as their malice, when they pretend to tax this relation of Moses, representing God's appearance in a flame of fire, in thunder, and lightning, &c. with any incongruity, or invent any groundless stories to account for it ; since nothing can be more agreeable to the ancient divinity, or common notions of the Heathen world, \* than that the apparition of their gods, whenever they descend upon the earth, is usually attended with such like harbingers.

A. M.  
2513, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1491, &c.  
from Exod.  
ch xiii. to  
xxxiv. 24.

Sundry law-givers, no doubt, have protended to a familiarity with their respective deities, as well as Moses did with the God of Israel ; but (besides the attestation of

No incongruity in these laws.

itself, as it were, and where no other rock appears, and has twelve holes about a foot wide, from whence it is thought that the water came forth which the Israelites did drink ; *Galmet's Dictionary*, under the word *Sinai*.

\* That fire and lightning should attend the presence of God is a notion so frequent in the most ancient and oriental theology, that it might possibly give occasion to the worship of fire among the Chaldeans and Persians : to the magi, among the Cappadocians called *Purrethi*, which Strabo mentions, and to the vestal fires among the Greeks and Romans, as well as ancient Britons.

Ἡνία βλάψης μορφῆς ἁγερῶν πῦρ  
Λαμπόμενον σκισθηδὸν ὅλας καὶ βένθει Κόσμου  
Κλύθι πυρὸς φωνήν.

Say the Chaldaic oracles : and as for earth-quakes, or shaking of mountains, this is no more than what all nations suppose have ever come to pass, upon God's manifesting himself at any time ; for it is not only the Psalmist who tells us, that *the earth shook and the heaven dropped at the presence of God* ; but in the description which Virgil gives us of the approach of Phoebus, he does in a manner translate the words of Moses.

—— Tremere omnia visa, repente,

Luminaque, laurusque Dei ; totusque moveri  
Mons circum, et mugire adytis cortina reclusis.

Vide Niehoff's Conference, part 2.  
miracles

A. M. miracles in his favour, which none of them laid any claim  
 2513, &c. to) we may venture to put his character upon this issue,  
 Ant. Chris. viz. the excellency of his laws, above what Athens, or  
 1491, &c. Lacedemon, or even Rome itself ever had to produce. For  
 from Exod. what a complete system of all religious and social virtues  
 ch. xiii. to do the ten commandments, delivered on the mount, contain,  
 xxxiv. 24. taking them (as we ought to do) in their positive, as well  
 as negative sense! In the second of these indeed, there is  
 a passage, of *God's visiting the sins of the fathers upon the  
 children*, which seems to bear a little hard upon his mercy  
 and justice; but this is entirely owing to the mistake of our  
 translation: For if the preposition *lamed*, and *hal*, which  
 we there render *upon*, may, (a) according to the sense of  
 some critics, be rendered *by*, or *in favour of*; then may  
 the words now under consideration be properly translated,  
*God's punishing the wickedness of the father*, BY OR IN  
 FAVOUR of the children. In the former of these senses,  
 (b) David's murder and adultery was justly punished by  
 his favourite, but wicked son Absalom; and in the latter,  
 the meaning will be, that God frequently inflicts remarkable  
 judgments upon a wicked father, in order to deter his chil-  
 dren, even to the third and fourth generation, from the  
 like provocations.

Nor in the  
 appoint-  
 ment of  
 cities of  
 refuge.

What more just, as well as merciful constitution could  
 there be devised, than to ordain cities of refuge for the  
 innocent manslayer to fly to, thereby to avoid the rage and  
 ungovernable fury of the dead man's relations, (who, ac-  
 cording to the custom of these times, were wont imme-  
 diately to revenge their kindred's death), and thereby to  
 gain time to prepare a plea in his own vindication; which,  
 if it was found insufficient, and the man adjudged guilty of  
 wilful murder, could not, according to the tenour of the  
 same law, secure him from being dragged even (c) *from the  
 horns of the altar*.

*An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth*, may seem  
 to us, who live under a milder dispensation, a rigid and se-  
 vere decree; but then we may observe, that it was no  
 more than what was thought reasonable in other na-  
 tions, and obtained a place among \* the celebrated Ro-

(a) Le Clerc's Commentary, in locum. V (b) 2. Sam. xi. and  
 some following chapters. (c) Exod. xxi. 14.

\* Aulus Gellius sets down this law of the twelve tables in  
 this manner. SI MEMBRUM RUPERIT. NI. CUM EO. PACIT.  
 TALIO. ESTO; *Nell. Attic. lib. 20. c. 1.*

man laws of the twelve tables. It was in some measure necessary to restrain quarrelsome and unruly tempers from violence; and, in case that death did not ensue, the law was always mitigated, and the *talis* committed for a pecuniary mulct.

Several of the Jewish laws, which to us may seem frivolous, had a valid reason for their institution at first, if it were but to discriminate them from other nations, and to guard them against the common infection of idolatry. The wearing of linsley-woolsey was probably a proud, fantastical fashion of the Heathens at that time, which the Jews were forbid to imitate. An ox and an ass were not to be coupled together in the same carriage, with this merciful intent, that one beast of greater strength might not strain a poor creature of less beyond its ability; and as sowing the ground with mixed seeds, in some men's opinion, is an effectual way to wear it out, it was therefore a practice prohibited, in commiseration (if I may so say) to our mother earth, as well as to set bounds to the husband-man's covetousness; though, as others imagine, these three injunctions, as they stand altogether in the same place, might perhaps have something emblematical in them, besides the precept, to make men have a greater abhorrence of all venereal mixtures, contrary to nature.

It is an injunction which God often inculcates to his people the Jews, (*d*) *After the doing of the land of Egypt, wherein ye dwelt, ye shall not do; and after the doing of the land of Canaan, whither I bring you, ye shall not do: I am the Lord your God, ye shall therefore keep my statutes, and my judgements*; which words seem to imply, not only that the idolatrous rites of the Gentiles were forbidden, but that those of God's appointment were made in direct opposition to them: and to this purpose we find (*e*) the Roman historian representing the Jews as a people whose religious rites were so contrary to all the world besides, that what in others was most sacred, they accounted profane, and allowed as lawful what other nations were wont to abominate.

Now, if the Mosaic laws and ceremonies were given to the Jews, as barriers against idolatry, and formally repugnant to the customs of the Heathens, we may appeal to any sober and considerate man, whether it be consistent with good sense, or congruous to truth and reason, that

A. M. 2513, &c. Ant. Chris. 1491, &c. from Exod. ch. xiii. to xxxiv. 24. Valid reasons for seemingly frivolous laws.

No resemblance between the Egyptian and Jewish ceremonies.

(*d*) Lev. xviii. 3, 4.  
VOL. II.

(*e*) Tacitus, l. viii. c. 4.  
3 E

A. M. God should make laws exactly contrary to the Egyptians  
 2513, &c. and other Pagan nations, shewing thereby, that he hated  
 Ant. Christ. the very semblance of their rites, and yet at the same time  
 1491, &c. take the rise of his institutions from the customs and prac-  
 tice of these Pagans: Nay, whether it gives us not such an  
 from, Exod. ch. xiii. to  
 xxxiv. 24. idea of God, as reverence to his tremendous majesty will  
 not suffer me to name, (f) to represent him making up all  
 the vain, ludicrous, superstitious, impious, impure, ido-  
 latrous, magical, and diabolical customs, which had been  
 first invented, and afterwards practised by the most barbarous  
 nations, and out of these patching up a great part of  
 the religion which he appointed his own people.

It cannot well otherwise be, but that, in matters of tra-  
 dition, which have equally descended among all nations  
 perhaps from Noah, a man of some learning and fancy  
 may form a similitude between the religious rites and usages  
 of one people with another; but it would really rack  
 one's invention to find out the great agreement between  
 the Jewish high priest and the Egyptian chief justice;  
 since the *Urim* and *Thummim* of the one was a piece of  
 cloth, about a span square, beset with Jewels, but the *Ala-  
 thea* (as they call it) of the other, was a golden medal, re-  
 presenting the figure of a bird; since the robe of the one  
 was made of scarlet, blue, and purple, woollen cloth, on-  
 ly embroidered with wreaths of fine linen; but the garment  
 of the other was made of linen only, because it was unlaw-  
 ful, (g) as Herodotus tells us, for the Egyptian magistrates  
 to wear any thing else.

When the tables of the covenant were delivered to Mo-  
 ses, it seems no more than requisite that some care should  
 be taken of them; and if so, what could be a more appo-  
 site contrivance for that purpose than a chest? Moses, e-  
 ven by his enemies, is reputed a very cunning man; but  
 they certainly mean it as a compliment, and not his due,  
 if they think him not capable of so small a contrivance as  
 this, without copying from the Egyptian *cista*, wherein the  
 priests were wont to lock up their religious trinkets from  
 the eyes of the vulgar: And as for the Cherubims which  
 overshadowed this ark, there certainly seems nothing ana-  
 logous, but rather a particular opposition in these to the  
 Egyptian idolatry. For whereas their temples were gene-

(f) Edward's Survey of religion, vol. 1.  
 c. 37.

(g) Lib. 2.

rally filled with the images of monkeys, calves and serpents, the representations of real animals, which (according to the natural Deism of those times) they fancied to be parts and exhibitions of the Deity; Moses here † orders figures to be made, which had little or no resemblance of any thing in the world, and were expressive of the angelical nature only, which every one knew was subordinate to God's. So little congruity is there to be found between the Egyptian and Jewish laws and ceremonies, \* less perhaps than might be discovered in several other nations, were we disposed to be prolix upon this subject. But let us return to their legislator.

A. M.  
2513, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1491, &c.  
from Exod.  
ch. xiii. to  
xxxiv. 24.

† What the particular figure of these cherubims was, it is hard to imagine at this distance. Grotius indeed, and some others, have ingeniously conjectured, from the creatures seen by Ezekiel in his vision, chap. i. 5. and x. 15. which he calls *cherubim*, that they had the face of a man, the wings of an eagle, the mane of a lion, and the feet of an ox; and by this they will have the dispensations of Divine Providence, by the ministry of angels, symbolically represented; the lion exhibiting the severity of his justice; the eagle the celerity of his bounty; the man his goodness and mercy; and the ox the slowness of his punishment which comes (as the Greek proverb says) *βούτι ποδι, with an ox's foot*; *Nicholls's Conference, part 2.*

\* To this purpose, we are informed, that the brachmans, the Indian priests, wear bells about them like the Jewish high-priest, were only allowed to go into the inward part of the temple, and were like him obliged to marry virgins. Slaves there have their ears bored through; a perpetual light is kept in their temples, and cakes are set before their idols like shew-bread. Nay, even the barbarous Tartars have many things not unlike the Jews; for they celebrate their new moons with songs and computations; they bewail their dead thirty days; they breed no hogs, and punish adultery with death. The like may be said of the people of the new world. Those of Jucatan are circumcised; those of Mexico keep a perpetual fire in the temples; and the Charibbeans celebrate the new moon with the sound of a trumpet, and abstain from swine's flesh: And therefore, if a similitude in ceremonies is admitted as a valid argument, we may as well say, that the Jews had their laws and religious ordinances from any of these, as that they had them from the Egyptians; *Nicholls's Conference, part 2.*

A. M.  
2513, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1491, &c.  
from Exod.  
ch. xiii. to  
xxxiv. 24.  
pression  
concerning  
God vindic-  
ated.

That God, who is a pure spirit, eternal and omnipresent, has neither body nor parts, nor any affections thereunto belonging, is a proposition which our reason cannot but assent to: and yet when we set ourselves to explain (as we call it) the divine nature and attributes, we soon find ourselves under a necessity to borrow expressions from corporeal beings, the better to accommodate the loftiness of our subject to our readers comprehension: For unless we could contrive a perfect set of new words, there is no speaking at all of the Deity without using our old ones in a tralatitious sense. Providence and mercy, for instance, are two known attributes of God; but if we respect their original use, and do not take them in a metaphorical meaning, they are altogether as absurd, when applied to God, as are his eye, or hand, or back-parts, in their grossest sense. For how improper is it, literally speaking, to say, that God looks before him, like men when they act cautiously; or that he has that relenting of heart, or yearning of bowels, which merciful men feel at the sight of a miserable object? The truth is, languages were composed to maintain an intercourse with one another, and not to treat of the nature of that being who dwelleth in light that is inaccessible. No form of words, be they never so exquisite and well chosen, can reach those transcendent perfections that are unutterable; and therefore, if we consider the low capacity of the people to whom the great poverty of the language, in which, and the vast sublimity of the subject, about which Moses wrote, we shall have less occasion to blame this metaphorical way of expressing the divine nature, which, upon experiment, he certainly found best adapted, both to inform the understanding, and animate the affections of the people; while a number of dry, scholastic, and abstracted terms, would have laid flat upon their minds, and served only to amuse and confound them.

Though therefore it must be acknowledged, that there is indeed an impropriety in language, when corporeal parts or actions are imputed to the Deity; yet since the narrowness of the Hebrew tongue would not furnish Moses with a sufficiency of abstract terms, and the dulness of the people (had he had a sufficiency) would not have permitted him to employ them, he was under a necessity of speaking according to the common usage, which was secured from giving the people any gross ideas of God, be-  
cause

cause these phrases were always understood to be spoken A. M. 2513, &c. Ant. Christ. 1491, &c. from Exod. ch. xiii. to xxxiv. 24.  
*ἀνθρώπων παθεῖς*; and therefore (b) a Jewish rabbin acquaints us, that whenever they meet with an expression concerning the Deity of this nature, they are used to interpose a *cabaical*, or, if *I may so speak*.

Interpreters indeed are at some variance what we are to understand by the *hand*, *face*, and *hinder parts* of God. “The face of God, (i) (says an ingenious glossary), signifies his essence, before the beginning of the world, and his hinder-parts, his creation and providence, in the “government of the world:” But (k) Maimonides is of opinion, that these words may be interpreted according to the *targum*; viz. That God made his majesty, *i. e.* an exceedingly bright representation of himself, (though not in its full glory), pass before Moses, in so much splendour, as human nature could bear, which may be termed his *back-parts*; but not in his unveiled brightness, which may signify his *face*, and (as the apostle speaks) is *inaccessible*; and (l) the *hand*, wherewith God covered him, while he passed by, may probably denote a *cloud*, which God cast about him, that he might not be struck dead by the inconceivable force and refulgency of those rays which came from the face, or full lustre of the Divine Majesty.

In this sense the ancient Jews could not but understand their legislator, when they found him conveying sublime truths under outward and sensible representations. For, to clear him from all unjust imputation, we need but call to mind the glorious descriptions he gives, almost every where, but especially in Deuteronomy, of the Deity, and what pains he takes to deter them from making any representation of it, under any form whatever, by reminding them; that when God was pleased to display his glory upon Mount Sinai, at the delivering of the ten commandments, they saw no shape or likeness, but only heard his dreadful voice. (m) These so frequent inculcations may therefore be looked upon as so many intimations given them, in what sense they were to understand all those other expressions which he had been forced to accommodate to their capacity, *i. e.* not in a literal, but in such a one, as was becoming the Deity, and suitable to the dignity of the subject.

(b) Quoted by Hottinger in his Dissert. Theolog. Philol.  
 (i) Elias Cretensis. (k) More Nevoc. part 1. c. 21. (l) Patrick's Commentary on Exod. xxxiii. (m) Universal Hist. lib. 1. c. 7.

A. M.  
2513, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1491, &c.  
from Exod  
ch. xiii to  
xxxiv. 24.  
And con-  
cerning  
himself  
justified.

Moses, no doubt, was a good governour, and zealously affected for the welfare of his people: But we injure his memory much, if we think him hither so ignorant of a future state, or so negligent of his own salvation, as to wish himself damned, in his deprecation of God's judgments, for their salvation. The case is this.—The Israelites, in making a golden calf to worship, had highly offended God: God renounces all relation to them, and, in his displeasure, threatens either to abandon or destroy them; whereupon Moses intercedes for their pardon, and among other motives makes use of this: (n) *Oh, my God, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold; yet now, if thou wilt, forgive their sins; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of the book which thou hast written:* (o) Not that God stands in need of a book wherein to register or record any of his purposes: \* But the Scripture makes use of this form of expression, in allusion to the custom of numbering the people, and setting down their names in a scroll, or register, (p) as Moses did, at their coming out of the land of Egypt. The same method was likewise observed at the return from the Babylonish captivity, as may be seen in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah; and those who were inrolled in this book, are

(n) Exod. xxxii. 32. (o) Patrick's Commentary in locum.

\* To this purpose the Royal Psalmist, in relation to his own formation in the womb, bespeaks God, and says, *Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect, and in thy book were all my members written;* as if God kept a catalogue of the children that were born, Psal. cxxxix. 16. And again, speaking of wicked men, he says, *Let them be wiped out of the book of the living, and not be written among the righteous,* Psal. lxi. 28. Nor is this form of speech to be found only among sacred writers, but even Plautus himself, having occasion, in one of his prologues, to take some notice of the Divine Providence, makes use of these words:

Qui falsas lites falsis testimoniis  
Petunt, quique in jure abjurant pecuniam,  
Eorum referimus nomina exscripta ad Jovem.  
Quotidie ille scit, quis hic quærit malum,  
Qui hic litem apisci postulent injuriâ  
Mali, res falsas qui impetrant apud judicem:  
Bonos in aliis tabulis exscriptos habet:

*Le Clerc's Comment. ad Exod. c. 32.*

(p) Numb. i.

said



said (q) *to be written for life, or among the living*, because every year they blotted out of this catalogue the names of those that were dead.

A. M.  
2513, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1491, &c.  
from Exod.  
ch. xiii. to  
xxxiv. 24.

According to this construction of the phrase, (and this is certainly the true construction), Moses can by no means be supposed to wish his own damnation, which would look like an enthusiastic rant, rather than divine inspiration ; which would be impious for him to ask, and unrighteous for God to do ; but only that, “ rather than live to see the calamities which would befall the people, in case God should either desert or destroy them, he desires to be discharged from life, that so he may escape the shock of so woful, so terrible a spectacle.”

In a former communion with God, wherein he threatens either to extirpate or disinherit his people, he promises Moses to (r) *make of him a greater nation, and mightier than they* ; but, instead of that, Moses here desires to die with them ; and, as a learned father of the church observes, “ (s) there is a great deal of pious art and policy in the petition or proposal (as we may call it), which this great favourite, and confident of God, offers to him. He does not make it at all adventures, as one less acquainted with the divine mind might do ; nor does he make it out of a slight and contempt of life, as one whose circumstances had brought him into despair might do. He knew God’s goodness was infinite, as well as his justice ; so that, in this alternative, *either be thou pleased to slay me and them together, or to spare them and me together*, he was sensible he should engage God’s mercy to pardon the criminals, whilst, on their behalf, he devoted himself at the same time to that justice, which cannot be supposed capable of hurting the innocent.”

One great commendation which we have frequently remarked of the author of the Pentateuch, above any other historian, is, that he consults truth more than plausibility in his narrations, and conceals no material point, even though it tends to the dishonour of the people whose actions he is recording. Josephus wrote the Jewish history of these times, as well as Moses ; and yet, when he comes to the proper period, he quite conceals their blind idolatry in worshipping the golden calf : Whereas Moses relates it

(q) Isaiah iv. 3.  
epist. 21.

(r) Numb. xiv. 12,

(s) Paulin.

A. M.  
2513, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1491, &c.  
from Exod.  
ch. xiii. to  
xxxiv. 24.

How Aaron  
was indu-  
ced to make  
the people  
an idol.

in all its aggravating circumstances, and seems to fix, in a manner, the whole odium of it upon his brother Aaron. And therefore, to inform ourselves how far Aaron was culpable in this particular, we must attend a little to the probable occasion of it.

