REFLEXIONS

Upon the

BOOKS

OF THE

HOLY SCRIPTURE

To Eſtabliſh the

TRUTH

OF THE

CHRISTIAN RELIGION,

In Two Volumes.

By Peter Allix.

Volume I.

LONDON,

Printed for **Richard Chiſwell** at the *Roſe* and *Crown* in St. *Paul's* Church-yard. MDCLXXXVIII.

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H. Maurice R$^{mo.}$ in Christo P. D. Willielmo Archiep. Cant. à Sacris.

TO THE

KING.

Great SIR,

THe gracious acceptance which your Majesty was pleased to allow the first Volume of my Reflexions upon the Holy Scriptures to establish the Truth of the Christian Religion, encouraged and almost necessitated me to the further presumption of laying these two Volumes at this time at your Majesties Feet. Your Majesty did me the honour to say, *That you were pleased to see Divines apply themselves to the clearing of Subjects so important.* And after this Judg-

ment given by ſo great a Prince, which is ſo evident a Demonſtration of your Zeal for the Fundamental Truths of the *Chriſtian Religion*, it had been unpardonable in me not to have gone on with the Work; and I had Reaſon then to Conſecrate it wholly to your Majeſty, who I was aſſured would approve of my Intentions, and for that Reaſon would pardon the Imperfections of the Performance. As your Majeſty continues ſtill to give ſuch illuſtrious Inſtances of your Clemency and Royal Protection to thoſe of our Nation, ſo, I confeſs, Sir, I thought my ſelf under an Obligation to lay hold upon this Opportunity of publiſhing what all thoſe who find ſo ſure a Protection in your Majeſties Dominions, feel and think as much as my ſelf upon theſe new Teſtimonies of your Royal Bounty: When your

your Majeſty had taken us into your particular care, and had granted us ſeveral Priviledges, and ſo made us ſharers in all the Advantages, which thoſe who live under your Government enjoy, your Majeſty did yet ſomething more, and inſpired all your Subjects with the ſame compaſſion towards us with which your Royal Breaſt was already touched. You ſaw our miſeries, and reſolved to give us eaſe, and this generous Deſign was executed, and your Royal Clemency diffuſed in the hearts of all your Subjects. The whole World, Sir, which has received upon all its Coaſts ſome Remainders of our Shipwrack, is fill'd with admiration of the unexampled effects of your Majeſties Clemency. There is no place ſo barbarous, whither the renown of that mercy which has been ſo glorioufly extended towards us,

has not been carried: and the remembrance will be ever dear to the remoteſt Ages of Poſterity. We muſt Sir, be wholly inſenſible if we had not all of us the higheſt ſenſe of ſo great a Bounty; and we ſhould juſtly appear to the whole World to be unworthy of this your *Majeſties* Paternal care, if notwithſtanding that low condition to which we are now reduced, we ſhould not proſtrate our ſelves before your Auguſt Throne with the humbleſt demonſtrations of Thankfulneſs. When God ſhow'rs down the greateſt Bleſſings upon *Mankind*, he requires this juſt Tribute, which is alſo their greateſt honour, by opening to them an acceſs unto the Throne of Glory. And this ſacred Pattern we crave leave to follow, when we ſolemnly pay the like Tribute to your *Majeſty*, who can receive nothing from

us

us again, that can anſwer the greatneſs, or the number of thoſe Favours which have ſo very much exceeded all our deſires. I could wiſh, Sir, that this Work which I now preſent to your *Majeſty*, might be ſo haypy as to paſs to Poſterity with this Character of our acknowledgment, and that it might ſtand as a faithful Record for ever, to perpetuate the memory of that lively ſenſe of your Bounty, which is imprinted on all our hearts: If this could be hoped for, it muſt be wholly owing to your Majeſties glorious Name, which lateſt Ages will receive with Reverence. But, Sir, tho' I dare not hope that theſe *Reflexions* can obtain that honour, yet our Age at leaſt may ſee, that they bear theſe publick Marks of Gratitude for all your Majeſties Royal Favours. This, Sir, is my ſole

aim

aim in the Dedication of this Work to your *Majeſty*; and may your Sacred *Majeſty* be pleaſed to approve of theſe poor Teſtimonies of our Thankfulneſs in general, and to look upon them as Inſtances of mine in particular; and of that profound Reſpect, with which I am,

SIR,

London May the 7th. 1688.

Your Majeſties

moſt dutiful

and obedient Subject

and Servant,

P. ALLIX.

THE PREFACE.