While Moses was gone up into the mount, he appointed Aaron and Hur to be the rulers of the people in his absence; but as his absence proved longer than was expected, the people began to be uneasy. They saw *the glory of the Lord, which was like a devouring fire on the top of the mount*, and thereupon they concluded that Moses, who tarried so long, was certainly destroyed in the flames. They saw too, that the *pillar of the cloud*, which used to conduct them in their marches, was gone, and in no likelihood of returning again; and hereupon, having lost their guide, and the visible token of God's presence among them, they came unto Aaron, and, in a tumultuous manner, demanded of him to make them another representation of the divine presence, in the room of what was departed from them. (t) Up, say they, and make us gods; or, (as the Hebrew text will bear †), *make us a God which shall go before us*. (u) Not that they were so stupid as to imagine, that the true God could be made by any man, or that any image could be a means of conducting them, either forward into Canaan, or back again into Egypt; but what they wanted, was some outward object to supply the want of the cloud, by being a type and symbol of the Deity, and where they might depose the homage which they intended to pay to the supreme God; for so some of the Jewish doctors have expounded the text of Moses: (x) *They*

(t) Exod. xxxii. 1.

† It has been argued by some learned men, that the Israelites intended here to fall entirely into the Egyptian religion, and that the Deity they made the calf to, was some god of the Egyptians; but to me, this seems not to be the fact. In this calf, the Israelites evidently designed to worship the God who brought them out of the land of Egypt, and accordingly their feast was proclaimed not to any Egyptian deity, but to the Lord, to Jehovah, their own God, Exod. xxxii. 4. So that their idolatry consisted not really worshipping a false deity, but in making an image to the true and living God, which the second commandment expressly did forbid; *Shuckford's Connection*, vol. 3. lib. 11.

(u) Saurin's Dissertations.  
Cozri, part 1. sect. 97.

(x) R. Jehudah, in lib.

*desired*

*desired a sensible object of divine worship to be set before them, not with an intention to deny God, who brought them out of Egypt, but that something in the place of God, might stand before them, when they declared his wonderful works.*

A. M.  
2513, &c  
Ant. Christ.  
1491, &c.  
from Exod.  
ch. xiii. to  
xxxiv. 24.

The commandment against making images had so lately, in so terrible a manner, been enjoined by God himself, that though some reason may be given why the children of Israel were so forward to make the demand, yet none can be imagined, why Aaron should comply with it, without making any remonstrance; and yet we meet with no refusal recorded by Moses. All that we have in extenuation of Aaron's fault, is from the suggestion of the Rabbins, who pretended that his compliance proceeded from his fear; that the people had † murdered Hur the other deputy, for opposing their desire; that to discourage them from pursuing their design, Aaron demanded all their golden earrings, in hopes that they would not insist upon having an idol which would cost them so dear; but that when nothing would avail, he took their gold, and cast it into the fire, and, contrary to his intention, by some magical or diabolical art, there immediately came out a calf, which much increased the peoples superstition. But this, and abundance more of the like nature, seem to be conceits invented for the excuse of Aaron, who is plainly enough said to have (y) *made this molten calf*, which he could not have done, without designing it, and running the gold into a mould of that figure.

The word which we here render *calf*, (z) does, in other places of Scripture, signify *an ox*: And as an ox's head was, in some countries, an emblem of strength, and the horns a common sign of kingly power; so (a) a learn-

And why it was a calf.

† What authority they had for these assertions, I cannot say; but if what they offer be true, this does not at all prove Aaron to be innocent; because no obstinacy of the people could have forced him without his own fault, and he should have been willing, and adventured to die, rather than, by a timorous compliance, have made himself partaker of their sins.

Justum et tenacem propositi virum,  
Non civium ardor prava jubentium,  
Non vultus instantis tyranni

Mente quatit solida, &c.

Hor. Carm. lib. 3. ode 2.

(y) Exod. xxxii. 35. (z) Psal. cvi. 20. (a) Patrick in his Comment *in locum*.

A. M.  
2513, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1491, &c.  
from Exod.  
ch. xii. to  
xxxiv. 24.

ed prelate, but of a design to apologize for Aaron, is willing to insinuate, that his design in making an ox the symbol of the divine presence, was to remind the Israelites of the power of God, and to express the great tokens which they had seen of it, in their wonderful deliverance. But how ingenious soever this hypothesis may be, it wants this foundation for its support, that this hieroglyphic of the divine power was not in use in the time of Moses; for if it was, we cannot imagine why Aaron, when called to an account by his brother, should forget to plead it in excuse for himself; or why God should be so highly incensed against him, had his design been only to exhibit a symbol of the divine power and authority to a people of too gross sentiments, without such a visible representation, ever to comprehend it.

Another learned prelate of our own, (b) equally inclined to excuse this action of Aaron, supposes that he took his pattern from part of what he saw on the holy Mount, when the Shechinah of God came down upon it, attended with angels, some of which were cherubims, or angels appearing in the form of oxen: But this opinion is inconsistent with the great care which was taken on Mount Sinai, not to furnish any pretext for idolatry, and the caution which Moses gives the people to that purpose, (c) *Take ye therefore good heed to yourselves (for ye saw no manner of similitude, on the day that the Lord spake unto you in Horeb, out of the midst of the fire), lest ye corrupt yourselves, and make you a graven image, the similitude of any figure, the likeness of any male or female, the likeness of any beast that is on the earth; the likeness of any winged fowl that flieth in the air; the likeness of any thing that creepeth on the ground; the likeness of any fish, &c.* where the Holy Spirit enumerates animals of all kinds, and positively assures us, that none of their forms or figures appeared upon the mount.

The most common therefore, and indeed the most probable opinion is, that Aaron made choice of the figure of an ox or calf, in compliance to the prejudice of the people, and because that creature was worshipped in Egypt. That the Israelites were forely infected with the idolatry of the Egyptians, we have many plain proofs (d) from Scrip-

(b) Tenison of idolatry, c. 6.

(c) Deut. iv. 15, &c.

(d) Vid. Josh. xxiv. 14. Ezek. xx. 7, 8. and chap. xxii. 3, 8.

ture to convince us, that all sorts of animals were worshipped by the Egyptians, and among the terrestrial, more especially the ox, is what (e) the several authors, who have treated of the affairs of Egypt, do abundantly testify; and that the idolatry of animals, and more especially of the ox, was established in Egypt during the sojourning of the Israelites in that land, is more than probable from these words of Moses to Pharaoh; (f) *If we sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians before their eyes; i. e. if we sacrifice to our God oxen, sheep, and goats, which the Egyptians worship and adore, and consequently make an abomination to the Lord, will they not stone us?* So that it seems most rational to suppose, that this image was made in compliance to the giddy humour of the people, who, upon the supposed death of Moses, were probably all for returning back again, and in imitation of the Egyptians, who worshipped their idol Apis, or Serapis, not only in a living ox, but in an image made after the similitude of an ox, bethought themselves of the like representation of a deity to go before them: The only question is, Whether the worship of the Egyptian Apis was prior to the formation of this golden calf? Which happens to be a point wherein the (g) the learned are not so well agreed.

Thus have we endeavoured to give a full answer to several objections which have been raised against the sacred historian, during the period which is at present under consideration: And, for a further confirmation hereof, we might now produce some foreign testimonies and traditions concerning the truth and veracy of his narrations. That the miraculous pillar, for instance, which conducted the Israelites in the wilderness, very probably gave rise to the ancient fables, (h) how Hercules and Bacchus, (who under different shapes, are both supposed to denote Moses) set up pillars in testimony of their travels and expeditions: That the Israelites safe passage over the Red-Sea, upon its being divided by the rod of Moses, and the tradition which the people of Memphis have thereupon, are related by Antiphanus, as he is quoted (i) by Eusebius: That upon the return and conflux of the waters, the

Ant. Christ.  
1491, &c.  
from Exod.  
ch. xiii. to  
xxxiv. 24.

All this confirmed by  
Heathen  
testimony.

(e) Vid. Strabo, lib. 17. De Egyptiacis templis; Herod. lib. 2.; Diod. lib. 1.; et Plutar. de Iside et Osiride. (f) Exod. viii. 26. (g) Vid. Ger. Vof. De idolat. c. 9.; Bochart Hierof. part 1. lib. 2.; and Tenison of idolatry. (h) Huettius, Quæst. Alnet. lib. 2. (i) Præpar. Evang. lib. 9.

A. M. 2513, &c. Ant. Christ. 1491, &c. from Exod. ch. xiii. to xxxiv. 24.

armies which pursued them were swallowed up in the deep, is mentioned (*k*) by Diodorus, as a current story among the people inhabiting the western coast of the Red sea : That on this coast there are several lakes and springs of a salt and brackish taste, in the manner that Moses has recorded, and no such thing found on the other side of the sea, is testified (*l*) by Orosius, as well as several ancient geographers : That God's sending down manna for bread to the Israelites, and great plenty of quails for meat, is mentioned by Antiphanus, as he is cited again (*m*) by Eusebius : That from Moses's striking the rock with his rod, the fable of Bacchus's doing the same with his Thyrsus, in order to extract water for the relief of the virgin Aura, had its original : And (to name no more) that from Moses's receiving the law on Mount Sinai, most of the lawgivers of other nations took the hint to borrow their institutions from some god or goddess or other : Minos, from Jupiter : Lycurgus, from Apollo ; Zeleucus, from Minerva ; Numa, from Egeria, &c. ; so well was the world persuaded of the truth and authority of the Jewish legislator, when they seemed to agree in this,—That even a distant imitation of him was enough to give sanction to their several fictions.

## DISSERTATION I.

### *Of the Israelites passing the Red sea.*

Why this miracle has been disputed.

THE passage of the Israelites through the Red sea is what we have reserved for the subject of our dissertation, because it is one of the most remarkable events in this period, if not in the whole Jewish history ; and yet has had the misfortune to meet with more suggestions against its miraculoufness, than any other that we find upon record.

What has contributed to this perverseness, may not unlikely be the fond conceits which some ancient doctors, both of the Jewish and Christian church, have been pleased to affix to this miracle, *viz.* That God divided the sea, into twelve passages, according to the twelve tribes : That, to facilitate their passage, he pulled up the weeds, removed

(*k*) Lib. 3. p. 174. (*l*) Huetius, Quæst. Alnet. lib. 2.  
(*m*) Prep. Evang. lib. 9. c. 27.

huge stones, levelled the rugged places, and made the sand at the bottom as hard as a rock : That the waters, upon being divided, were immediately congealed, and stood in array, like a wall of glass ; and that some fragments of the Egyptian chariot-wheels may even to this day be seen at the bottom, as far as the sight can reach. For it is not improbable, that in prejudice to these extravagant fancies, others have exercised all their wit and learning to depreciate the miracle, by asserting,——That there was no more in it (even as Josephus himself seems to insinuate) than in Alexander's passing the sea of Pamphylia ; (n) that the Red sea, especially in the extreme part of it, where the Israelites passed, is not above two or three miles over, and very often dry, by reason of the great reflux of the tide ; and that Moses, who perfectly understood the country, and had made his observations upon the flux and reflux of the sea, led down his men at the time of ebb, when, being favoured by a strong wind blowing from the shore, he had the good luck to get safe to the other side ; while Pharaoh and his army, hoping to do the same, but mistaken in their computation, had the misfortune to be lost. And therefore, to give this matter a fair hearing, we shall first endeavour to establish the truth of the miracle, and then examine into the pretensions of those who are willing, either to ascribe it to natural causes, or to compare it with other events (as they suppose) of the like nature.

Without entering far into Moses's character, we will suppose him at present a man of common sense, and who had some honour and modesty in him ; and yet if he had, we can hardly conceive how he durst have recorded so palpable an untruth, (supposing this passage to have nothing miraculous in it), when there was such a multitude of living witnesses to confront him ; or (o) what possible artifice he could use to persuade above two millions of persons, that God, by his hand, had wrought a stupendous miracle, when they knew, as well as he, that there was no such thing transacted. Among such a contumacious and mutinous set of people, Moses must necessarily have made himself ridiculous, and his authority despicable, had he ever once attempted to foist such a fable upon them. And

A. M.  
2513, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1491, &c.  
from Exod.  
ch. xiii. to  
xxxiv. 24.

The reality  
of it.

(n) Vide Le Clerc's Dissertation concerning the passage of the Red sea. (o) Calmet's Dissert. sur le passag. de la Mer rouge.

therefore,

A. M.  
2513, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1491, &c.  
from Exod.  
ch. xiii. to  
xxxiv. 24.

therefore, when we find other sacred writers bearing testimony to what he relates, and relating the matter in the like lofty expressions; when we find the royal Psalmist assuring us, that (p) *God, dividing the sea, made the waters to stand up on an heap, and caused the Israelites to pass through*; when we find the prophet Isaiah demanding, (q) *where is he, that brought them up out of the sea, that led them by the right-hand of Moses, by his glorious arm dividing the water before him, to make him an everlasting name?* When we find the prophet Habakkuk declaring upon this occasion, that (r) *the Lord made himself a road to drive his chariot and horses cross the sea, across the mud of the great waters*; and when we find the author of the book of Wisdom thus recording the story; (s) “Where water stood before, dry land appeared; out of the Red sea a way without impediment, and out of the violent stream a green field, where-through all the people went, that were defended by thy hand, seeing thy marvellous strange wonders; for they went at large like horses, and leaped like lambs, praising thee, O Lord, who hadst delivered them:” When we find these, I say, and several more writers of great authority, asserting the wonderfulness of this passage, (unless we can suppose that they were all combined to impose upon us), we cannot but assent to the truth of the fact itself, how poetical soever we may think the words of that sacred hymn to be, wherein Moses endeavours to display it: (t) *By the blast of thy nostrils the waters were gathered together, the flood stood upright as an heap, and the depths were congealed in the heart of the sea.*

In an event so wonderful and so unaccountable to human reason, it cannot be expected, but that traditions should differ, and accounts be various: But certainly it is no small confirmation of the testimony which the sacred writers give us of it, that we find Antiphanus, in his history of the Jews, as he is quoted by (u) Eusebius, and (x) Clemens of Alexandria, giving us this narration of the matter. “The people of Memphis tell us, that Moses, who was acquainted with all the country, knowing the time when the tide would be out, carried over all his army at low water: But those of Heliopolis say otherwise, viz.

(p) Psal. lxxviii. 13. (q) Isa. lxiii. 11, 12. (r) Hab. iii. 15. (s) Wisd. xix. 7, *etc.* (t) Exod. xv. 8. (u) Præpar. Evang. lib. 9. c. 27. (x) Strom. lib. 1.

“ that



“ that the king, following the Jews going away with what  
 “ they had borrowed of the Egyptians, carried with him a  
 “ great army ; but that Moses, by an order from heaven,  
 “ struck the sea with a rod, whereupon the waters imme-  
 “ diately separated, and he led over his forces in a dry  
 “ tract, but that the Egyptians, attempting the same pas-  
 “ sage, were dazzled by lightning, and as the sea returned  
 “ upon the paths they were in, were all destroyed either  
 “ by fire or water.” So that, if the joint testimony both  
 of friends and foes, can have any weight with us, we can  
 not but believe, that this passage of the Israelites, as it is  
 recorded by Moses, was certainly matter of fact, and a fact  
 so very wonderful and miraculous, that nothing in history  
 can stand in competition with it.

The passage of Alexander the Great over the sea of Pamphylia bears no manner of resemblance to this of the Israelites. Alexander, as (y) Arian \*, and others relate it, was to march from Phaselis, a sea port, to Perga, an in-

A. M.  
 2513, &c.  
 Ant. Chris.  
 1491, &c.  
 from Exod.  
 ch. xiii. to  
 xxxiv. 24.

Alexander's  
 passage con-  
 sidered.

(y) Exped. Alex. lib. 1. ; and Shuckford's Connection, vol. 2. lib, 9.

\* Strabo relates the matter thus. — “ About Phaselis there  
 “ are freights towards the sea, through which Alexander  
 “ passed his army. There is also a mountain, called *Climax*,  
 “ which lies to the Pamphylian sea, leaving a freight passage  
 “ to the shore, which is quite bare in good weather, but when  
 “ the waves arise, it is for the most part covered with them.  
 “ Now the road by the mountain is about, and difficult ; and  
 “ therefore, in calm weather, they go by the shore. But A-  
 “ lexander coming thither in stormy weather, and trusting  
 “ to his fortune, would go over before the waves were  
 “ abated, which made his soldiers go all day up to the  
 “ navel in water,” lib. 14. And much to the same purpose  
 is the account which Plutarch gives us. “ The march through  
 “ Pamphylia, (says he) has been the subject to many historians  
 “ of mighty wonder, and fine declamation, as if the sea, by  
 “ order of the gods, gave place to Alexander, which almost al-  
 “ ways is rough there, and does very rarely open a smooth  
 “ passage under those broken rocks. But Alexander himself,  
 “ in his epistles, speaks of no miracles, but only says, that he  
 “ passed by *Climax*, as he come from Phaselis ;” *Vita Alex.*  
 Now, by the joint authority of these two excellent historians,  
 this passage is no more than an ordinary thing ; but the Mo-  
 saic transit must still remain a miracle, until we find as good  
 historians to vouch for a passage over the Red sea : *Nicholls's*  
*Conference*, part 2.

land

A. M.  
2513, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1491, &c.  
from Exod.  
ch. xiii. to  
xxxiv. 24.

land city of Pamphylia. The country near Phaselis, upon the shore of the Pamphylian sea, was mountainous and rocky; so that he could not find a passage for his army; without either taking a great compass round the mountains; or attempting to go over the strand, between the rocks and the sea. The historian remarks, that there is no passing along this place, unless when the wind blows from the north; and therefore Alexander, when he came to Phaselis, perceiving that the wind blew from this quarter, laid hold of the opportunity, and having sent some of his army over the mountains, went himself with the rest along the shore. But now what miracle was there in all this, unless we call the wind's blowing opportunely for Alexander's purpose a miracle? It is certain, that, according to (z) Plutarch's account of the thing, Alexander himself thought that there was nothing extraordinary in it; and therefore we may justly wonder \* at Josephus's comparing this passage with that of the Israelites, when there is so manifest a disparity between them. The Israelites crossed over a sea, where no historian makes mention of any persons, but they, that ever found a passage; whereas Alexander only marched upon the shore of the sea of Pamphylia, where the several historians, who most magnify the Divine Providence in protecting him, do all freely allow, that any one may at any time go, when the tide retreats, and the same wind blows that favoured him.

That the  
Israelites  
passage was  
not at low-  
water.

What the breadth of the Red sea may be at the place where the Israelites passed over, is not so easy a matter to de-

(z) In Alexand. p. 674.

\* The words of Josephus are these.—"I have been more particular in these relations, because I find them in holy writ; and let no man think this story incredible of the sea's dividing to save the Hebrews, for we find it in ancient records, that this hath been seen before, whether by God's extraordinary will, or by the course of nature, it is indifferent. The same thing happened one time to the Macedonians under the command of Alexander, when, for want of another passage, the Pamphylian sea divided to make them way, God's providence making use of Alexander at that time as his instrument for destroying the Persian empire;" lib. 2. c. 16. But it is evident, that Josephus was ignorant of the account of the above-cited historians, otherwise he would have said nothing of the Pamphylian sea's dividing for the passage of the Macedonian army, when the matter of fact was no such thing.

termine,

termine \*, because both geographers and travellers mightily differ in their computations. But if (according to some of the lowest accounts) we suppose it to be much about two leagues, most writers agree, that the sea in this place is very boisterous and tempestuous, which is hardly consistent with shallowness, much less a total desertion of water, upon any hasty reflux. The wind, it must be owned, if it blew from a right quarter, might both forward the ebb, and retard the flux; but the wind, which blew at this time, we are told, was an east wind, whereas it must have been a west or north-west wind, to have driven the water from the land's end into the main body of the sea, as any one who looks into a map may easily perceive. But now the east wind blows cross the sea, and the effect of it must be, to drive the waters partly up to the extremity of the bay, and partly down to the ocean, which probably is the meaning (if we must allow an hyperbole in the expression) of the waters *being a wall to the Israelites on their right hand, and on their left*, because they so defended them on both sides, that the Egyptians could no way come at them, but by pursuing them in the same path which they took.

Why they ventured to pursue the Israelites, the sacred historian seems plainly to intimate, when he tells us, (a) *that the angel of the Lord, which went before the camp, removed, and went behind them: It came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel, and was a cloud and darkness to the one, but gave light by night to the other*: So that the true reason why the Egyptians went in after the Israelites into the midst of the sea, was, that they knew not where they were. They imagined, perhaps, that they were still upon the land, or at least upon the shore, whence the sea had retired; the darkness of the night, and the preternatural darkness of the cloud, not suffering them to see

\* One affirms, that the sea is six leagues wide at this place; another makes it but 15 furlongs: one says it is narrow, and long like a river, and another allows it to be the breadth of one league. Thevenot makes it eight or nine miles in breadth, but Andricomius will have it to be no more than six. Those, however, who are minded to consult the authors who treat of this subject, among many others, may turn to Diodorus Siculus, lib. 3: Strabo, lib. 2.; P. Bellon's Observat. lib. 2.: Petro della Valle, tom. 1. ep. 11.; Voyage de Levant; and Theatrum terræ sacræ.

(a) Exod. xiv. 19, 20.

A. M.  
2513, &c.  
Ant. Chif.  
1491, &c.  
from Exod.  
ch. xiii. to  
xxxiv. 24.

A. M.  
2513, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1491, &c.  
from Exod.  
ch. xiii. to  
xxxiv. 24.

the mountains of water on each side. But (b) *when the Lord looked on the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire*, i. e. when he turned the bright side of the cloud upon them, to let them see the danger they were in, and at the same time (as Josephus adds) poured out a storm of thunder and lightning, and hail-stones upon them from the cloud; (c) *Let us fly*, cried they, *from the face of Israel, for the Lord fighteth for them.*

It is not to be questioned, but that Moses was a person of excellent judgment: By his being so long a general of an army, he could not but know the proper advantages that might be made in marches and retreats; and yet he seems to give no great specimen of his skill, by declining the mountains, which possibly were inaccessible to the chariots and horsemen, and marching his men along the sea-coasts, where Pharaoh's army might make after him, (as we find they did), had not God commanded him to take this rout, and foretold him the event. Upon the approach of the Egyptian army, Moses has sufficiently described the consternation which the Israelites were in; and, can any one suppose, that such a situation of things was matter of their own choice, or that their leader would, of his own head, have brought them into a place where there was no possibility of escaping the fury of their enemies, without crossing the sea? (d) Had Pharaoh laid hold of this advantage, (and nothing but a miraculous interposition could have hindered him), how could Moses, with all his sweet words and address, have prevailed with his people to run into the sea? Or (supposing he trusted to the tide at ebb) how could he know for certainty, that this ebb would begin precisely at the close of the day, and that the Egyptians would allow him time to decamp, without their guards giving him intelligence, or their forces pursuing them in his retreat; which had they done, to what dismal extremities must he and his people have been reduced? If we suppose that this was an hasty resolution, which the difficulties he found himself in compelled him to take; yet we shall still be at a loss to know, how he could possibly answer for the event, or with what face he could promise the people, that (e) *the Lord would fight for them; that they should stand still, and see the salvation which he would shew them*; and that the Egypt-

(b) Exod. xiv. 19. (c) Ver. 25. (d) Calmet's Dissert. sur le passage de la Mer rouge. (e) Exod. xiv. 13, 14.

tians,

tians, who had given them so much molestation, *they should see them again no more for ever?* A. M. 2513, &c.  
Ant. Christ. 1491, &c.  
from Exod. ch. xiii. to xxxiv. 24.

He might not be ignorant perhaps of the course of the tide, and might easily discern the favourable disposition of the wind : but was there never a man in all the great army, which Pharaoh brought with him, of equal observation and skill? It is incongruous to think, that the Egyptians, who excelled at that time all other nations in their knowledge and observation of celestial bodies, should be ignorant of the fluxes and refluxes of the sea, in their own country, in their own coast, and in their own most trading and frequented ports and havens : and, if they were not ignorant of the time of the reflux, it is hardly to be imagined, that any eagerness of pursuit would have made them venture into the gulf, when they could not but be sensible, *that*, in case they miscomputed, the returning waves would devour, and swallow them up.

But the truth is, their taking the tide at the ebb would serve the purposes, neither of the Israelites escaping, nor the Egyptians pursuing them. That it badly answered the design of the Egyptians is plain from the event ; and that the Israelites could promise themselves no security by it, is evident from the nature of its motion. (*f*) Every one knows, that in the flux of the sea, its waters come on gradually, and for the space of six hours, swell higher and higher upon the banks ; and then, continuing in this state for about a quarter of an hour, they sink by degrees for six hours more, and retreating from the shores, (which is called the *reflux*), they remain at their lowest ebb, as long as they had done at their highest flux, and then begin to change their course, and creep in towards the shore again ; and in this revolution they always go on, with the variation only of three quarters of an hour, and some minutes, in each tide.

That the Red sea does ebb and flow like other seas that have communication with the main ocean, we readily grant ; but then we are told by those who have made the exactest observations, that the greatest distance that it falls from, the place of high-water, is not above three hundred yards, and that these three hundred yards, which the sea leaves uncovered at the time of low-water, cannot continue so above half an hour at most ; because, during the first six hours, the sea does only retire by degrees, and, in less than half an hour, it begins to flow again towards the shore :

(*f*) Calmet's Dissert. *ibid*.

A. M.  
2513, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1491, &c.  
from Exod.  
ch. xiii. to  
xxxiv. 24.

So that, upon a moderate computation, the most that can be allowed, both of time and space of passable ground, is but about two hundred yards, during six hours, and an hundred and fifty during eight. But now it is plain, that a multitude of above two millions of men, women, and children, incumbered with great quantities of cattle and household-stuff, could never be able to cross, even though we suppose it to be that arm or point of the sea, which is not far distant from the port of Suez, and allow them withal a double portion of time, and a double space of ground to perform it in; whereas the general tradition is, that the place where the Israelites entered the Red sea on the Egyptian side, is two or three leagues below this northern point, at a place called *Kolsum*; and the place where they came out of it, on the Arabian side, is at present called (*g*) *Carondal*, where the sea is about eight or nine miles in breadth.

did not  
coast along  
the strand,  
but passed  
quite thro'.

From the breadth of the sea, and the Israelites coming out of it at a place (*h*) of the same name with that of their entrance, some have imagined, that they did not cross from shore to shore, but only took a short compass along the strand that was left dry at low water, and so came out a little farther in the bay, which the Egyptians attempting to do, by the unexpected return of the tide, were all lost. Now, besides the incongruity (as we said before) of supposing the Israelites better judges of the tide than the Egyptians were, we do not find, that the Scriptures any where determine the length of time which the former employed in passing this sea. *In the morning watch*, (which continued from two to six in the morning), it is said indeed, that (*i*) *the Lord troubled the host of the Egyptians, and took off their chariot-wheels*; but how long the Israelites might have entered the channal, before the Egyptians met with this obstruction, is no where said; so that the computation of time will depend upon the supposed breadth of the sea.

Supposing then (as we said before) that the breadth of the sea was about eight miles in all, we cannot but imagine, that a people, *full of strength and vigour*, (as (*k*) the Psalmist represents them), pursued by so dreadful and enraged an enemy, would make the best of their way; nor can we see any absurdity, in an event so abounding with miracles,

(*g*) Thevenot's Voyage de Levant.  
xiii. 20 with Numb. xxxiii. 6, 8.

(*h*) Compare Exod.  
(*i*) Exod. xiv, 24, 25.

(*k*) Psal. cv. 37.

to suppose one more. (l) Now, if God interposed his power to disable the chariots of Pharaoh, lest the return of the waters should excite the Egyptians fears, and their fears, by improving their diligence, save them from destruction; why might not God interpose the same power (if there was occasion), to quicken and accelerate the Israelites, and make them perform their passage in due time? Nay, if we will allow his own words to be a good comment upon his actions, we cannot but suppose that he did so, when we find him, after all was over, recounting his kindness to them thus: — (m) *Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians; and how I did bear you on eagles wings,* (where the expression certainly denotes some extraordinary assistance given them in their passage), *and brought you unto myself.* It cannot be denied indeed, but that some ambiguity may arise as to the place where the Israelites came on shore, (since they were at Etham but two days before, and now landed in a wilderness of the same name), yet if we will but suppose that there were two Ethams, the one a town where they encamped, on the Egyptian side, and the other, on the Arabian side, a wilderness; or if we will needs have the wilderness of Etham denominated from the town, supposing that the town was situated near the upper part of the Red sea, and gave denomination to a great desert, which surrounded the head of the bay, and reached down a considerable space on both sides of it, we may easily perceive, that though the Israelites, in the evening, marched from the wilderness of Etham cross the gulf, yet, upon their landing in the morning, they would but be in another part of the wilderness of Etham still. Upon the whole therefore it appears, that the Israelites coasting it along the Egyptian shore, in a kind of semicircle, is both a needless and groundless supposition. For had this been all, upon the return of the tide, the drowned Egyptians must have been brought back upon their own shore; whereas the scripture-account of this matter is, — that, as soon as (n) *Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, it returned to its strength, and the waters returned, and covered the Egyptians who fled against them;* which certainly can denote no less, than that the mountains of waters were first dissolved where they first congealed, i. e. on the Egyptian side, and that there be-

A. M.  
2513, etc.  
Ant. Chris.  
1491, etc.  
from Exod.  
ch. xiii. to  
xxxiv. 24.

(l) Saurin's Differt  
xiv. 27, 28.

(m) Exod. xix. 4.

(n) Exod.

A. M.  
2513, etc.  
Ant. Chris.  
1491, etc.  
from Exod.  
ch. xiii. to  
xxxiv. 24.

ginning to reunite, in order to stop the Egyptians return, they came rushing upon them in vast inundations, and, of course, swept them away to the contrary, *i. e.* Arabian shore, where all the host of Israel were safely arrived.

Thus we have endeavoured to evince the reality of this miraculous event, and to examine the pretences of those who have either compared it with others recorded in profane story, or ascribed it to natural causes, or espied some seeming contradictions in it; and have nothing now more to do, but with the grateful Psalmist, to acknowledge upon this occasion, *(o) Thy way, O Lord, is in the sea, and thy paths in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known. Thou art a God that doest wonders, and hast declared thy power among the people.*

*(o) Psal. lxxvii. 19, 14.*

## C H A P. II.

*From the Building of the Tabernacle, to the death of Korah, &c.*

### The HISTORY.

A. M.  
2514, etc.  
Ant. Chris.  
1490, etc.  
from Exod.  
xxxiv. 28.  
to Numb.  
xviii.

Moses, on  
the mount  
receives di-  
rections  
concerning  
the tabe-  
nacle, etc.

**F**OR full forty days and forty nights, Moses continued upon Mount Sinai, as he had done before, without either eating or drinking; and, when he came down from thence, his face had contracted such a lustre, by his holding so long a conference with God, that the people were not able to approach him; and therefore, whenever he talked with Aaron, or any of them, he was accustomed to put a veil over his face, as long as the lustre lasted, but never made use of any when he went into the tabernacle to receive the divine commands.

While he was on the mount, God gave him the ten commandments written in two tables, and withal full instructions in what manner the tabernacle, intended for his own habitation among them, and all its sacred utensils, were to be made; which he now communicated to the people, and at the same time exhorted them to bring in their several offerings to that purpose. This they did in such abundance, that he thought it convenient, by a public proclamation, to restrain their farther liberality; and having thus made a sufficient collection of all kinds of materials, he gave them to Bezaleel and Aholiah, the two great artists



## Chap. II. from the Israelites departure from Egypt, &c. 423

artists in building, and all manner of workmanship, whom God had before made choice of.

In less than six months, the tabernacle, and all its rich furniture were finished, and on the first day of the first month, in the second year after the Israelites departure out of Egypt, it was set up: When, as soon as this was done, the *pillar of the cloud* († which is called *the glory of the Lord*) covered, and quite filled it, so that Moses, for some time, was not able to enter in. However, when he entered in, he received instructions from God, which he communicated to the people, in what manner (according to this new institution) he was to be worshipped by sacrifices and oblations; what festivals were to be observed, and how celebrated; what meats were forbidden; what the instances of uncleanness were; and what the degrees of consanguinity prohibited in marriage. And having appointed these, and some other ordinances, he solemnly consecrated Aaron to the high-priest's office; his sons, and in them their posterity, he made priests; and to these he adjoined the whole tribe of Levi, to serve in the tabernacle, with particular allowances for their subsistence, and some re-

A. M.  
2514, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1490, &c.  
from Exod.  
xxxiv. 28.  
to Numb.  
xviii.

Consecrates  
Aaron and  
his sons;

† *The glory of the Lord*, (what the Jews call *Shekinah*), was a particular manifestation of the divine presence, appearing usually in the shape of a cloud, but sometimes breaking out into a bright and refulgent fire. For we must not suppose that the cloud and the glory of God were two different things, but one and the same, even as the pillar of the cloud and fire were: for outwardly it was a cloud, and inwardly a fire. And, in like manner here, the external part of it covered the tabernacle without, while the inward part of it shone in full glory within the house; in which sense, the account of this appearance, (Exod. xvi. 10) is to be understood: *The glory of the Lord abode upon mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it* (i. e. covered *the glory of the Lord*, not *the mount*) *six days*; for on the seventh day, this glory broke through the cloud, and appeared like a devouring fire in the sight of all the people, Exod. xxiv. 17. This wonderful appearance, whether occasioned by the presence of angels, or (as others imagine) by the residence of the second person in the ever blessed Trinity, took possession of the tabernacle, on the day of its consecration, and (as the Jews believe) passed into the sanctuary of Solomon's Temple, on the day of its dedication, where it continued to the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple by the Chaldeans; after which time it was never more seen; *Calmet's Dictionary*, under the word *Shekinah*; and *Patrick's Commentary*.

A. M.  
2514, &c.  
Aut. Christ.  
1490, &c.  
from Exod.  
xxxiv. 28.  
to Numb.  
xviii.

straining laws, as to their persons, their conduct, and marriages.

Eight days after his consecration, Aaron offered his first burnt-sacrifice for himself and the people, which God was pleased to manifest his acceptance of, in the sight of all the people, by sending down fire from heaven, which, by consuming the offering, struck them with such reverence, that they all fell prostrate, in humble adoration, before the divine Majesty. The fire, thus miraculously kindled, was (a) by the divine command, to be kept perpetually burning, and no other to be used in all the oblations that were made to God. But Nadab and Abihu, two unhappy sons of Aaron, unmindful of this command, took common fire on their censers, and so entering the tabernacle, began to offer incense; but by this their profane approach they so offended God, that he immediately struck them dead with lightning, and to inject terror to the rest, ordered them to be carried forth with out, and there buried without any mourning or funeral pomp. And much about the same time: he gave another instance of his severity against sin, in a certain person, the son of an Israelitish woman indeed, but whose father was an Egyptian, who, for his cursing and blaspheming the name of God, was by him directly ordered to be stoned to death; from which it became a standing law, († though there was no express precept to that purpose

whereof  
two are  
killed with  
lightning,  
and some  
other of-  
fenders  
punished.

(a) Lev. vi. 12, 13.

† If it be asked, how this fire could be preserved, when both the tabernacle, and the altar whereon it burnt, were in motion? (as they evidently were, when the Israelites journeyed in the wilderness), I see no reason why we may not suppose, that upon these occasions, there might be a certain portable conservatory of this sacred fire, distinct from the altar: And that there was some such vessel made use of seems manifest from the injunction, that at such times, *the ashes should be removed from off the Altar, and a purple cloath spread over it*, Numb. iv. 8. *Bibliotheca Bibl. vol. 4. occasion. annot. 2.*

† The criminal, and his offence, are only thus recorded by Moses;—*The son of an Israelitish woman, whose father was an Egyptian, and a man of Israel strove together in the camp, and the Israelitish woman's son blasphemed the name of the Lord, and cursed*, Lev. xxiv. 11. But the Jews, in explaining these words, have followed either that superstitious respect which they pay to the name JEHOVAH, or their wonted humour of supplying the silence of the sacred history, with circumstances no where to be found but in their own imaginations. In pur-  
suance

## Chap. II. from the Israelites departure from Egypt, &c. 425

purpose before), that whoever was guilty of the like offence, whether stranger or Israelite, was to undergo the same punishment.

Nay, and not long after this, another instance of the divine severity was upon a man, who by a post-fact-law was likewise adjudged to be stoned to death, for violating the Sabbath, (which God had so strictly enjoined to be observed), by gathering some sticks on that day. There was no penalty annexed to the violation of this commandment; and therefore the people who brought him before Moses, were ordered to keep him in custody, until he should know the divine pleasure concerning Sabbath-breakers; and when he acquainted them, that such transgressors were to be punished with death, (b) they immediately led him out of the camp, and there stoned and buried him.

While the Israelites lay encamped in the wilderness of Sinai, God appointed Moses at first † to renew the ordinance

A. M.  
2514, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1490, &c.  
from Exod.  
xxxiv. 28.  
to Numb.  
xviii.

The Israelites mustered, and their manner of encamping and marching.

suance to their superstition, they fancy, that the crime of this blasphemer consisted simply in his pronouncing the name Jehovah, forasmuch as they suppose, that there can be no blasphemy without such pronunciation; and in pursuance to their humour of supplying the silence of Scripture, they have invented a genealogy for this blasphemer. For they tell us, that he was the son of one of those task-masters who were set over the Israelites in Egypt, and of that very task-master, who, by personating her husband, violated the chastity of the Jewish matron Shelometh, and was afterwards slain by Moses, for using the same husband with great barbarity; that the son, who is here mentioned, quarrelling with a man of the tribe of Dan, because he would not let him incamp in the same district, brought his cause before Moses; but that being condemned at his tribunal, he began, out of mere rage and madness, to blaspheme. Of all this, however, Moses himself says nothing, out of a scruple (as we may well suppose) to relate the circumstances of a crime which his very thoughts detested; *Saurin's Dissertations*, 58.

(b) Numb. xv. 31, &c.

† During the sojourning of the children of Israel in the wilderness, they seem to have had a divine dispensation from observing the ordinances both of circumcision and the passover. Circumcision did not consist with their itinerant course of life, and for the celebration of the passover they had not, in every incampment, all the materials that were necessary: But having now rested in the confines of the holy mount for almost the space of a whole year, after the tabernacle was set up, the

A. M.  
2514, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1490, &c.  
from Exod.  
xxxiv. 28.  
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dinance of the passover, and then, with the help of Aaron, and the heads of each tribe, to make a general muster of the men that were able to bear arms; which accordingly was done, and the whole number (exclusive of the tribe of Levi, which were appointed to attend the service of the tabernacle), amounted to six hundred and three thousand five hundred and fifty men; and, upon this muster, God appointed their encampment, ever after, to be in this manner.

The whole body of the people were disposed under four large battalions, so placed as to inclose the tabernacle, and each under \* one general standard. The standard of the camp of Judah was first. It consisted of the tribes of Judah Issachar, and Zebulun, the sons of Leah, which pitched on

high-priest consecrated, and his first-oblation honoured with a gracious acceptance, God thought it not an improper time to re-ordain the celebration of the passover, that so remarkable a deliverance, as their escape out of Egypt, (which, by their repeated desires of returning thither, seemed, in a great measure, to have been forgotten), might not altogether be obliterated. And if it should be asked, whence they could have a sufficiency of lambs and kids for so vast a multitude to feast on, there is no reason to deny, (even supposing they had not a supply of their own), but that they might traffic with the Ishmaelites, and ancient Arabs inhabiting these parts, for such a number of small cattle, and being not far distant from Midian, (Exod. iii. 1.) by the interest of Jethro, might from thence be furnished with such a quantity of meal for unleavened bread, as this one passover (as this was the only one they kept in the wilderness), may be presumed to require; *Le Clerc's Commentary*: and *Pool's Annotations*.