ONe may divide Men into two general Claſſes, ſome are without any knowledge of a Diety, or Sence of Religion: *Travellers tell us, that in the* Weſt-Indies, *the Eaſtern parts of* Tartary, *and ſome places of* Africa, *ſuch people are to be found. I know this is a Fact which is diſputed by others, and* Fabricius *a Divine of the Palatinate, pretends that he has ſolidly confuted it. If this Fact ſhould be thought doubtful, yet it is known at leaſt, that ſome perſons may be found here and there in the World who look upon the Exiſtence of a Deity, as upon a Fable, and who ridicule all acts of Religious Worſhip whatſoever: But one may alſo ſay, that if he compare theſe with the reſt of the World, they make the leaſt and worſt part of Mankind, tho many of them affect to live Morally well.*

All

All the reſt of the World make Profeſſion that they own a God; that is to ſay, a moſt perfect, Eternal, and independent Being; that he governs all things by his Providence; that there is a difference between Good and Evil; that Man doth well or ill in thoſe Actions which depend on his Liberty: From whence they equally conclude, that Man was deſign'd for the Duties of Religion, that Society without it would be pure Robbery: And that, as it is hard to conceive that Men ſhould be wholly deſtroy'd by Death, ſo it is directly contrary to the Sentiments of Conſcience to deny all Rewards for Virtue, or Puniſhments for Vice after this Life.

All the Diverſities of Religion amongſt Men are reducible to two kinds.

The firſt is of thoſe who ſuppoſe, that there is more than one God; and this is the Belief of all Pagans *in general.*

The Second is of thoſe that acknowledge one only God, ſuch are the Jews, Chriſtians, *and* Mahometans.

Now, as for the cure of different Diſeaſes, ſeveral Remedies are made uſe of, ſo it is viſible, that to deliver Men of their various prejudices, we muſt take very different Methods.

The ignorance of thoſe Barbarous People in the Indies, Tartary, *and* Africa, *muſt be removed, by teaching them the firſt Principles, and making*

making them apply the little ſenſe they have left them of good and evil, right and wrong, to the fundamental Maxims of Religion.

Atheiſts muſt be convinced, by Reflexions upon thoſe Principles, which they admit, by ſhewing, that the Truths which they reject, are the natural Conſequences of thoſe Principles, which they dare not diſpute.

To convince the Heathen, who ſuppoſe many Gods, we muſt examine their Principles, and confute them; which is the eaſieſt thing in the World; the Wiſeſt Men having formerly acknowledged, as they alſo own to this very day, that there is but one God.

And indeed it ſeems, that the greateſt part of Philoſophers did own a plurality of Gods, only in compliance with the Opinions of the people, which it was dangerous to contradict.

And as for the Jews, *foraſmuch as they agree with the* Chriſtians *and* Mahometans *about the Unity of God, we are only to prove to them the truth of that which is the very Eſſence of the* Chriſtian Religion, *in oppoſition to their prejudices; One may prove this againſt the* Jews *without any trouble, becauſe they are agreed in moſt of thoſe Principles, which the* Chriſtian Religion *ſuppoſes. So likewiſe it is eaſily eſtabliſhed againſt the* Mahometans, *who grant the truth of* Chriſtian Religion *in general, but pretend*

pretend that it ought to give place to Mahometaniſm, *as the Law ought to give place to the Goſpel, preach'd by Jeſus Chriſt.*

My deſign is not to proſecute every one of theſe ways in particular. There are Books enough in the World which ſolidly prove the neceſſity of Religion againſt all ſorts of Atheiſts, as well thoſe, who are ſo through ignorance, as thoſe who profeſs themſelves ſuch from Love to Libertiniſm, and to paſs for Men of a mighty reach.

There are alſo ſeveral Famous Authors, who have made it evident, that Reaſon alone is ſufficient to overthrow all Pagan *Religions whatſoever.*

I am reſolved to follow a more compendious, and ſure Method, that is, to demonſtrate the Truth of the Chriſtian Religion, *conſidered by it ſelf.*

In ſhort, It is impoſſible (conſidering the oppoſition there is between the Chriſtian Religion, *and all other Religions in the World) that the* Chriſtian Religion *ſhould be the true, but that all others muſt be falſe in thoſe Articles wherein they eſſentially differ from it.*

And on the other hand, one cannot explain thoſe Arguments which clearly evince the truth of Chriſtianity, without convicting all other Religions of falſehood, becauſe they are deſtitute of thoſe proofs, which are peculiar to the Chriſtian Religion.