\* All the twelve tribes were distinguished from one another by particular standards, and each standard is supposed by some to have been of the colour of that stone in Aaron's pectoral, upon which the name of the tribe whereunto it belonged, was written. The figures on the standards of the four principal tribes that we have mentioned, are these, — In that of Judah was borne a *lion*; in that of Ephraim, *an ox*; in that of Reuben the head of *a man*, and in that of Dan, *an eagle* and *a serpent* in his talons; which are indeed the four most perfect animals, forasmuch as the lion is the most noble among wild beasts; the ox among beasts of labour; the eagle among birds, and the man among all other creatures; *Lamy's Introduction*, lib. i.

the

# THE CAMP OF THE ISRAELITES.

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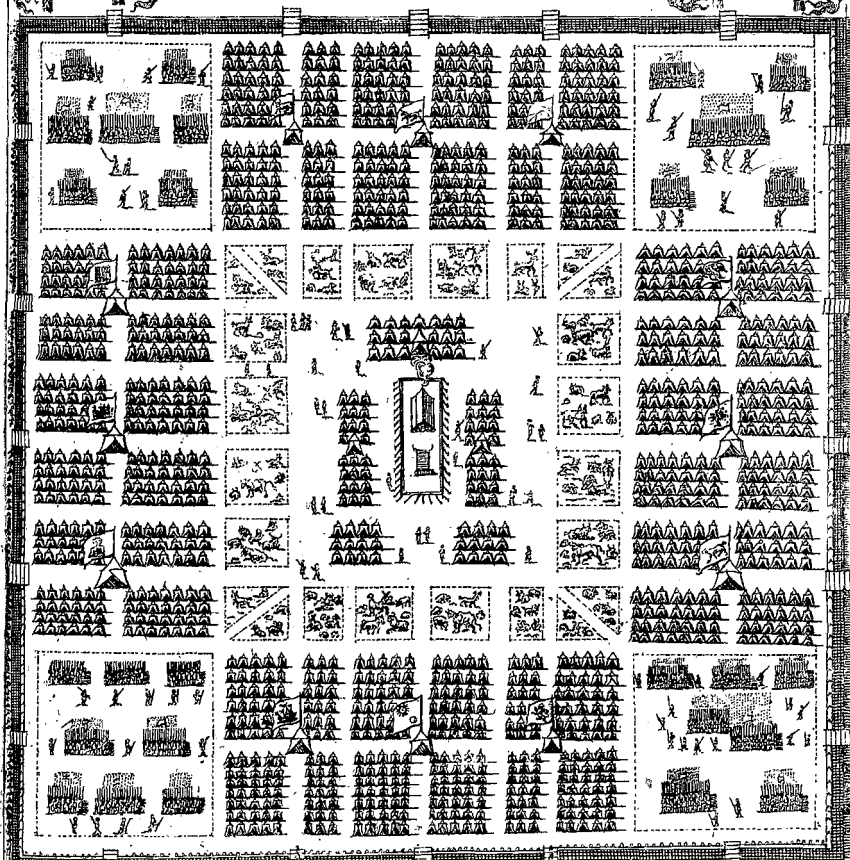
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Every man of the children of Israel shall pitch by his own standard, with the ensign of their fathers house. Numb II Ch. V 2.



the east side of the tabernacle, towards the rising of the sun. On the south side was the standard of the camp of Reuben, under which were the tribes of Reuben, and Simeon, the sons of Leah likewise, and that of Gad, the son of Zilpah, her maid. On the west side was the standard of the camp of Ephraim, under which were the tribes of Ephraim, Manasseh, and Benjamin. And on the north side was the standard of the camp of Dan and Naphtali, the sons of Bilhah, Rachel's maid, and that of Asher, the son of Zilpah. Between these four great camps and the tabernacle, were pitched the four less camps of the priests and the Levites, who had their attendance about it. On the east side incamped Moses and Aaron, and Aaron's sons, who had the charge of the sanctuary. On the south side were the Kohathites, a part of the Levites descended from Kohath, the second son of Levi. On the west side were the Gershonites, another part of the Levites, descended from Gershon, Levi's eldest son; and on the north side were the Merarites, the remaining part of the Levites, who sprang from Merari, Levi's youngest son.

This was the order of the Israelites incamping; and in like manner, the method of their marching was thus, — Whenever they were to decamp, (which always was when the pillar of the cloud was taken up from the tabernacle), the trumpet sounded, and upon the first alarm, the standard of Judah being raised, the three tribes which belonged to it set forward; whereupon the tabernacle was immediately taken down, and the Gershonites and the Merarites attended the waggons, with the boards and staves of it. When these were on their march, a second alarm was sounded, upon which the standard of Reuben's camp advanced with the three tribes under it; and after them followed the Kohathites bearing the sanctuary, which because it was more holy, and not so cumbersome as the pillars and boards of the tabernacle, was not put into a wagon, but carried upon their shoulders. Next followed the standard of Ephraim's camp with the three tribes belonging to it; and last of all, the other three tribes, under the standard of Dan, brought up the rear.

After that the Israelites had, for some time, continued in ease and rest, not far from the skirts of mount Sinai, the pillar of the cloud gave them a signal to decamp; but they had not marched above three days into the wilderness,

A. M.  
2514, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1490, &c.  
from, Exod.  
xxxiv. 28.  
to Numb.  
xviii.

A. M. wilderness before they began to complain of the weariness of their journey, and to murmur against God; which  
 2514, &c. Ant. Christ. so provoked him, that he † sent down fire, and destroyed  
 1490, &c. from Exod. the loiterers, and such as were found in the extreme parts  
 xxxiv. 28. of the camp; so that though, upon Moses's intercession,  
 to Numb. the fire ceased, the place nevertheless obtained the name  
 xviii. of *Taberah*, which signifies *burning*.

This fresh instance of the people's stubbornness made Moses apprehensive, that though he had certainly eased himself, in some measure, by constituting such magistrates as Jethro his father-in-law had advised him to; yet the work of governing so numerous, and so mutinous a people, would still be an overmatch for him; and therefore, by God's immediate direction, † he made choice of  
 seventy

† The fire which God sent upon the Israelites, came either immediately from heaven, like lightning, or did issue from the pillar of the cloud which went before the tabernacle; or (according to the conjecture of a learned commentator), that what is here called *fire*, might be an hot burning wind, in these desert places not unusual, and many times very pestilential, and on this occasion preternaturally raised in the rear of the army, to punish the stragglers, and such as out of a pretence of weariness, lagged behind; *Le Clerc's Commentary*.

† It may be supposed indeed, that Moses had no occasion for any more assisting magistrates after what had been constituted by the advice of Jethro, his father-in-law: But it is highly probable, that those of Jethro's advising were appointed to hear and judge only in smaller causes; whereas all weighty and difficult points, as well as last appeals in smaller matters, still were left upon Moses; and that it was to ease himself of this burthen, that he made choice of these seventy, as men of superior capacity and understanding, and who were to be assisted by the Spirit of God in their judgments and determinations. This assembly of the seventy elders, not only the Jews but even Grotius, and some other Christians, will needs have to be the same with that famous council which afterwards obtained the name of *Sanhedrim*. The Rabbins have left no stone unturned to prove, that the Sanhedrim did constantly subsist ever since its first institution by Moses, and that the members of it always assembled themselves before the tabernacle, wherever that was set up, either in the wilderness, or in the promised land, till the erecting of the temple by Solomon, who, at the same time, built them a stately room or hall to convene in. They add farther, that this supreme court was continued



seventy of the chief of the elders of the people, men of re-  
nown for their wisdom and integrity, and every way fit to  
be erected into a supreme court.

A. M.  
2514, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1490, &c.  
from Exod.  
xxxiv. 28.  
to Numb.  
xviii.

To these God imparted a portion of the same Spirit that  
he had given unto Moses, which enabled them to be highly  
assistant to him in the government of a people, which al-  
most every day were discovering a spirit of discontent. For  
no sooner were they removed from Taberah, but they be-  
gan to murmur at the manna they had so long eat, and to  
regret the flesh pots of Egypt they had parted with; and  
hereupon they beset Moses's tent on all sides, and in a tu-  
multuous manner demanded of him a supply of flesh, in-  
stead of manna; which, how unreasonable soever it was  
for them to request, God nevertheless promised Moses to  
perform; and accordingly caused the south wind to arise,  
which drove vast quantities of quails from the sea coasts to  
within a mile of the camp where they lay, about a yard  
thick upon the ground. But while they were regaling them-  
selves with these dainties, the anger of the Lord fell upon  
them, and smote a great number of them with a sore dis-  
ease, whereof they suddenly died, in memory of which the  
place came to be called *Kibroth Hattaavah*, i. e. *the graves*  
*or sepulchres of lust and concupiscence*.

The people  
murmur for  
want of  
flesh.

From this place the people took their journey to Ha-  
zeroth, where another unhappy accident befel them. For  
Aaron and his sister Miriam, observing what great power  
their brother Moses had with the people, and that God  
chiefly made use of him in the delivery of his oracles to  
them, began to envy him; but, to give some colour to  
their quarrel, they pretended to fall out with him upon ac-  
count of his marrying a foreigner, whom they called in  
contempt an *Ethiopian*. This Moses could not but per-

And Aaron  
and Miriam  
against Mo-  
ses.

in Babylon, during their captivity there, and that at their re-  
turn, it had the same place rebuilt in the second temple, and  
so continued till its total extinction under the Romans. But  
as they bring no authority for these, and many other particu-  
lars relating to this assembly, but merely their own traditions,  
they are justly rejected by the major part of Christians, who  
can find no foot-steps of any such high court, either in the  
times of Joshua, of the Judges, or of the kings, nor indeed af-  
ter the Babylonish captivity, till the time of the Maccabees;  
*Calmet's Dissertations sur la police des anciens Hebreux*; and  
*Universal History*, lib. 1. c. 7.

A. M.  
2514, &c.  
Ant. Chriſt.  
1450, &c.  
from Exod.  
xxxiv. 28.  
to Numb.  
xviii.

ceive : but as it was a perſonal pique, he took no notice of it. God however would not ſuffer it to go off ſo ; and therefore calling Moſes, Aaron, and Miriam before the door of the tabernacle, he ſharply rebuked the two latter. He gave them to underſtand the diſparity, † in point of divine revelation, between them and him, and (to leave a brand upon their contumacious affecting an equality) he immediately ſmote Miriam † with a leproſy ;  
and

† The Jewish commentators make the difference between Moſes and other prophets, to conſiſt in theſe particulars : 1ſt, That God ſpoke to others by a mediator, *i. e.* (as they explained it) by ſome angel ; but to him by himſelf, without the intervention of any other. 2dly, That they never prophesied, but their ſenſes were all bound up, either in viſions or in dreams, whereas he was perfectly awake as we are, when we diſcourſe one with another. 3dly, That after the viſion was over, they were oftentimes left ſo weak and feeble, that they could ſcarce ſtand upon their feet, (as appears from Dan. viii. 18.) ; whereas Moſes ſpoke with the divine Majeſty without any conſternation or alteration. And, 4thly, That no prophet but he, could know the mind of God when he pleaſed, becauſe he communicated himſelf to them only when he thought proper ; whereas Moſes might at any time have recourſe to God, to inquire of him, and receive an answer ; *Patrick's Commentary.*

† A leproſy, as well as all other diſtempers (ſuch as the ſcurvy, ring-worm, itch, &c.) which bear reſemblance to it, does proceed originally from a previous ill diſpoſition both in the blood and juices, but the more immediate cauſe of it is an infinity of ſmall imperceptible worms, that inſinuate themſelves between the fleſh and ſkin, which firſt prey upon the ſcarf-skin then upon the inner-skin, and afterwards upon the extremities of the nerves and muſcles, from whence ariſes a total corruption of the whole maſs of blood, and all the other ſymptoms attending it. But the leproſy here inflicted upon Miriam was ſudden and inſtantaneous. The juices of her body were not corrupted by a gradual decay, but turned at once into thoſe corroding animals. And as this was a fit puniſhment for her pride and detraction, ſo by its being inflicted on her, and not on Aaron it ſeems not improbable that ſhe was firſt in the tranſgreſſion, and drew Aaron (who ſeems in ſome inſtances to be a perſon of too much facility) over to her party. Aaron indeed, by his office, was appointed to judge of leproſy, which he could not have done had himſelf been infected with it ; and as he was lately conſecrated his high-prieſt, God, for the preſervation  
of

and though, upon Moses's intercession, he promised to remove it, yet because the offence was public, he ordered her to be turned out of the camp for seven days, in the manner of any common leper, that others might be deterred from the like seditious practices. After several encampments, the people came at length to † Kadesh-Barnea, on the frontiers of Canaan, where Moses was commanded to chuse twelve fit men, out of each tribe one, (among whom were Joshua and Caleb), to take a view of the country: And accordingly having received their instructions from him, to examine diligently into the strength of its cities, and inhabitants, the nature and fertility of its soil, and the like, they set out upon their progress, and finished it in forty days

A. M.  
2514, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1490, &c.  
from Exod.  
xxxiv. 28.  
to Numb.  
xviii.  
He sends  
spies into  
the land of  
Canaan.

At their return they passed through a valley, which, for its fertility in vines, is called *the valley of Eschol*, which signifies *a cluster of grapes*; and here they cut down a branch with but one cluster upon it, which, \* by reason of

of his authority, might not think it proper to make him so soon become vile and contemptible in the eyes of the people, as this distemper was known to make men; *Calmet's Dissertation sur la nature, &c. de la lèpre*; and *Patrick's Commentary*.

† Most commentators and geographers are of opinion, that whatever is said of Kadesh, in the travels of the Israelites, is to be understood of one and the same place; whereas the sacred history plainly makes mention of two places of the same name, one adjoining to the wilderness of Paran, which is mentioned Numb. xiii. 26. and the other lying in the wilderness of Sin, mentioned in Numb. xx. 1. and xxxiii. 36.; *Well's Geography of the Old Testament, vol. 2.*

\* That there are vines and grapes of a prodigious bigness in those eastern and southern parts of the world, is a matter recorded by several writers. Strabo tells, that in Margiana, and other neighbouring countries, there were vines so very thick about, that two men could scarce fathom them, and that they produced bunches of grapes of two cubits long. Pliny informs us, that in the inland parts of Africa there are bunches of grapes bigger than young children. Olearius, in his travels into Persia, acquaints us, that not far from Astracan, he saw vines which a man could hardly grasp with both his arms; and the learned Huetius affirms, that in Crete, Chios, and other islands in the Archipelago, there are bunches of grapes, from ten to forty pounds in weight; *Quæst. Alnet. lib. 2*; and *Le Clerc's Commentary*.

A. M.  
2514, &c.  
Ant. Chris.  
1490, &c.  
from Exod.  
xxxiv. 28.  
to Numb.  
xviii.

its immoderate largeness, as well as to preserve the grapes from being bruised, they hung upon a pole, and carried between two mens shoulders. Nor was this the only product of that happy soil; the golden fig, and beautiful pomegranate adorned the trees, and a variety of other fruits (of which they brought samples along with them) loaded the luxuriant branches.

Being at length happily arrived in the camp, they went, and made their report to Moses and Aaron, in the presence of the elders, and of all the people. They began indeed with extolling the riches of the land, and shewed them a specimen of some of the fruits which it produced; but when they perceived that this account had fired the people with a desire to become the happy possessors of it by a speedy conquest, ten of them then began to alter their tone, and to represent it as a thing impossible, both by reason of the strength of its fortified towns, and the valour and gigantic stature of its inhabitants.

Upon their  
report the  
people are  
for return-  
ing to E-  
gypt, and  
the false  
spies are  
sain.

Joshua and Caleb were the only two that remained true to their report, and gave them all imaginable encouragement that the enterprise was practicable; but the cowardly account of the other ten had got such a powerful possession of them, that they cried out, one and all, that they could never hope to overcome such powerful nations, in comparison of which they looked upon themselves as mere grasshoppers and reptiles; and their murmuring, in short, grew to such an height by the next morning †,

\* Though they might in their raging fits speak of returning into Egypt; yet it is an amazing thing, that they should continue in their madness, and deliberate about it, nay actually appoint them a leader, as Nehemiah, ix. 17. says they did. For how could they get thither without food, which they could not expect that God would send from heaven, when they had thus shamefully forsaken him? How could they hope to find their way, when the cloud which directed them was withdrawn from them, or think of coping with such nations as would oppose their passage, in case they should hit upon the right way? And after all, if they came into Egypt, what reception could they expect from a people, whose king and princes, and first-born, had lately been destroyed upon their account? Nothing can be said in answer to these questions, but that outrageous discontent infatuates mens minds, and will not suffer them to consider any thing but that which grieves them; *Patrick's Commentary.*

that

that a return to Egypt was thought more adviseable, than to face such an enemy. Nay, in the hearing of Moses and Aaron, of Caleb and Joshua, (who endeavoured to dissuade them all they could, even to the hazard of being stoned by them), they were deliberating upon a proper person to re-conduct them into the land of their former thralldom; when, all on a sudden, the glory of God appeared in a brighter lustre than ordinary, in the tabernacle, and from thence was heard to speak to Moses in such threatening terms, as gave the people cause to fear, that some speedy and terrible judgment would be the reward of their rebellion and ingratitude.

Here Moses was forced again (as at several other times) to become their intercessor, and made use of such powerful arguments, and expostulations, as did in some measure avert the divine vengeance: But as their ingratitude and infidelity were become intolerable, notwithstanding God's constant care in providing against their wants, screening them from their enemies, and preserving them from all dangers, he solemnly declared, that none of that generation, above twenty years of age, except \* Joshua and Caleb, (who received his commendations for their fidelity), should enter into the promised land, but should wander from place to place in the wilderness, for the space of † forty years: and as for the false spies, the immediate

A. M.  
2514, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1490, &c.  
from Exod.  
xxxiv. 28.  
to Numb.  
xviii.

\* Josephus introduces Joshua and Caleb (in order to pacify the tumultuous people) delivering themselves in words to this effect. "How is it possible for you, good people, to distrust the veracity and goodness of God, and at the same time to give credit to stories and amusements about the land of Canaan, that are propagated on purpose to abuse you? Why should not you rather believe and follow those who have taken so much pains to put you into the possession and enjoyment of the blessings you desire? What's the height of mountains, or depth of rivers to men of undaunted spirits, and of honourable resolutions; especially when God is both their protector and defender? Wherefore let us advance, and attack the enemy, without ever questioning the event. Only trust God for your guide, and follow us where we shall lead you;" *Jewish Antiquities, lib. 3. c. 14.*

† Moses here makes use of a round number, in allusion to the forty days of the spies searching the land; tho' it is plain, that the children did enter into the land of Canaan in less than thirty-nine years after this sentence was pronounced against their

A. M.  
2541, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1490, &c.  
from Exod.  
xxxiv. 28.  
to Numb.  
xviii.

The Israel-  
ites defeat-  
ed.

authors of this rebellion, they were all destroyed by a sudden death (c), and became the first instances of the punishment denounced against the whole nation.

This severe punishment, joined with the sentence of exclusion with the promised land, gave the humours of the people soon another turn: for supposing that their forwardness now would make some atonement for their former cowardice, they assembled themselves together next morning, and offered to go upon the conquest. Moses endeavoured what he could to dissuade them from so rash an enterprise, by telling them, that it was contrary to God's express command, and therefore could not prosper; that by their late undutiful behaviour they had forfeited his assistance and protection, without which it was impossible for them to succeed; and that as the Amalekites and Canaanites had gained the passes of the mountains before them, there was no fighting them upon the par. But all this admonition had no weight with them: notwithstanding the ark of the covenant went not with them, notwithstanding Moses their general was not at the head of them; yet out they marched to the top of the mountains, where the enemy surprised, defeated, and having slain many of them, pursued the rest as far as Hormah.

The rebel-  
lion of Ko-  
rah, etc.  
and the de-  
struction  
that at-  
tended, it.

While the people continued in the wilderness, many remarkable occurrences befel them, and seditions, almost innumerable, were daily fermenting; but one in particular was hatched (with the utmost deliberation) in the breast of one of the chiefs of the tribe of Levi, and countenanced by some of the most considerable men in the whole camp.

fathers. The truth is, Moses reckons the time past since they came into the wilderness, which was a year and a half; to that the meaning of the sentence is, — That they should wander for forty years in all, before they went out of the wilderness; which however is not to be understood so precisely, as to want nothing at all of it: for since they came out of Egypt on the 15th day of the first month, and arrived in Canaan, and pitched their tents in Gilgal, on the tenth day of the first month, of the one and fortieth year after their departure out of Egypt, Josh. iv. 19. it is plain, that there wanted five days of full forty years; *Universal history*, lib. i. c. 7.; and *Patrick's Commentary*.  
(c) Numb. xia. 36. 37.

Korah,

† Korah, the great-grandson of Levi by his father Jaha-  
 har, and consequently one of the heads of that tribe, im-  
 patient to behold Aaron and his family raised to the high-  
 est office in the priesthood, to which he thought himself  
 had an equal title, was always caballing against him, until  
 he had drawn a considerable number of eminent persons  
 into his interest, and, among these, Dathan, Abiram, and  
 Hur, who were heads of the house of Reuben. As soon  
 as things were ripe for an open rupture, Korah appeared  
 at the head of the faction, and publicly upbraided Moses  
 and Aaron with an unjust ambition, in usurping upon the  
 liberties of the people, in ingrossing all power into their  
 own hands, and excluding every body else.

A. M.  
 2514, &c.  
 Ant. Christ.  
 1499, &c.  
 from Exod.  
 xxxiv. 28.  
 to Numb.  
 xviii.

Surprised at the boldness of this accusation, Moses, for  
 concern, fell prostrate upon his face; but when he rose  
 again, he desired that the determination of their controversy  
 might be left to God, and for that purpose appointed  
 them to appear on the morrow at the door of the taber-  
 nacle, with every man his censer in his hand: And then  
 addressing himself to Korah, and the rest of the Levites,

† At what time, or in what encampment this Rebellion of  
 Korah and his adherents happened, the sacred history is not  
 informed us: but as the general opinion is, that the cause of  
 the mutiny was his resentment upon the advancement of Aa-  
 ron and his family to the office of the high-priest; so we find Jo-  
 sephus introducing him, as addressing himself to his accomplices  
 in words to this purpose; “ A scandal it is, and a thing not  
 to be endured, for Moses to take upon him at this rate, to  
 carry on his ambition thus, under the mask of holiness and  
 religion, and by that means to raise himself a reputation to  
 the wrong of other men. He gave lately the priesthood,  
 and other dignities to his brother Aaron, without any right  
 or colour for it. No consent of the people was asked, nor  
 any pretence of authority produced, save only his own ar-  
 bitrary will and pleasure—for what has he to say for him-  
 self for so doing? If God has annexed the honour to the tribe  
 of Levi, I myself may pretend a right to the preference, be-  
 ing of the same stock with Moses, and his superior both in  
 riches and years: or if it be to pass by seniority, it belongs to  
 the tribe of Reuben, viz. to Dathan, Abiram, and Phaleg,  
 who are the seniors of that tribe, and men of eminent credit  
 every way among them;” *Jewish Antiq. lib. 4. c. 2.*

A. M. he put them in mind of their ingratitude and arrogance, in  
 2514, &c. not being content with the dignity and privileges which  
 Ant. Chriſ. God had annexed to their tribe, without aspiring at the  
 1490, &c. high prieſthood, which he had reſerved to Aaron and his  
 from Exod. poſterity.  
 xxxiv. 28.  
 to Numb.  
 xviii.

Dathan and Abiram were at ſome diſtance when Moſes thus talked with the reſt; and therefore, ſuppoſing that they had been drawn into the conſpiracy by Korah's inſinuations, he ſent privately to them, with a deſign to argue the caſe more calmly with them: but inſtead of a civil answer, he received an haughty meſſage, wherein they upbraided him with a non-performance of his promiſe, and "that he had decoyed the whole nation from the rich and fertile land of Egypt, under the pretence of bringing them into a much better, but inſtead of that, had only detained them in a barren wilderneſs, there to domineer and tyrannize over them." At which meſſage Moſes was ſo highly provoked, that he appealed to God againſt the injuſtice of it, and at the ſame time requested of him not to regard the prayers and offerings of ſuch ungrateful wretches.

Early next morning Moſes and Aaron went towards the tabernacle, whether Korah, at the head of his party, with each man a † cenſer in his hand, (attended with a vaſt promiſcuous multitude, which came in all probability to be ſpectators of this famous conteſt), failed not to repair. The firſt thing that drew their eyes, was the amazing ſplendor which iſſued from the cloud over the tabernacle, from which God called to Moſes and Aaron to withdraw from that rebellious crew, leſt they ſhould be ſwallowed up in the deſtruction which he was going to bring upon them. Hereupon Moſes, having firſt requested of him

† The two hundred and fifty princes had not as yet offered any incenſe, becauſe they were prevented by death; however it may be preſumed, that they had lighted their cenſers at the holy fire, by which they obtained (at leaſt in the opinion of the people) a kind of conſecration: and therefore to keep up among them a reputation and eſteem for things conſecrated, as well as to ſhew the difference between his own inſtitution, and men's contrivances, God ordered all theſe brazen cenſers to be wrought into broad plates, and to cover the altar with them; that being poliſhed bright, they might by their luſtre put the people in mind of the offence of thoſe who were once owners of them, and ſo caution others againſt the like offence; *Howell's Hiſtory of the Bible, lib. 2.*



not to slay the innocent with the guilty, advertised the people (if they consulted their own safety) to separate themselves from the company of these wicked men; and then bespoke the assembly to this purpose:—"That if these rebels died in the common way of nature, he would give them leave to call in question his divine mission; but that if the earth did immediately open itself in a miraculous manner, and swallow them up alive, he then hoped that they would look upon him only as an instrument in God's hand, and sufficiently authorised for all he did." And no sooner had he ended these words, but the earth clove asunder under their feet, and swallowed them up alive, together with their families, and all their substance; while, at the same time, Korah, and his company, (who stood with their censers before the court of the tabernacle), were all destroyed by a miraculous fire from heaven: And, to perpetuate the memory of this judgment, as well as to deter, for the future, any but the sons of Aaron, from presuming to burn incense before the Lord, Eliazar was ordered to gather up the censers of the dead, and to have them beat into broad plates for a covering of the altar.

So terrible a punishment, one would think, might have been sufficient, for some time at least, to have kept the Israelites within the bound of their obedience; but no sooner were they recovered from their fright, than they began to murmur afresh, and to accuse Moses and Aaron for having *murdered the people of the Lord*, as they were not ashamed to call that seditious crew. Moses and Aaron were well aware of the unruly temper of the people, and therefore fearing to what degree of madness and outrage they might proceed, they took sanctuary in the tabernacle; where they had no sooner entered, but God threatened to destroy all the rest of the congregation, as it were, in a moment, and had already sent out a plague amongst them; which Aaron, at his brother's directions, endeavoured to assuage by his interposing, with a censer of incense, between the dead and the living; but the plague, in this short time, had raged so violently, that no less than fourteen thousand and seven hundred persons (besides those that perished in the sedition of Korah and his company) were carried off by it.

This was enough, in all reason, to establish the authority, civil and ecclesiastical, in the hands of the two brothers: However, to put Aaron's claim beyond all manner

A. M. 2514. &c.  
Ant. Chris. 1490, &c.  
from Exod. xxxiv. 28.  
to Numb. xviii.

Great numbers slain by the plague.

And Aaron's priesthood confirmed to him by a miracle upon his rod.

A. M.  
2514, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1490, &c.  
from Exod.  
xxiv. 28.  
to Numb.  
xviii.

ner of dispute, God was pleased to confirm it by one miracle more. Aaron, on the one side, and the heads of every tribe on the other, were ordered to bring each man his rod, with their respective names written upon them, and these were to be deposited in the tabernacle, until the next morning; by which time God would decide in favour of that family, on whose rod some miraculous change should be seen. Accordingly, when they came to examine them next morning, † Aaron's rod alone was found not only to have budded, but blossomed likewise, and brought forth ripe almonds: In memory of which remarkable decision, God ordered the rod to be laid || up in the ark of the

† Some will needs have this rod of Aaron's to have been the same with that of Moses, wherewith he wrought so many miracles in Egypt, and at the Red sea; but there is this argument against them, that the miracle of its blossoming had not been a sufficient conviction to the Israelites, if so be that Aaron's rod had not been of the same kind with the rest. For whatever had come to pass, they might have ascribed it to the singular quality and virtue of the rod, (especially had it been Moses's wonder-working rod) and not to the special hand of God interposing to establish the authority of Aaron; whereas, on the contrary, we find that the miracle had its intended effect, and silenced for ever the pretences of other people to the priesthood. It is presumed therefore by some learned men, that the rods which the several princes brought Moses, were neither their common walking-staves, nor any such wands, as were a badge of their power and authority in their respective tribes, but rather certain twigs, that were cut off from some almond-tree, and not improbably from one and the same tree, that there might be no manner of difference between them. The difference, however, next morning, appeared in this:— That on the twig which bore Aaron's name, there was, in some places, an appearance of buds coming forth; in others, the buds were opened, and shot forth into blossoms; and in others the blossoms were knotted, and grown into Almonds; *Le Clerc's and Patrick's Commentaries.*

|| It is made a matter of some inquiry, whether this rod of Aaron's was put within the ark of the covenant, or only by it. God commanded Moses to put it only in the tabernacle (Numb. xvii. 4.) to be preserved there; but St. Paul, in Heb. ix. 4. says, that it was placed within the ark, with a pot of manna, and the tables of the law. Others affirm, that it was not put within; but by the side of the ark: and for their opinion

*the covenant*, and gave an express prohibition, that none but the sons of Aaron should presume to come into the tabernacle, under pain of death.

A. M.  
2514, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1490, &c.  
from, Exod.  
xxxiv. 28.  
to Numb.  
xviii.

The OBJECTION.

“ **M**oses, no doubt, was a peculiar favourite of God, and his admission to an intimate conversation with him on the sacred mount, was a vouchsafement of an extraordinary nature; but it seems a little irreconcilable to our thoughts, how human nature, in its present situation, could be able to subsist forty days and forty nights, without any manner of sustenance; nor can we conceive, how the countenance of Moses came to contract a bright and radiant lustre, by conversing with the Deity, at this time, more than it did when he went up to the mount before. The Israelites, without all question, were a very obstinate and perverse sort of people; but, (to magnify himself) Moses seems to have represented them in blacker colours than they did deserve; because it is hardly to be imagined, how they could, after having been eye-witnesses of so many miracles wrought for their preservation, go on still in distrusting and complaining of God; nor can we devise any reason, why they were not punished a year before,

nion they alledge a passage in 1 Kings viii. 9. which seems to intimate, that there was nothing in the ark, but the tables of the law: But then their adversaries contend, that St. Paul, in that passage to the Hebrews, is to be understood literally; that there could be no hindrance for its being put into the ark, since the ark was five feet long, and could not but be of capacity enough to hold it; and therefore, when the Scripture says, that there was nothing in the ark but the tables of the law, they conceive that it may be understood with this limitation, — That nothing else was originally in it, because the ark was primarily intended for that use; but this need not hinder but that afterwards other things likewise might be put in it. How long this wonderful rod continued in this repository, is no where mentioned in Scripture. When the ark was brought into Solomon’s temple, 1 Kings viii. 9, there is no notice taken of it; and yet it seems reasonable to think, that it should have been preserved for some considerable time, and preserved in that very verdure, wherein it now appeared, with its buds, blossoms, and fruit, for the conviction of posterity; *Gabriel’s Dictionary* under the word *Rod*.

- A. M. 2514, &c. Ant. Christ. 1490, &c., from Exod. xxxiv. 28. 2. Numb. xviii.
- “ as well as now, for asking flesh for their lusts, since, at both times, their crime was equally the same.
- “ (d) *God's hands cannot wax short*, as himself told Moses, neither can his power admit of any diminution ; and yet it seems to favour of some defect in that respect, and to be a derogation from the greatness of the miracle, that we find quails (which they had before) sent here again, upon their second complaint. Quails, no doubt, are excellent food ; but a diversity, one would think, had been more agreeable to the generality, and more expressive of God's sovereignty over the world ; because a repetition of the same diet to a people he was minded to gratify, seems as incongruous a thing in him, as it would be in a clerk of the kitchen to be always sending up the same bill of fare.
- “ (e) *Whatever goeth in at the mouth*, we must allow, *defileth not the man* ; and therefore we may justly wonder, why God should enact (f) a prohibition of several kinds of food, which have no relation to inward purity, and to many of which mankind seem to have a natural aversion, without a divine interdiction : And though the apostle to the Hebrews has informed us, that several things relating to the tabernacle-service, were types of Christ, yet we are still at a loss to know, why the great mysteries of man's redemption should be prenotified by such dark shadows and emblems, and not rather discovered in the plainest predictions and expressions imaginable.
- “ Grief for the untimely death of a child, is what a good-natured parent cannot refrain ; and therefore how much soever we may suppose that the two young men Nadab and Abihu deserved to suffer for their indiscretion ; yet it seems to be an unreasonable restraint upon the innate passions of human nature, for God to forbid Aaron to make any moan or lamentation for them. Nor can we think it any instance of Moses's prudence and modesty, to commend himself so highly *for being very meek, above all the men that were upon the face of the earth*, or to relate the difference between him and his brother and sister, who seem to have had sufficient reason to quarrel with him, for marrying another Ethiopian

(d) Numb. xi. 29. (e) Matth. xv. 17, 20. (f) Lev. xi. 13.

“ woman,

“ woman, and so disgracing their family, by a base and  
 “ idolatrous alliance. A. M.  
2514, &c.  
Ant Christ.  
1490, &c.  
from Exod.  
xxxiv. 28.  
to Numb.  
xviii.  
 “ Fit however it was to bring the matter to a speedy  
 “ accommodation, otherwise the defection of Korah might  
 “ have proved more dangerous, and the juggle of Aaron’s  
 “ fructifying rod (which, according to the history, was  
 “ certainly under Moses’s management, and who, by slight  
 “ of hand, might easily have substituted an almond branch  
 “ in the room of it) could not have been carried on so dex-  
 “ troufly. But to make Almighty God interpose in a fa-  
 “ mily quarrel, and condescend so far as to call the seve-  
 “ ral parties before him, is certainly debasing the divine  
 “ Majesty, and giving it an employ a little below its dig-  
 “ nity.”

In this state of our infirmity indeed, we are obliged to  
 repair the gradual decays of our bodies with a supply of  
 daily food; but in that of a greater perfection, there will be  
 no occasion for these weak supports of human nature. In  
 the mean time we are assured, that *(g) man doth not live  
 by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the  
 mouth of God*, by whose command our natural perspira-  
 tion may be so shut up, and the instruments of our diges-  
 tion so retarded, as to make a small quantity of meat sub-  
 sist us for a considerable time. Elijah, we read, had *(h)*  
*but a cake baken on the coals, and a cruse of water* for his  
 whole repast, even when he was going to undertake a long  
 journey; and yet we find, that both under the fatigue of  
 body, and expence of spirits, which travelling must ne-  
 cessarily occasion, he was enabled to *go in the strength of  
 that meat forty days and forty nights*. And for the like  
 reasons we may suppose, that Moses being now received  
 within the cloud on Mount Sinai, might find no uneasy  
 cravings of appetite during his stay, and long conversation  
 with God.

The Jews have a proverb with relation to this long  
 fasting of his, *(i)* which tends to this purpose, “ That a-  
 “ bove, where there is neither eating nor drinking, Moses  
 “ staid eighty days, *(viz.* at two different times), and be-  
 “ came like the angels; and below, where men do eat and  
 “ drink, ministering angels come down, and eat and  
 “ drink like them.” Whereby they seem to impute this  
 alteration of appetite in both to a change of climate, rather  
 than a miracle. But whether the climate contributes

*(g)* Matth. iv. 4. *(h)* 1 Kings xix. 6. 8. *(i)* Vid. Buxtorf.  
 Vol. II. 3 K 10

A. M.  
2514, etc.  
Ant. Chriſt.  
1490, etc.  
from Exod.  
xxxiv. 28.  
to Numb.  
xviii.

to it or no, it is certain, that God, by influences and emanations from himſelf, can ſupport a man as long as he thinks fit, and keep up his ſpirits in their juſt height, without the common recruits of any kind of aliment.

It is another notion of the Jews, (*k*) that as eating and drinking are actions which prejudice the underſtanding, God, who intended to prepare his ſervant for the reception of the revelations he was going to communicate, withheld all meat and drink from him, that by depressing his bodily faculties, he might exalt his intellectual. In the caſe of Daniel, it is certain, that in order to diſpoſe him for the heavenly viſion, (*l*) *he did eat no pleaſant bread, neither came fleſh or wine in his mouth, for three whole weeks together*, as himſelf teſtifies : And therefore, conſidering the many wonderful things which God intended to impart to Moſes, there ſeems to be a propriety at leaſt, if not an abſolute neceſſity, of his being put under the like regimen, to enable him, with more facility, to comprehend them.

St. Paul is ſuppoſed to ſpeak of himſelf, (though modeſty makes him conceal it), when he expreſſes his viſions in theſe words :———(*m*) *I knew a man in Chriſt, above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body I cannot tell, or out of the body, I cannot tell, God knoweth) ſuch an one caught up to the third heaven ; and I knew ſuch a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body I cannot tell, God knoweth), how he was caught up into paradise, and heard unſpeakable words which it is not lawful, or (as the marginal note has it) not poſſible for man to utter.* Now, wherever the divine preſence is, there is paradise, and there is heaven : And therefore, if St. Paul, when he was in a viſion, and thought himſelf tranſlated to the regions above, in the contemplation of the wonderful things he ſaw and heard there, loſt all ſenſe of his body, and perceptions of its affections ; why may we not ſuppoſe, that the joy and extaſy wherewith Moſes was tranſported, upon the like occaſion, made him never think of once eating or drinking.

A man muſt be a ſtranger to deep ſtudy and meditation, who has not experienced in himſelf a total forgetfulneſs for ſome time, not only of the nimble minutes, as they paſſed away, but of the neceſſities of nature likewise, as they came upon him ; and even found, at length, that his

(*k*) Patrick's Commentary. (*l*) Dan. x. 3. (*m*) 2 Cor. xii. 2. &c.

## Chap. II. from the Israelites departure from Egypt, &c. 443.

recollection, and sensation of these things, proceeded from an imbecility of his mind, which was not able to endure a continued intention, or stretch of thought, more than any natural call, which seems to have been suspended as long as his superior faculties were thus agreeably employed. With much more reason therefore we may conclude, that in the presence of God, where the mind might be impregnated with a power to sustain the fatigue of close perpetual thinking, the variety of objects which presented themselves would be so great, and the entertainment of its intellectual faculties so very strong, as would quite absorb all corporal desires and appetites.

Had Moses therefore been employed in no farther capacity, than barely in contemplating the many amazing wonders of God's infinite being, which the irradiations from his beatific presence must have transfused upon his mind, this had been enough to suspend all other operations, and engross, as it were, the whole complex of his faculties. But besides this, the Scripture informs us, that (n) he took a review of the model of the tabernacle, and its furniture, which God had shewn him when he was with him before, and (as we may suppose) received fresh instructions from God. This could not but take up some portion of his time; as most of the remainder of it seems to have been spent in (o) prayer and intercession with God for the people, that he would restore them entirely to his favour, and bring them, in his good appointed time, to their inheritance.