I know very well, that there are ſeveral ways which lead to the end which I propoſe. Men that think much, wiſh that a perfect Conformity of the Chriſtian Religion, *with the Conſcience of Man might be demonſtrated, from Reflexions on the Heart of Man, and the Dictates of it, which to them would be a convincing, and demonſtrative proof.*

Others apply themſelves to a ſpeculative examination of the Doctrines and Proofs of the Chriſtian Religion, *to ſhew their Conformity with the Notions of Reaſon: I will not deny but that both theſe employ themſelves uſually in this ſort of ſtudy, and that Truth finds a conſiderable ſupport from their Meditations.*

But how uſeful ſoever they may be, I have rather choſen to follow another courſe, as thinking it of more advantage, ſolidly to eſtabliſh the Facts which the Chriſtian Religion *propoſeth; which appears to me to be more proper to perſwade all ſorts of Readers, and better levell'd to the ordinary Capacity of thoſe, who newly enter upon the examination of this Truth.*

And as the neceſſity of Revelation is generally owned by Heathens, and by all other Nations of the World: I thought it a thing altogether unneceſſary to enter upon the examination of ſeveral abſtracted Queſtions, ſuch as theſe: Whether there be any natural knowledge of God, whether

Men

The Preface.

Men are naturally inclined to be Religious, and the like? When I shall have firmly proved, that God revealed himself, that he prescribed a Service to the first Men, who left the Rules of it to all their Posterity, from whence all the Religion that ever was, or is yet in the Heathen World, was derived, I shall have prevented many very unprofitable Disputes, and which can only perplex the mind by their obscurity.

I have therefore confin'd my self to certain Considerations, which do so establish the truth of the Books of the Old and New Testament, as by their Union they firmly prove the truth of the Christian Religion.

I hope, that it will not be thought needful for me to demonstrate, that the Mahometan *Religion ought not to abolish the Christian, as the Christians pretend, that the* Christian Religion *abrogated the Ceremonial part of the* Jewish *Worship.*

As soon as an understanding Reader shall make some Reflexions upon the nature of the Arguments which demonstrate the Truth of the Christian Religion, *he may easily perceive, that God never framed the Model of that Religion, which the* Mahometans *would obtrude upon us.*

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To the Courteous Reader:

THE Errata's are so small, that they will not disturb the sense any where, and so few, that we need not trouble the Reader with a Table of them: And therefore hope he will take such inconsiderable pains upon himself, and excuse the Author.

R E-

REFLEXIONS UPON THE BOOKS OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURE For the Establishing of the Truth OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

CHAPTER I.

Concerning the Fundamentals of the Christian Religion.

WE are to consider three things in the Christian Religion; the Matters of Fact it propounds to us for true, the Promises it affords us, and the Worship it commands.

The Matters of Fact it propounds to us as true, are; that God created the World, that he

formed the first Man, from whom the rest of mankind have been propagated, that a while after this Man was created, he violated the Law, God had given him; and that whereas he deserved to have perished for this his disobedience, God was pleased, instead thereof, to comfort him with the hopes of a Saviour which was to be born of the Seed of his Wife; that God hath actually sent this Saviour into the World, which comprehends the whole Oeconomy of Christ, *viz.* His Birth, Life, Preaching, Miracles, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension into Heaven, *&c.*

The Promises it vouchsafes, are the forgiveness of our Sins, the Resurrection of our Bodies, and a state absolutely happy for ever in Heaven.

And lastly, the Worship or Divine Service it prescribes consists in Obedience to the Law of God, in Prayer for the pardon of our Sins, and his Protection, and in a grateful Acknowledgement of what we owe him for all his Benefits towards us.

The first of these three parts of the Christian Religion, *viz.* The Truth of the Matters of Fact it relates, may be said to be the foundation of the other two, *viz.* The Promises and Commands.

It is impossible to be perswaded, that God hath created this World in which we live, and made Mankind of one and the same blood; that after the Fall he promised to save Men, and did actually redeem them in sending Jesus Christ, who suffer'd Death, and being rais'd the third day

day Ascended into Heaven, *&c.* I say, it is impossible to look upon these Facts as true without being assured that God will accomplish the Promises he hath made to us.

And it is as evident that we cannot be convinc'd of the truth of these Matters, without being sensible of a strong obligation laid upon us to perform all the Duties of the Christian Religion.

As soon as a Man reflects upon his being Gods Creature, he finds himself naturally oblig'd, to obey God universally, according to his utmost ability: but when he comes further to believe, that God did not destroy the first Man for his disobedience; but was graciously pleased to promise him a Saviour for himself and all his Posterity; and when moreover he is assured, that God hath really sent this Saviour in the way and manner the Gospel relates to us, we cannot conceive, but that he must find himself under the highest engagements imaginable of rendring to God a religious obedience; and believing his Promises.