Upon the whole therefore it appears, that Moses was in the presence of God all the while that he continued on the mount; had a full employ for his mind and thoughts during that time; and, by the divine influence, and his spirits sustained in their proper height, and his animal part preserved without wasting; he could have no leisure to think of eating and drinking, or that (had he thought thereon) he could find in himself no call or occasion for it.

The word *Karan*, which our translators have made *shining*, is by the Vulgate rendered *cornutus*, or *horned*; and from this misapplication of ideas, painters very probably have been induced to draw Moses with a pair of horns branching, as it were, out of his forehead; whereas the

A. M.  
2514, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1490, &c.  
from Exod.  
xxxiv. 28.  
to Numb.  
xviii.

(n) From the beginning of the 25th chapter of Exodus to end of the 30th chapter. (o) Deut. ix. 18, 19, 25, 26, and x. 10.

Why Mo-  
ses's face  
did not  
shine, at  
the first go-  
ing up to  
the mount.

A. M. 2514, etc. proper representation of him should be, with a glory covering his head, in the manner that the saints are painted in the Roman church : For it is not improbable, that the hair of his head was interspersed with rays of light, at the same time that a certain beauteous lustre proceeded from his face, and dazzled the eyes of its beholders.

Ant. Christ.  
1490, etc.  
from Exod.  
xxxiv. 28.  
to Numb.  
xviii.

Moses was certainly in this, as well as many other things, an eminent type of our Saviour Christ, and the change of his countenance an emblem of our Lord's transfiguration upon the mount, when (*p*) *his face* (as the Evangelist relates the matter) did *shine as the sun, and his raiment was as white as the light*. In both cases, it was the glorious being (*q*) within the cloud, that transfused this radiant splendor around his son and servant : But the reason why Moses, at his first time of being upon the mount, and conversing with God, did not contract this wonderful brightness, seems to be this,——That he had not then seen the divine Majesty in so great a splendour as he did now. He was obliged then to keep at a more awful distance from the tremendous throne of God, and not come within the circle of its refulgency ; but now, upon his humble petition, God was pleased to vouchsafe him such a sight of his glory as his human nature could bear. So that, by being permitted to come within the circumference of it, he carried off (though unknown to himself) \* such a beamy lustre from the divine refulgency, as (like the lambent fires wherewith the poets adorn the temples of their heroes) played about his head and face, and there was permanent for some considerable time : For Moses being now to bring down the tables of the covenant from the mount, that the people might not suspect him of any fallacy or collusion, or think that his pretence to a correspondence with the Deity (as that of some subsequent lawgivers proved) was vain and fictitious, God was pleased to send along with

(*g*) Matth. xvii. 2

(*q*) Ver. 5.

\* It was a custom amongst the ancient Heathens, and probably derived from what here befel Moses, to represent the gods with a beamy glory around their heads, *ἐν τῇ κεφαλῇ ἀκτίνες φέροντες* to carry rays about their heads, as Lucian *De Dea Syria* has it : And hence it was, that the Roman Emperors who were raised so much above the rest of mankind, that they were honoured as a sort of deities, were thus represented, as appears from the testimony of Pliny, (among many more), who in his panegyric to Trajan, makes the *radiatum Domitiani caput* the subject of some banter ; *Patrick's Commentary*.

him



## Chap. II. from the Israelites departure from Egypt, &c. 445

him this testimony, as it were, of his having held communion with God. For the miraculous radiancy wherewith he was adorned, shewed in what company he had been during his absence; confirmed his message to the people; and in every respect carried new credentials in it.

It may seem a little strange indeed, why a people so immediately under the guidance of God, should every day stand in need of so many new credentials, and upon every little emergency, fall a murmuring and rebelling against the God of Israel, and his servant Moses. St. Stephen, in quoting the prophet Amos, has let us into the cause of this people's frequent prevarications: (r) *O ye house of Israel, have ye offered to me slain beasts and sacrifices, by the space of forty years in the wilderness! Yea, ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch, † and the star of your God Remphan, figures which ye made to worship them.* By *Moloch* the learned are pretty well agreed, that we are to understand the image of the sun, and by *Remphan*, that of the planet Saturn; and that the worship of these idols was a common thing among the Israelites, in the time of their sojourning in the wilderness, is manifest from that passage of the prophet, where he introduces God thus complaining of the perverseness of that people: (s) *In the day that I chose Israel, and lifted up my hand unto the seed of the house of Jacob, to bring them forth*

A. M.  
2514, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1490, &c.  
from Exod.  
xxxiv. 28.  
to Numb.  
xviii.

Why the  
Israelites  
were so apt  
to murmur  
and mutiny.

(c) Acts vii. 42, 43.

† Thus the Septuagint, from whom St. Stephen took this passage in Amos, translate it; but the import of the Hebrew text is this, *Ye have borne the tabernacle of your kings, and the pedestal (so the word Chiun signifies) of your images, the star of your gods, which ye made to yourselves.* So that it seems very probable, that the LXX read *Rephan*, or *Revan*, instead of *Chiun* or *Chevan*, and thereby mistook the pedestal for a god. Kircher however, and Salmasius assert, that *Kiionis Saturn*; that his star is called *Keiran* among the Persians and Arabians, and that *Remphan*, or *Rephan*, signified the same thing among the Egyptians; and therefore they suppose, that the Septuagint, who made their translation in Egypt, changed the word *Chiun* into that of *Remphan*, because they had the same signification, *Remphan* is generally supposed to have been an Egyptian god; and Hammond, in his notes upon Acts vii. 43. is of opinion, that this was the name of a certain King of Egypt, who after his death was deified by his subjects: but of what make and figure the image of this idol was, or in what manner he was worshipped, we can no where learn; *Calmet's Dictionary*, under the words *Chiun* and *Remphan*.

(s) Ezek. xx. 5, &c.

A. M.  
2514, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1490, &c.  
from Exod.  
xxiv. 28.  
to Numb.  
xviii.

*out of the land of Egypt, unto a land that I had espied for them, flowing with milk and honey, then said I unto them, "Cast ye away every man the abominations of his eyes, and defile not yourselves with the idols of Egypt: I am the Lord your God." But they rebelled against me, and would not hearken unto me; they did not every man cast away the abominations of their eyes, neither did they forsake the idols of Egypt. Nay, so far were they from forsaking the idols of Egypt, that we find them adopting strange gods from every other neighbouring nation; which occasioned that severe commination in God: (t) I will set my face against that man, and will cut him off from among his people, because he has given of his seed unto † Moloch, to defile my sanctuary, and to profane my holy name. And of any one fail to punish this idolater, then will I set my face, says God, against that man and against his family, and will cut him off, and all that go a-whoring after him, from among their people.*

Now, if Idolatry was a practice which the Israelites retained, and in some instances improved after their departure out of Egypt, there is great reason to presume, that

(t) Lev. xx. 3. &c.

† The rabbins assure us, that the idol Moloch, (which was the same as Baal, the Sun, or Lord of heaven, worshipped by all the people in the east), had its image made of brass, sitting upon a throne of the same metal, having the head of a calf, adorned with royal crown, and his arms extended as it were to embrace any thing: but what the childrens passing through the fire means, they are not so well agreed. Some of them are of opinion, that parents, in the worship of this idol, did not actually burn their children, but only caused them to leap through fire that was lighted before it, or to pass between two fires placed opposite to each other, by way of lustration; but the expressions of David are a little too strong to admit of this interpretation. For when he tells us, that *they sacrificed their sons and daughters unto devils, and that they shed innocent blood, even the blood of their sons and daughters, whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan*, Psal. cvi. 37, 38. we cannot but infer, that they did actually murder their children in this execrable way. — When any infants were to be sacrificed, the idol was made hot by kindling a great fire in the inside of it; and when it was heated to a most intense degree, the miserable victim was put into its arms, and soon consumed by the violence of the heat; but that the cries of the children might not be heard in their extremities, the people were wont to make a great noise with drums, and other instruments about the idol; *Calmet's Dictionary, and Dissertations.*

these idolators were the very murmurers also who infected the camp with their infidelity. They might believe (because they saw so many manifestations of it) the residence of a God among them; but then it is not unlikely, that they thought of him (as most of the heathens thought of their gods) that he was a local and limited deity, who had done something for them indeed, but could not do all they wanted; who had brought them into the wilderness, but had not the power to conduct them into Canaan.

In this manner it is, that the Psalmist represents them reasoning with themselves. (u) *Shall this God of ours prepare us a table in the wilderness? He smote the stony rock indeed, that the water gushed out, and the streams flowed withal; but can he give bread also, and provide flesh for his people?* Many of these miracles they saw wrought before their eyes; but then they might look upon Moses who did them, (x) to be no more than a mere magician, though perhaps of a better sort than those of Egypt; and consequently might be apprehensive, that upon every new turn and exigence, his art would fail him: and therefore having no better notions of God, and so gross a conception of their leader, it is no manner of wonder, that they ran into murmuring and discontent, into riot and disorder, upon every little difficulty that pressed them.

Two times we find them complaining for the want of such food as they desired; once (y) in the wilderness of Sin, a few days after their passage of the Red sea, and again, at the encampment (z) of Kibroth-Hattaavah, not long after their departure from mount Sinai; and at both of these times God thought proper to send them quails; not out of any destitution or scarcity of other provision, (for (a) *all the beasts of the forest are his, and so are the cattle upon a thousand hills; he knows all the fowls upon the mountains, and the wild beasts of the field are in his sight*), but for this very reason, — That how willing soever he might be to supply his people's necessities; he had no design to pamper their appetites with a needless variety, or to multiply miracles without any just occasion. And therefore, as both these events happened in the spring, when quails (which are found in great quantities upon the coasts of the Red sea) are accustomed to pass from Asia in-

(u) Psal. lxxviii. 20, 21. (x) Bibliotheca Bibl. vol. 4. accaf. annot. 5. (y) Exod. xvi. 3, 13. (z) Numb. xi. 34. (a) Psal. l. 10, 11.

A. M. to Europe, God caused a wind to arise, which in their  
 2514, &c. flight drove them towards the camp of the Israelites, and  
 Ant. Christ. 1490, &c. (b) (as the eastern tradition has it) was so very violent, that  
 from Exod. it broke their wings, and made them fall at a convenient  
 xxxiv. 28. distance, and in a proper condition to be taken up.  
 to Numb. xviii.

That quails among us are very excellent food, cannot be denied; but the same tradition informs us, that these birds, in Arabia Fœlix, do vastly surpass all others, and (as our author expresses it) have neither bones, veins, nor sinews in them, i. e. are very fat and tender, something like our fig-peckers and ortolans. And therefore, though God refused to gratify their palates with a profuse variety of dainties; yet is there no fault to be found with his provision, since the food he sent them was delicious in its kind, and a whole year had now intervened between the former and latter flight of quails, to whet their appetites, and prevent any danger of being cloyed with the same dish.

Why he was  
 angry at  
 their second  
 murmuring  
 though not  
 at the first.

Something however there was in their behaviour, which provoked God in this their latter, more than their former complaint for want of flesh, to punish them so severely. (c) The desire of flesh for food is in itself but natural, and, absolutely speaking, far from being criminal or provoking to the author of nature, who created every appetite of man, as well as his understanding: but when this breaks out into murmuring, mutiny, and disorder, the case is then entirely altered. In the former of these cases, the people were in want of bread, and really pinched with hunger; but in the latter, they had bread from heaven in abundance, and may therefore be said to complain not out of need, but wantonness. Their discontent in the former case was expressed comparatively, in modest terms; but here their tone is, (d) *Who shall give us flesh to eat? We remember the fish which we did eat in Egypt freely, the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic; but now our soul is dried away: there is nothing at all besides this manna before our eyes.* This same contempt of the manna, which God so miraculously sent from heaven, especially in persons so well instructed in the divine will, was such an instance of baseness and ingratitude, as justly deserved the punishment it met with.

(b) *Vid. Bibl. Orient. p. 749. col. 1.* (c) *Bibliotheca Bibl. vol. 4. occas. annot. 3.* (d) *Numb. xi. 5, &c.*

In the former time of their complaining, God winked at their ignorance, and pitied their distrets; he had not then given them his laws for the rule of their actions and appetites; and therefore, never looking to reap where he had not sowed, he was not so extreme as to mark what they had done amiss; but after he had published his precepts from the holy mount, and many more instructions from the tabernacle, he then expected that their obedience should keep pace with their knowledge, and was more provoked at their backslidings than before, because they proceeded not from the ignorance of their minds, but the perverseness of their wills: for this was the true and the just cause of their (e) *condemnation, that even when light was come into the world, they loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.*

In the 11th chapter of the book of Leviticus, we have a catalogue of the beasts, fishes, and fowls, which God either permitted, or prohibited the Israelites to eat. From his first making choice of them, God's purpose was to distinguish them from other nations, and more especially from the Egyptians, among whom they had long lived, had contracted their manners, and were too tenacious of their customs: and therefore, in opposition to these, he enjoined them to eat such creatures as were worshipped in Egypt, which would be an effectual means to render the pretences of these sham deities contemptible; as, on the contrary, he ordered them to abstain from those that were held in the greatest delicacy among them. And because the Egyptians would have nothing to do with such animals as had hoofs and horns, the Jews were allowed to eat none but what parted the hoof, as well as chewed the cud.

It is to be observed farther, that in the very make and nature of some animals, there are certain qualities which prejudice mankind against them, and seem as it were to defecrate their use; that some, for instance, are monstrously big, others very ugly and deformed; some come from heterogeneous mixtures, others feed upon dead bodies; and to others most men have an inbred antipathy; so that, in the main, what the law forbade the Jews in this regard, was nature's aversion before: but then the question is, — Why the things which they were naturally averse to, and would have refrained without it, were made the matter of a divine interdiction?

(e) John iii. 19.

A. M. Now, if we trace the history of these people, we shall  
 2514, etc. find, that they had their seasons of affliction and scarcity,  
 An. Carist. as well as of prosperity and plenty. At the very time when  
 1490, etc. these prohibitions were given them, they were travelling,  
 from Exod. and were to continue travelling for many years in a waste  
 xxxiv. 28. and barren desert, which being destitute of the convenien-  
 to Numo. cies and necessities of life, might tempt them to make ex-  
 xlii. periment upon the flesh of some of these animals that they  
 naturally abhorred; but upon this occasion, as they thought,  
 might innocently make use of: and therefore, to set a  
 stronger guard upon human nature, God thought proper  
 to confirm this their innate aversion, by the sanction and  
 establishment of laws which were to last beyond the term  
 of their continuance in the wilderness.

The truth is, this people, by their gross impieties and  
 prevarications with God, brought frequently upon them-  
 selves famines, and sieges, and other calamities, wherein  
 they suffered very grievously. To pass by the famines,  
 which happened (*f*) in Judea, (*g*) in the times of the  
 Judges, and (*h*) in David's days; in the reign of Ahab,  
 there was (*i*) a dreadful one in Samaria, when an *ass's head*  
*was sold for fourscore pieces of silver, and the fourth part of a*  
*cab of doves dung* (it should be rendered *pulse*) *for five pie-*  
*ces of silver*; and (what is more lamentable still) when mo-  
 thers entered into compact about eating their own children.  
 But the most tragical account of all is that which their own  
 historian has recorded of them, at the siege of Jerusalem  
 by Titus, when wives snatched the necessities of life from  
 their husbands, children from their parents, and parents  
 from their children; (*k*) when mothers were forced, for  
 their own support, to defraud their infants of the little milk  
 that was in their breasts, while the infants were dying in  
 their arms for want of it; when hunger and necessity turn-  
 ed every thing into victuals, and (what is shocking to hu-  
 man nature but barely to think on) (*l*) made one Jewish  
 lady of quality eat her own child.

Now the use that I would make of this melancholy part  
 of their history is this: — That as to God's pre-  
 sence, were present from everlasting all the wickednesses,

(*f*) Bibliotheca Bibl. vol. 3. occasional annot. 3. (*g*) Ruth  
 i. 1. (*h*) 2 Sam. xxi: 1. (*i*) 2 Kings vi. 25 (*k*) Jo-  
 seph De Bello Jud. lib. 5. c. 10. (*l*) Joseph. De Bello Jud.  
 lib. 6. c. 3.

and rebellions of this people; so were those penalties and judgments, which his infinite wisdom determined to be most suitable to them. For what method can be thought more proper to make an impression upon those that forsake God, than that he should forsake them, *i. e.* so far, at least, as to withdraw the succours of life from them? A. M. 2514, etc. Ant. Christ. 1490, &c. fr m Exod. xxiv. 28. to Numb. xviii.

And considering his prohibition of certain animals for food under this view, it was certainly a kind and generous warning to his people, not to bring themselves, in consequence of these provocations, (which he foreknew, and against which he had so strictly cautioned them), into such circumstances, as would oblige them either to forbear the very last means of sustaining life, or to break more of God's commandments than they had done before.

But there is a farther reason arising from the quality of animals, why God might enact a discrimination of meats, and that is, —to give his people therein a mystical system of morality. Thus the birds which were allowed to be eaten, (the pigeon, the dove, the partridge, for instance) were either tame, or of gentle nature, feeding on grain or pulse; whereas all the species that lived on prey, and such as gorge themselves with flesh and blood, were utterly forbidden, thereby to bring into reputation justice and mercy, and moderation, and at the same time to discountenance the contrary disposition to rapine, oppression, and cruelty. It is a noted allegory, that in Homer, of Circe's changing Ulysses's friends into hogs. By *Circe*, the poet intends that we should understand *sensual pleasures*; by *Ulysses*, *reason and discretion*; and by his *retinue*, the *inferior faculties and powers*: and in like manner, the prohibition of swine's flesh was designed to restrain the Jews from such lusts as war against the spirit, as pollute and debase human nature, like that creature's wallowing in the mire: for (as a learned author observes) (*m*) the Jewish law was more remarkably strict in its prohibitions of things that were fordid and slovenly; wherein it seems to have had an especial aim to the training and forming of a people that had lived uncultivated, by reason of their long slavery in Egypt, and their dirty work in clay and bricks, to an elegance and politeness of manners, as well as a detestation of all filthy and brutal lusts, that *being set free from sin*, (as the apostle expresses it), (*n*) *they might glorify God in purity and holiness, both in their bodies, and in their spirits, which were his.*

(*m*) Spencer, De Legibus Heb.

(*n*) 1 Cor. vi. 20.

A. M.  
2514, etc.  
Ant. Chris.  
1490, c.c.  
from Exod.  
xxxiv. 28.  
to Numb.  
xviii.

Why God  
made use of  
types in the  
Jewish ser-  
vice.

The same apostle, in his epistle to the Hebrews, has informed us, *that (o) the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope, by which we draw nigh unto God, did.* The Jewish high-priest was a type of our blessed Saviour, and his entrance into the holy of holies, of our Lord's his ascension into heaven, after his resurrection. The sacrifices which were offered under the Levitical law, were previous representations of the death of Christ; and the redemption of mankind, by the effusion of his blood, was exhibited every day in the several oblations in the tabernacle: *(p) For if the blood of bulls, and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh; how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, purge the conscience from dead works, to serve the living God?* Now, besides the arguments which might be drawn from the grossness of the Jews understanding, and their incapacity to receive a more spiritual dispensation, God might have this farther design in setting before them the mystery of man's redemption under such typical representations, *viz.* that thereby he might excite their industry, and give a fuller scope to the exercise of their faith. For that the faith, and hope, and other graces of the patriarchs and devout Jews, were more effectually proved by the exhibition of things ambiguous and obscure, than if they had been altogether opened in the fullest and plainest propositions, is a matter that can hardly be contested. To rest assured, that God would bring to pass what he had expressly and circumstantially foretold, shewed indeed a sincere and true faith in general; but to be persuaded, that faint resemblances, and the remotest hints were pregnant with certainty and solidity, and would, in their proper time, be gloriously completed, (how unintelligible soever they might be at present), was (if we may so call it) a special advance of heroic faith, and rendered their dependence and resignation as complete as possible. And accordingly the apostle, having enumerated several ancient worthies, who by faith extended their views, and looked upon the dispensation they were under, as no more than a system of types and shadows of the good things to come, concludes their cha-

(o) Chap. vii. 19.

(p) Heb. ix. 13.



acter in the following manner : (q) *And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise : God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made so perfect.* So that the Jewish religion and worship was, in some respects, adapted to the capacity and genius both of the learned and ignorant : Of the ignorant, as being made up of pomp and shew enough to attract their attention ; and of the learned, as abounding with shadows and emblems of higher matters, enough to exercise their deepest contemplation.

What the sin of *offering strange fire before the Lord* was, and upon what account it raised the divine indignation against Nadab and Abihu, the two sons of Aaron, will best appear by attending a little to the probable occasion of it. After the consecration of Aaron and his sons to the priestly office, we are told, that a miraculous fire from the Lord, i. e. a fire which either came immediately down from heaven, or out of the cloud which covered the tabernacle, consumed the first victim which Aaron offered for a burnt-offering ; that God had expressly commanded, that (r) *the fire which was upon the altar* should not be suffered to go out, which (according to the consent of most interpreters) signifies, that the said miraculous fire which had confirmed the installation of Aaron and his sons after so surprising a manner, should be kept alive, and burning with the utmost care ; and that, as at this very fire Aaron was (s) required to light the incense which he offered to God in the most holy place, on the great day of expiation ; so may we take it for granted, that the like injunction was imposed on the inferior priests, with relation to the incense which they were to offer every day before God in the holy place. We have indeed no mention made of such a law ; but the history we are commenting upon gives us strong presumption, that the use of this fire only was permitted ; and therefore the words (t) in the text, *which he commanded them not*, is thought to imply an express prohibition of any other.

The crime then of Nadab and Abihu consisted in their kindling the incense, which their office of priests obliged them to offer every morning and evening, with fire different from that which was continually on the altar of burnt-offerings ; and consequently different from what God or-

(q) Heb. xi. 39. 40. (r) Lev. vi. 12. (s) Ibid xvi. 12. (t) Lev. x. 1.

A. M.  
2514. etc.  
Ant. Chris.  
1490, etc.  
from Exod.  
xxxiv. 28.  
to Numb.  
xviii.

dored them, to use. † Other offences indeed have been laid  
to their charge. Some pretend, that they endeavoured to  
intrude into the *most holy place*, which was not permitted  
them to enter; because, immediately after the recital of the  
manner of their death, Moses, in another place relates, that  
God commanded him to speak unto Aaron, *(u)* *That he*  
*should not come, at all times, into the holy place, within the*  
*veils before the mercy seat, that he died not; but others in-*  
*sinuate, that they were guilty of intemperance, at the en-*  
*tertainment made at their installation, because, after the*  
*account of their fatal end, Moses, by God's order, gives*  
*this injunction to Aaron, and the remainder of his sons:*  
*(x) Do not drink wine; nor strong drink, thou, nor thy sons*  
*with thee, when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation,*  
*lest ye die. It shall be a statute for ever through your gene-*  
*rations, that ye may put difference between holy and unholy,*  
*between unclean and clean.* But these are no more than  
bare surmises, that have no proper foundation in the fore-  
going texts; nor is there any occasion to hunt out for pas-  
sages to augment these offenders crime.

Nadab and Abihu had not only been admitted, in com-  
mon with the rest of their brethren, to the honour of the  
priesthood, which, among the Jews, was a dignity of  
no small esteem; but had particular motives which the  
others had not, to the observance of all God's command-  
ments, as having had the privilege of seeing the symbols of  
the divine presence, (on the formidable mount from  
whence his laws were promulged, without being consumed.  
The higher therefore their station was, and the more dis-  
tinguishing the favours they had received, the more pro-  
voking was their affront, in attempting to adulterate an

† The author of the Connection so often cited, supposes ano-  
ther kind of innovation to have been the occasion of their un-  
timely death. God as yet, says he, had given no law for the  
offering of incense in censers; all that had been commanded  
about it, was that Aaron should burn it upon the *altar of in-*  
*cense* every morning and every evening; but, these men took  
upon them to begin, and introduce a service into religion,  
which was not appointed, and which, if it had been suffered,  
would have opened a door to great irregularities; and there-  
fore God, by an exemplary judgment upon the first offenders,  
put an effectual stop to it; *Stuckford, vol. 3. lib. 11.*

(u) Lev. xvi. 2.

(x) Ibid. x. 9. 10.

ordinance

ordinance of God's institution. Common fire, they thought, might serve the purpose of burning incense, as well as that which was held more sacred : At least, in the gaiety, or rather naughtiness of their hearts, they were minded to make the experiment, even in opposition to the divine command; and therefore (y) it was just and requisite in God (especially in the beginning of the priesthood, and when one alteration of a divine precept might, in process of time, be productive of many more), to inflict an exemplary punishment, that others might hear, and fear, and not commit the like abomination.

A. M.  
2514, &c.  
Ant. Chriſt.  
1490, &c.  
from Exod.  
xxxiv. 28.  
to Numb.  
xviii.

And for this reason, viz. the injection of terrour into others, Moses is commanded to make no lamentation, or funeral pomp for them ; which among the Jews, who of all other nations, were so very sumptuous in their obsequies of their deceased friends, was accounted a sore judgment. In the case of Jehoiakim the King of Judah, the commination of God is thought very terrible. (z) *They shall not lament for him, saying, Ah my brother, or ah sister: They shall not lament for him, saying, Ah Lord, or ah his glory. He shall be buried with the burial of an ass, drawn, and cast forth beyond the gates of Jerusalem.* Temporal judgments however are not always sure indications of the final commendations of the person on whom they fall ; and therefore Aaron had no occasion utterly to despond : On the contrary, he might presume, that the justice of God being satisfied with the present punishment of his sons, might be appeased with relation to their eternal state ; and that though their (a) *flesh was destroyed, yet their spirits might be saved in the day of the Lord.* He knew too, much himself had offended in the matter of the golden calf, and might justly think, that God had called his sin to remembrance in the destruction of his two sons. He acknowledged therefore the righteousness of God, in all that he had brought upon him, and in the phrase of Scripture, (b) *was dumb, and opened not his mouth, because it was the Lord's doing.*

Aaron's behaviour thereupon.

What the occasion of the difference between Moses and his brother Aaron, and sister Miriam was, is not so very evident : The history indeed tells us, that (c) *they spake against Moses, because of the Ethiopian or rather Arabian woman, whom he had married.* The generality of

The occasion of the difference between Moses and his brother and sister.

(y) Le Clerc's Commentary. (z) Jer. xxii. 18. 19. (a) 1 Cor. v. 5. (b) Psal. xxxix. 9. (c) Numb. xii. 1.

A. M.  
2514, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
3490, &c.  
from Exod.  
xxxiv. 28.  
to Numb.  
xviii.

interpreters suppose this woman to be Zipporah, the daughter of Jethro, whom he married in Midiah; for those who imagine her to have been another, can hardly get over this difficulty,——Why Moses should set so bad an example, as to marry, at two several times, a foreigner, rather than one of the daughters of his people. The first time indeed that he did so, was when he lived in a state of exile, but was nevertheless kindly received in a family of the best distinction in the place, which might be inducement enough for his matching himself with one of the daughters, since no express precept against matches of this kind was then in force. But now that he was set at the head of a people, who were to be separated from the rest of mankind, and was conducting them into a country, with whose inhabitants they were to have no matrimonial intercourse, for fear of introducing idolatry, it would have been highly indecent and unpopular, an affront upon his own countrywomen, as well as a dangerous inlet to impiety, for him to have married into an idolatrous nation; nor would his brother and sister have been the only persons to clamour against him, but the whole congregation would have risen up in arms, upon so notorious a provocation. Since therefore we hear of no such commotion, we may reasonably conclude, that this Cushite, or Arabian woman, was the same Zipporah, whom he had married some forty years before. But then why they should quarrel with him upon her account, at this time, and no sooner, is the difficulty.

Now to resolve this we must observe, that when Jethro, his father-in-law, was in the camp, it was by his advice that Moses (*d*) instituted judges to determine lesser causes; and that he found his son Hobab so very serviceable to him in the capacity of a camp-master-general, that || he earnestly intreated him to continue with him, and received

(*d*) Exod. xviii. 21. 22.

|| Moses's words to Hobab are these:—*Leave us not, I pray thee, forasmuch as thou knowest how we are to encamp in the wilderness, and thou mayest be to us instead of eyes*, Numb. x. 31. But if the being which resided in the miraculous cloud was their guide, what need was there for Hobab's stay? Now the design of the cloud was to direct the people when to decamp, and where to encamp again: But for the securing of their camp against all hostile force, they were left to human means:

And

ceived him, no doubt, into great confidence. It is to be observed farther, that in the foregoing chapter, we have an account of the creation of the seventy elders to assist in the administration, and that these elders were nominated by Moses, without ever consulting Aaron or Miriam. As therefore the story of their quarrelling with him is immediately subjoined, it seems very likely, that taking themselves to be neglected, in so great an alteration made in the government without their advice, they were very angry; but not daring to charge Moses directly, they fell foul upon his wife, giving her opprobrious names, and complaining to the people very probably, that she and her brother had too much power and influence over Moses.

Josephus, in his Jewish history, makes no mention of this family-difference, as thinking that it might reflect discredit upon his nation; but Moses was an author of more veracity, than to conceal any action, which was proper for mankind to know, even though it tended to the lasting disgrace of his own family. For he does not affect to aggrandize the thing, or to make his family appear more considerable, when he introduces God as arbitrating the difference between them; but purely to acquaint us, that as the Israelites lived then under a theocracy, God himself being their immediate King, undertook to decide the controversies depending between such of his chief ministers as were not accountable to any other judge, nor was the divine Majesty any more debased in condescending to make this decision, than any earthly prince would be, by interposing his authority to determine a controversy between two of his great and powerful subjects.

Moses indeed inserts a passage, to show, that the occasion of this family quarrel was not from him; that he was a man of a meek and peaceable disposition; and there-

And therefore Hobab, having lived long a borderer upon the wilderness, was well acquainted with every part of it, and the better able to advise them, both whence to provide themselves with such things as they wanted, and how to secure themselves against any neighbouring powers that should attempt to assault them: and for these reasons Moses was so pressing for his staying with him; tho' the Septuagint understand the passage, as if he desired him to continue to be what he had hitherto been in the wilderness, viz. a good adviser, like his father Jethro, and withal assured him, that he would look upon him as an elder;

*Patrick's Commentary.*

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1490, etc.  
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Why Moses mentions it.

Why Moses might commend himself, without endangering the authenticity of his writings.

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2514, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1490, &c.  
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fore not addicted to strife and contention, especially with those of his own kindred ; and why might he not insert this, when it was no more than what was due to his character, and perhaps at that time necessary for his own vindication ? St. Paul, to clear himself from some aspersions which the malice of his enemies had cast upon him, enters upon his own commendation, though it be with some reluctance, and to give it a better gloss, tries all the powers of eloquence in working it up. (e) *Whereinsoever any is bold*, says he, *I speak foolishly, I am bold also. Are they Hebrews ? So am I. Are they Israelites ? So am I. Are they the seed of Abraham ? So am I. Are they ministers of Christ ? I speak as a fool, I am more : In labours more abundant, in stripes above measure : In prisons more frequent : In deaths often. — In perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by my own countrymen, in perils by the Heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren : In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often ; in hunger and thirst, in fastings often ; in cold and nakedness ; besides those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.* These are the words of our apostle, setting off the faithful discharge of his ministry ; and yet no one ever suspected the genuineness of this his epistle to the Corinthians upon that account: As little reason have we therefore to call in question the authenticity of this book of Moses, because we find a passage or two that speaks favourably of him.

That all historians, both ancient and modern, when they come to speak of the part and concern they had in such and such actions, are commonly accustomed to speak in the third person ; and that the modestest man upon earth may sometimes see occasion to magnify his office, or vindicate himself, without deserving the imputation of vanity or arrogance, cannot be denied. Now considering what share it was that Moses himself bore in the facts which he relates, and that the narrations, laws, and admonitions which he recorded, were not designed for that age only, but directed to all succeeding generations of the world ; and withal considering, that the seditious and turbulent behaviour of his brother and sister at that time obliged him to justify and clear himself ; there was no i-

(e) 2 Cor. xi. 21. &c.

maginable

imaginable way more proper for him to express himself in A. M. than that which he made use of, even had it been a matter of his own study and contrivance: But then, if we suppose that he wrote by divine inspiration, the commendation that is given of his natural lenity and good-nature, must be looked upon rather as the Holy Ghost's testimony concerning Moses, than Moses's testimony concerning himself.

Though Moses was certainly a good-natured man, and therefore could not live long at variance with his brother Aaron, yet we can hardly suppose, that his love and affection for him would ever prevail with him to enter into any fraudulent measures, in order to raise him to the pontificate. The rod which gave Aaron the preference, was not (as we noted before) Moses's wonder-working rod, but, in all probability, one of the same tree from whence the princes of the other tribes cut theirs. All these rods, with the names of the several tribes engraved upon them, were delivered to Moses in the face of the whole congregation, and by him were instantly carried into the tabernacle: And that he did not palm upon the people, when his back was turned, and put an almond-twigg into the place of Aaron's rod, is evident from what is related of it, viz. that it had leaves, buds, blossoms, and ripe fruit upon it, all at one time, which no tree of any kind ever was known to have before.

Some of the vulgar, and less curious, might perhaps, at a cursory view, have been imposed upon by a sham appearance of these things painted on Aaron's rod: But Moses knew very well, that he had the heads of each tribe to deal with; men of sagacity and observation, and who were too nearly concerned in the experiment to let any pretence to a miracle go unexamined: And therefore we may very well imagine, that when he brought forth all the rods the next morning, they surveyed every one very carefully, and made diligent search into the alteration which had passed upon that which belonged to Aaron; and, had they found any deception in it, would have exposed the two brothers to contempt and ridicule, or rather have deposed them from all rule and power for the future, as a couple of vile and impious impostors. But, instead of that, we find that this miracle silenced all cavils for ever after against Aaron and his family; confirmed

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the authority of Moses; and made the people (when he told them, that, by God's appointment, he had laid up Aaron's rod to be a witness against them, that if they murdered any more, they should most certainly be destroyed) break out into this doleful complaint: (*f*) *Behold we die, we perish, we all perish, and shall be consumed with dying*: For they began now to believe God's threatenings, and to fear, that at one time or other they should experience some heavy and severe punishment, as by this new sign he had convinced them that they justly deserved it.

Thus I have endeavoured to answer most of the material objections which have industriously been raised against the sacred history of this period; and, were it any farther confirmation of its truth and authority, I might add, (*g*) that the whole matter of Korah, how he rebelled against Moses, and made a defection among the people, for which he suffered the very judgment that the Scripture relates, was doubtless of standing tradition in the east. which the Mahometans have borrowed, and given us at second hand: That the consumption of Aaron's sacrifice (*h*) *by the fire which came from the Lord*, raised the report, (*i*) that, in ancient times, men did not kindle fire upon their altars, but called it down from heaven by prayer, and that the flame was produced by the deity to whom the sacrifice was offered: That the irradiation of Moses's face, when he came down from the mount, introduced the custom among the Heathens, of adorning the images of their gods and heroes with a beamy glory about their heads: That the veneration paid to his wonder-working rod, established an usage which prevails almost every where, (*k*) for the great ministers of state to carry in their hands wands, as ensigns of their office, whenever they appear at court; and that the budding of his

(*f*) Numb. xvii. 12, 13. (*g*) Calmet's Dictionary, under the word *Korah*. (*h*) Lev ix. 24. (*i*) Servius in *Æneid*. lib. 12. ver. 200; and Patrick's Commentary *in locum*. From the fire of the altar, which, in the Mosaic language, was called *the fire of the Lord*, as it came down from heaven, and was perpetually kept burning, it is obvious, at first sight, that the Greeks derived, in the way of etymology, their *isla*, and the Romans their vestal fire, so famous in all history; *Bibliotheca Bibl. on Numb. annot.* 2.

(*k*) Huet. *Quæst. Alnet.*

brother



brother Aaron's rod, in all probability, gave rise to (l) the fable of Hercules's club, when left in the ground, striking root downward, and so reviving, and repullulating. But I chuse rather, in this place, to remark the great affinity between the divine and human laws, so far as they relate to what we call the *decalogue*, inasmuch, that whatever the ancient Heathen law-givers have enacted about these matters, seems little more than a transcript from the ten commandments, which Moses delivered to the Jews.

Thus, the unity of God, and the folly of making any image of him, (which constitute the two first commandments), was an (m) institution of Numa, which he took from Pythagoras, who maintained, that there was only one supreme Being, and that, as he is perfectly spiritual, and the object of the mind only, no visible representation can be made of him. The reverence of God's holy name (which is the subject of the third) was recognized by the Heathens in all their solemn contracts, promises, and asseverations; and for this reason Plato (in his book *De Legibus*) acquaints us, that "it is (n) an excellent lesson, to be very cautious and tender, in so much as mentioning the very name of God." The setting apart one day in seven, and the observation of it for religious purposes, was a practice so general in the Pagan world, that, according to Philo, this seventh day was truly called ἑορτή πάνδημος, or *the universal festival*, and by the Athenians, according to the laws then in force, was observed with the utmost strictness, and such as admitted of no servile work. The honour and respect due to parents was secured by that excellent law made by Solon, which declares (o) "that if any one strike his parents, or does not maintain them, and provide them a dwelling, and all things necessary, let him be utterly disregarded, and banished from all civil society." The prohibition of murder is confirmed by the laws of Athens, which make its punishment capital, when wilfully committed; banishment, when by chance-medley; and for every maim designedly given, imposes both a confiscation of goods, and a proscription from the city where the injured person dwells. The prohibition of adultery was sufficiently enforced by Solon, when he left the guilty persons,

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(l) Huet. *ibid.* (m) Clem. Alex. Strom. lib. v.; and Bibliotheca Bibl. on Exod. xx. 4. (n) De Leg. lib. 2. (o) Bibliotheca Bibl. on Deut. Dissert. 3.

A. M. when apprehended in the fact, to the mercy of the injured husband, who, if he suffered them to escape with their lives, had licence to handle the man very roughly, (p) and to divorce the woman, who for her crime was excluded all places of public concourse, and reduced below the condition of a slave. The prohibition of theft was supported by

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Ant. Christ.  
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a law of Draco's, which made felons of what denomination soever lose their lives for their crime; but this being thought too severe, Solon's institution was, that every petty larceny should be punished with double restitution, and sometimes imprisonment, but every greater robbery, to the value of fifty drachms, with death. The prohibition of false witness was (q) ratified by the Athenian laws, which not only punished the offenders with fines, confiscation of goods, and banishment, but degraded them likewise from all dignity, as persons extremely ignominious, and who (according (r) to the law of the twelve tables) deserved to be thrown from the Tarpeian rock. The prohibition of covetousness of all kinds, (which is the tenth and last commandment), nowhere occurs in the edicts of any ancient legislator; for (as (s) a pious bishop well observes) "all the laws that were ever made by any governours upon earth, respected only the words and actions, or the outward carriage and behaviour of their subjects. None ever offered to give laws to the minds, or hearts of men, what they should think, or love, or desire, or the like; and it would have been ridiculous and absurd to have done it, because they could never have known whether such laws were observed or no;" so proper is the question, which their great lawgiver puts to the Jews, (t) *What nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?* So just the commendation which the Royal Psalmist gives of it: *The law of the Lord is an undefiled law, converting the soul: The testimony of the Lord is sure, and giveth wisdom unto the simple.*—*Moreover by them is thy servant taught, and in keeping of them there is great reward.*

(p) Archbishop Potter's Greek Antiquities. (q) Bibliotheca Bibl. ibid. (r) A. Gell. lib. 12. chap. 1. (s) Bishop Beveridge upon the Catechism. (t) Deut. iv. 8. and Psal xix, 7, &c.

D I S-

DISSERTATION II.

*Of the Jewish Tabernacle, &c.*

FROM the very first beginning of time, God had always some place appropriated to the solemn duties of religious worship. (u) Even during the small space of his continuance in paradise, Adam had (x) where to present himself before the Lord; and after his expulsion from thence, his sons, in like manner, had (y) whither to bring their oblations and sacrifices. The patriarchs, both before and after the flood, used (z) altars, and (a) mountains, and (b) groves, for the self-same purpose. Here they had their *proseuchæ*, or places for prayer, which were certain plats of ground, encompassed with a wall, or some other inclosure, and opened above. But since the first place of this kind, that made any considerable figure, was the tabernacle which God ordered Moses to erect in the wilderness, as an habitation for his majestic presence to reside in, it may not be improper, in this place, to give some account of it, and the other holy things appertaining to it.

The tabernacle was a tent, covered with curtains and skins, but much larger than other tents. It was in the form of an oblong square, thirty cubits in length, and ten in height and breadth, and was properly divided into two parts, *viz.* the holy place and the holy of holies. The holy place was twenty cubits long, and ten wide, where stood the table of shew-bread, the golden candlestick, and the altar of incense. The holy of holies (which was likewise called the *sanctuary*) was ten cubits long, and ten broad, contained the ark of the covenant, and was separated from the holy place by a veil, or hanging, made of rich embroidered linen, which hung upon four pillars of shittim, or cedar wood, that were covered with plates of gold, but had their bases made of brass; and at the entrance of the tabernacle, instead of a door, there was a veil of the same work, sustained by the like pillars, which separated it from the outward court.

- (u) Hooker's Ecclef. Polity, lib. 5. (x) Gen. iii. 8.  
 (y) Ibid. iv. 3. (z) Ibid. xiii. 4. (a) Ibid. xxii. 1.  
 (b) Ibid. xxi. 33.

The

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A description  
 of the  
 tabernacle.

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The boards or planks whereof the body of the tabernacle was composed, were in all forty-eight, each a cubit and an half wide, and ten cubits high. Twenty of them went to make up one side of the tabernacle, and twenty the other, and at the west end of it were the other eight, which were all let into one another by two tenons above and below, and compacted together by bars running from one end to the other; but the east end of it was open, and only covered with a rich curtain.

The roof of the tabernacle was a square frame of planks, resting upon their basis; and over these were coverings, or curtains of different kinds. Of these the first, on the inside, was made of fine linen, curiously embroidered in various colours of crimson and scarlet, and purple and hyacinth: The next was made of goats hair neatly wove together; and the last of sheep and badgers skins, (some dyed red, and others of azure blue), which were to preserve the rich curtains from wet, and to protect the tabernacle itself from the injuries of the weather.

The court.

Round about the tabernacle was a large oblong court, an hundred cubits long, and fifty broad, encompassed with pillars overlaid with silver, and whose capitals were of the same metal, but their bases were of brass. Ten of these pillars stood towards the west, six to the east, twenty to the north, and twenty to the south, at five cubits distance from each other; and over these hung curtains made of twined linen-thread, in the manner of net-work, which surrounded the tabernacle on all sides, except at the entrance of the court, which was twenty cubits wide, and sustained with four columns, overlaid with plates of silver. These columns had their capitals and bases of brass; were placed at proportional distances, and covered with a curtain made of richer materials.

The altar  
of burnt-  
offerings.

In this court, and opposite to the entrance of the tabernacle, stood the altar of burnt-offerings in the open air, that the fire, which was kept perpetually upon it, and the smoke arising from the victims that were burnt there, might not spoil the inside of the tabernacle. It was five cubits long, as much in width, and three cubits high; was placed upon a basis of stone-work, and covered both within and without with brass-plates. At the four corners of this altar there was something like four horns, covered with the same metal, and as the altar itself was hollow, and open both at top and bottom, from these horns there hung





*H. Goren sculptor.*

THE JEWISH HIGH PRIEST IN  
HIS PONTIFICAL HABIT.

*Engraved for W. Stacks House's History of the Bible.*

hung a grate made of brass, (fastened with four rings and four chains), whereon the wood and the sacrifice were burnt) and as the ashes fell-through, they were received below in a pan. At a very small distance from this altar there stood on the south side a brazen vessel, which, on account of its extraordinary size, was called the *brazen sea*, in which the priests were used to wash their feet, whenever they were to offer sacrifice, or to go into the tabernacle.

A. M. 2514, etc.  
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In that part of the tabernacle, which was called the *holy place*, there was on the north side a table made of Shittim, or cedar wood, covered with gold, two cubits long, one in breadth, and one and an half in length. About the edge of it was an ornament, or border made of gold, together with a crown of gold in the middle, and at each end was placed the offering of the shew-bread, viz. six loaves in a pile, to represent the twelve tribes. The bread was changed every day, and not allowed to be eaten by any but the priests.

The table of shew-bread.

Over against this table, on the south side, stood the candlestick, which was made of pure gold, upon a basis of the same metal, and had seven branches on each side, and one in the middle. These branches were, at equal distances, adorned with six flowers like lilies, with as many knobs like apples, and little bowls like half almond-shells, placed alternately; and upon each of these branches there was a golden lamp, which was lighted every evening, and extinguished every morning.

The golden candlestick

Between the table and the candlestick, was placed the altar of incense, which was but one cubit in length and breadth, and two cubits high; but was covered with plates of gold, and had a crown of gold over it. Every morning and evening, the priest in waiting for that week offered incense of a particular composition upon this altar, and to this end carried a smoking censer, filled with fire, which he took from the altar of burnt-offerings into the tabernacle, and so placing it upon this other altar, retired.

And the altar of incense.

The persons appointed to officiate about holy things were of three kinds, the high priest, priests, and Levites: and what is very remarkable in the first of this order, is the singularity of his vestments, which were the breast-plate, the ephod, the robe, the close coat, the mitre, and the girdle. The ephod, the robe and the close-coat were all of linen, and covered the whole body from the neck

The high-priest and his vestments.

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to the heel. Over these was a purple or blue tunick, which reached not so low, but was curiously wrought all over, and at the bottom of it had pomegranates, and bells, intermixed at equal distances. The pomegranates were made of blue, purple, and crimson wool, and \* the bells of gold.

The Ephod was a kind of girdle, made of gold thread, and other threads of divers colours, which being brought from behind the neck, and over the two shoulders, was put cross upon the stomach; then carried round the waist, and brought back again about the body, did gird the tunic like a sash, and so fell down before, and hung as low as the feet. Upon that part of the ephod, which came upon the

\* What the number of the bells worn by the high-priest was, the Scripture is silent, and authors are not so well agreed; but the sacred historian has let us into the use and intent of them in these words: *And it shall be upon Aaron to minister: and his sound shall be heard when he goeth into the holy place before the Lord, and when he cometh out, that he die not.* The kings of Persia are said to have the hem of their robes adorned, like the Jewish high-priest, with pomegranates and gold bells. The ladies who are about his person, and whose business it is to please and divert him, have little gold bells fastened to their legs, their neck, and elbows, and when they dance, the sound of these makes a very agreeable harmony. The Arabian princesses wear large hollow gold rings, which are filled with little flints, and make a sound like little bells when they walk; and besides these, they have abundance of little flat bobs fastened to the ends of their hair; which make a noise as often as they stir, and give notice that the mistress of the house is going by, that so the servants of the family may behave themselves respectfully, and strangers retire, to avoid seeing the person that is passing. It was therefore, in all probability, with a design of giving notice, that the high-priest was passing by that he too wore little bells on the hem of his robe; or rather it was (as it were) a kind of public notice, that he was going into the sanctuary; for as, in the King of Persia's court, no one was suffered to enter the apartments, without giving notice thereof by the sound of something; so the high-priest, out of respect to the divine presence, residing in the holy of holies, did, by the sound of little bells, fastened to the bottom of his robe, desire, as it were, permission to enter, *that the sound of the bells might be heard, and he not punished with death for an unmannerly intrusion; Calmet's Dictionary, under the word Bell.*

high-



high-priest's shoulders, were two large precious stones, A. M. 2514, &c. Ant. Chriſt. 1490, &c. from Exod. xxxiv. 28. to Numb. xviii. whereon were engraven the names of the twelve tribes of Israel, on each stone six; and where the ephod crossed the high-priest's breast, there was a square ornament, called the *pectoral* or *rational*, wherein were twelve precious stones set with the names of the twelve tribes engraven on them, on each stone one. The mitre was of fine flax: it covered the head; and on the forehead was a plate of gold: whereon were engraven these words, HOLINESS TO THE LORD, which was tied behind the head with two ribbons fastened to its two ends. The pectoral. The mitre.

These were the chief of the solemn ornaments, which belonged to the high-priest. The other priests had only a simple tunic, a linen mitre, and a girdle; but they all of them wore linen or cotton breeches, which covered their legs and thighs, and reached up to the waist. The Levites had no peculiar habit in the ceremonies of religion; but about the sixty-second year of Christ, they obtained of King Agrippa leave to wear a linen tunick, as well as the priests. The habits of other officers.

The high-priest was at the head of all religious affairs, and the ordinary judge of all the difficulties which related to them. He only had the privilege of entering into the sanctuary once a-year, which was, on the day of solemn expiation, to make atonement for the sins of the whole people. The ordinary priests attended the service of the tabernacle: they kept up a perpetual fire upon the altar of burnt offerings; lighted and extinguished the lamps of the golden candlestick; made the loaves of shew-bread; offered them on the golden altar in the sanctuary; changed them every Sabbath-day; and every day, at night and morning, carried in a smoaking censer of incense, and placed it upon the golden table, which upon this account was likewise called the *altar of incense*. The office of the priests.

But the chief business of the priests was to offer sacrifices, of which there were four kinds. 1. The burnt-offering, which was totally consumed by fire upon the altar, after that the feet and entrails had been washed. 2. The peace-offering, whereof the inward fat, or tallow, made up with the liver and kidnies, was only burnt upon the altar: The breast and right shoulder was the perquisite of the priests, who were obliged to eat them in the holy place; and the remainder belonged to the person who offered the sacrifice. 3. The sacrifice for sin, committed either wilfully or ignorantly; and in this the priest The several sorts of sacrifices.

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took some of the blood of the victim, dipped his finger in it, and sprinkled it seven times towards the vail of the sanctuary. The same parts of the victim were burnt on the altar in this as in the former sacrifice. The rest (if the sacrifice was offered for the sin of the high-priest, or for the people) was carried without the camp, and there burnt; but if it was for a private person, the victim was divided (as we said before) between the priest and the offerer. 4. The sacrifice of oblation was either fine flour, or incense, cakes of fine flour, and oil baked, or the first fruits of new corn. Oil, salt, wine, and frankincense went always along with every thing that was offered. All the frankincense was cast into the fire; but of the other things the priest only burnt a part, and the rest he reserved to himself.

Thus we have taken a cursory view of the Jewish tabernacle, and its utensils; of the Jewish priesthood, and its offices; and have nothing more to do, but to enquire a little for what \* ends and uses God was pleased to institute these

\* Josephus, having treated of the tabernacle, and the several things appertaining to it, makes the use and design of them a little too mytical and allegorical. "Let but a man consider," says he, "the structure of the tabernacle, the sacerdotal vestments, and the holy vessels that are dedicated to the service of the altar, and he must of necessity be convinced that our lawgiver was a pious man.—For what are all these but the image of the whole world? The tabernacle, consisting of thirty cubits, and being divided into three parts, whereof two are for the priests in general, and of free access, resembles the earth and the sea; while the third, where no mortal (except the high priest) is permitted to enter, is an emblem of heaven, reserved for God alone. The twelve loaves of shew-bread upon the table, signify the twelve months in the year. The candlestick, which is made up of seventy pieces, refers to the twelve signs of the zodiac, through which the seven planets take their course; and the seven lamps, on the top of the seven branches, bear an analogy to the planets themselves. The curtains, with the four colours that are wrought in them, represent the four elements.—By the high-priest's linen-garment, is designed the whole body of the earth; and by the violet colour, the heavens. The pomegranates answer to lightning; and the noise of the bells to thunder. The four-coloured ephod bears a resemblance to the very nature of the universe, and the interweaving it with threads of gold, to the rays of the sun, which

" give

these things. To this purpose, St. Paul informs us, that the Jewish law was an imperfect dispensation from the very first, and (d) *added only because of transgressions, until the seed should come, to whom the promise was made*: That in great condescension, it was adapted to the weakness of the Jewish people, whom he compares to an heir under a tutor or governor; for these are his words: (e) *I say then, that an heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all: Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage, under the elements of the world; so that (f) the law was our school-master, to bring us unto Christ, and (g) having only a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, it could never, with those sacrifices which were offered, year by year continually, make the comers thereunto perfect.* In order therefore to illustrate this point, viz. That the Jewish religion was, in a great measure, intended to typify and prefigure the more perfect dispensation of the gospel, we shall instance in some of its particulars already enumerated.

Thus the tabernacle itself was a type of our Redeemer dwelling in our nature; for so St. John tells us, that (h) *the Word was made flesh, and ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν, dwelt among us, as in a tabernacle.* The altar of burnt-offerings in the court, pointed out the death and sacrifice (i) of our Lord, by the shedding of whose blood our sins are pardoned, and we received into mercy and favour. The altar of incense within the holy place denoted our Lord's powerful intercession for us, in his exalted state of glory; and the ark of the covenant in the holy of holies, was an eminent emblem of him, from whose mouth we received a law, *found- ed upon better promises*; by whose intercession we have access to the throne of grace with all boldness; and whose

A. M. 2514, &c. Ant. Christ. 1490, &c. from Exod. xxxiv. 28. to Numb. xviii.

Christ, and his transac- tions, typi- fied in the tabernacle, and its u- tensils.

“ give us light. The pectoral or rational, in the middle of it, intimates the position of the earth in the centre of the world; the girdle about the priest's body, is the sea about the globe of the earth, the two sardonix stones, on the shoulders, re- present the sun and moon; and by the twelve other stones on the breast, may be understood either the twelve months or the twelve signs in the zodiac.” But all this is too light and fanciful, one would think, for so grave an author as Jose- phus, had not this way of allegorizing things been the prevail- ing custom of the age; *Jewish Antiq. lib. 3. c. 7.*

(d) Gal. iii. 19. (e) Ibid. iv. 1. &c. (f) Gal. iii. 24.

(g) Heb. x. 1. (h) John i. 14. (i) Heb. xiii. 10.

satisfaction

A. M.  
2514, &c.  
Ant. Christ.  
1490, &c.  
from Exod.  
xxxiv. 23.  
to Numb.  
xviii.

satisfaction to the divine justice is our true propitiatory or mercy-seat.

What a manifest type the Jewish high-priest was of our Lord and Saviour, the author to the Hebrews has declared in more instances than one. The Jewish high priest was the only man who was permitted to enter into the *holy of holies*; and (*k*) *we have such an high priest*, says the apostle, *who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man*. The Jewish high-priest offered a solemn expiatory sacrifice once a year; our Lord (*l*) *appeared once in the end of the world to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself*. After the expiatory sacrifice, the Jewish high-priest went into the holy place, there to offer incense on the golden altar; our Lord, *when he had purged our sins*, (*m*) *sat down, on the right hand of the Majesty on high*, there (*n*) *to appear in the presence of God*, and by the incense of his merits, to make continual intercession for us.

And in the  
several sa-  
crifices  
which were  
offered.

In like manner, whether we consider the several qualifications of the sacrifices under the law, or the several sorts of them, we shall find them to be types and prefigurations of Christ. The conditions of a Jewish sacrifice were,—That it should be without blemish, publicly presented before the congregation, substituted in the sinner's room, and the iniquities of the sinner laid upon him. With relation to these properties, our Saviour is said to be *holy, harmless, undefiled, and separated from sinners*. That he might *sanctify his people*, he is said to *have* (*o*) *suffered without the gate, bearing our reproach*; and that (*p*) *he, who knew no sin, became sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him*.

And so, if we look to the several sorts of sacrifices appointed under the law, we shall soon perceive that these equally lead us to Christ. For he was the trespass-offering, in that *he was made sin for us*; the peace-offering, because (*q*) *he made peace by the blood of his cross*; the meat, and drink offering, for (*r*) *his flesh is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed*; the scape-goat, for he hath carried away our sins, (*s*) *never to be more remembered against us*; the paschal lamb, for (*t*) *Christ, our passover, is*

(*k*) Heb. viii. 1, 2. (*l*) Ibid. ix. 26. (*m*) Ibid. i. 3. (*n*) Ibid. 9.—24. (*o*) Ibid. xiii. 12, 13. (*p*) 2 Cor. v. 21. (*q*) Col. i. 20. (*r*) John. vi. 55. (*s*) Ibid. i. 29. (*t*) 1. Cor. v. 7.

*sacrificed*

*sacrificed for us ; the great sacrifice of atonement, (u) for Jesus Christ the righteous is both our advocate with the Father, and a propitiation for our sins : And, in fine, (x) his blood, who, through the eternal Spirit offered himself to God, without spot, is more effectual than the blood of bulls and goats, to purge our consciences from dead works, to serve the living God.*

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Thus it appears, that the chief end of the several institutions relating to the ceremonial part of the Jewish worship, was to prefigure the person and transactions of our blessed Saviour, (y) *when the fulness of time was come that God should send forth his son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem those that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.* And therefore, since the ceremonies of the Jewish law could never be of any esteem in the sight of God, any otherwise than as they promoted this end, and prepared mens minds for the reception of a more perfect institution of religion, it is manifest, that when this more perfect institution was once settled, the former and more imperfect was, of course, to cease ; (z) *there being necessarily a disannulling of the commandment going before, for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof.*

The change  
of the Jew-  
ish religion  
consistent  
with God's  
attributes.

And from hence we may finally infer, that though the essence of religion be eternally and immutably the same, yet the form and institution of it may be, and often has been, changed. (a) The essence of all religion is obedience to that moral and eternal law, which obliges us to imitate the life of God, in justice, mercy and holiness, *i. e. to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.* This is the sum of all natural religion, as appears from the discourses of those wiser Heathens, who were free from prejudice and superstition. This was the sum of the Jewish religion, as appears from the frequent and earnest protestations of God to that people by his servants the prophets : And this likewise is the sum of the Christian religion, as the apostles every where inculcate. But though religion itself is thus immutably the same, yet the form and institution of it may be different.

When natural religion, by reason of its obscurity, in this corrupt estate of human nature, proved ineffectual to make men truly religious, God left them no longer to the

(u) 1 John. ii. 1, 2. (x) Heb. ix. 13, 14. (y) Gal. iv. 4, 5.  
(z) Heb. vii. 18. (a) Dr. Samuel Clarke's serm. vol. 10.

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guidance of their reason only, but gave them first the patriarchal, and afterwards the Mosaic dispensation ; and when (through the incumbrance with so many ritual observances) this latter proved ineffectual to the same great end, God abolished this form of religion likewise, and instituted the Christian. In all which proceeding, there is no reflection at all upon the immutable nature of God. For as the divine nature is, in the truest and highest sense, unchangeable ; so religion itself, in its nature and essence, is likewise unchangeable ; But as the capacities, the prejudices, and the circumstances of men are different, so the institution and outward form of that religion (which in its essence is always the same) may, with the good pleasure of God, be changed ; even as a careful nurse (to use a Scripture-comparison upon this occasion) adapts the diet to the strength and constitution of the person she attends : *For every one that useth milk* (as the elements of the Jewish dispensation were) *is unskilful in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe ; but strong meat* (or a religion of a greater perfection as the Christian is) *belongeth to them, that are of full age ; even those, who, by reason of use, have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.*

The End of the SECOND VOLUME.