But there is yet another obligation whereby Man is bound to obey God, to pray to him, and to offer him all manner of Religious Worship; God by redeeming him hath obtained a new claim to, and right over him, and a more indispensable obligation is laid upon Man to submit himself to God in all religious Concerns, as being not only created but also redeemed by him.

Reason acknowledgeth, that if the truth of these things be once admitted, nothing can be more just and natural, than those consequences which the Christians thence infer.

All the difficulty therefore, that occurs in this Matter, consists in the proof of those Facts which the Christian Religion propounds to us; that is to say in proving the Creation of the World, the Fall of Man, the Promise of a Redeemer, his coming into the World, his Miracles, Death, Resurrection, Ascension into Heaven, *&c.* which are the Foundations of the Christian Religion. And indeed these are the very matters of which Atheists and Libertines require a solid proof.

And it doth the more concern us to satisfie their demands; forasmuch as the Jews, who are scatter'd throughout the whole World, do oppose our assertion, that the Promise of sending the Messiah, is already accomplish'd, tho' they agree upon the matter with us in all other Articles. Moreover the performing this Task may very much contribute to the Conversion of a great number of bad Christians, whose fall and continuance in vices, and licentiousness is to be ascrib'd to their being so weakly perswaded of the truth of these Fundamentals, and that because they have never consider'd of them with sufficient attention.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

That the Christian Religion is founded upon Proofs of Mattter of Fact.

FOrasmuch as in order to establish the truth of the Christian Religion, we confine our selves at present to those proofs which make out the Matters of Fact it proposes; omitting all other arguments, which may evidence the truth of it, tho' possibly no less convincing; it is obvious, that the proofs we are to produce in confirmation of them, must be such as are proper to evince the truth of things long since past and done.

If we were treating of the Events of the time we live in, it might be justly required, that we should produce Eye-witnesses of them; but forasmuch as the question here is concerning matters long since past, it is natural for us to have recourse to History, which furnisheth us with the relations of those, who where Eye-witnesses of the same. This being the only way left us to confirm our belief of things at so great a distance from us.

I am beholding to History only for the knowledg I have of a *Cyrus*, an *Alexander*, or a *Cæsar*; and yet having read the account they give me of them, I find them matters I can no way rationally doubt of.

I acknowledg that the certainty we have of things long since past, is much inferiour to that

which we have of matters confirm'd to us by Eye-witneſſes. Nevertheleſs, becauſe it is evident, that the Events of ancient Times cannot be confirm'd, but by proofs of this nature, it has never entred into the minds of any to account the exiſtence of ſuch men as *Cyrus* and *Alexander* for Fables, upon the pretence, that none now alive did ever ſee them, or becauſe there are ſcarce any traces left of thoſe Empires of which they were the Founders.

Indeed the certainty we have of theſe things is ſuch, as nothing can be ſuperadded to it, for tho' it be founded on the Authority of Hiſtorians, who liv'd many Ages ago, yet withal we are to conſider that the matters related, do not only carry the Idea of probability and truth along with them, but that they are the very ground and foundation of all the Hiſtories of following Ages; which cannot be queſtioned, if we conſider the connexion and dependance of the things related, according to the light of Senſe, and the equity of Reaſon.

A Matter of Fact then is accounted certain, when it is atteſted by thoſe who were Eye-witneſſes of it, when recorded by an Hiſtorian, who liv'd amongſt thoſe who had perfect knowledg of it; when the Matter is not gainſaid or contradicted by any; if we find it pen'd at a time, when the things could not be related by any otherwiſe than indeed they were, without expoſing themſelves to publick deriſion: And laſt of all, when the matter is found to be of that nature, as none could be ignorant of it, either becauſe it was the intereſt

intereſt of every one to be inform'd of it, or becauſe the thing was ſo publick that it could not be hid from any, or laſtly becauſe of its natural connexion with all thoſe other Events which neceſſarily depend on it.

To ſpeak plain it is very unjuſt to demand either more proofs, or ſuch as are of another nature, for the confirmation of the Truth of our Religion, than are required to verifie any other matters of Fact. Why ſhould not the Teſtimony of *Noahs* Children be ſufficient to conclude there was ſuch a man as *Methuſalem* in caſe they aſſure us that they have ſeen him? Or why ſhould not the teſtimony of *Methuſalem* be of credit enough, to prove there was ſuch a Man as *Adam*, if he avers that he ſaw him, and convers'd with him? Do'nt we every day give credit to the account which old men give us of their Predeceſſors, eſpecially when we find that what they relate hath an exact reference and connexion with thoſe things we are Eye-witneſſes of.

But it is an eaſie thing to make it appear, that the proofs which evidence the Truth of the matters which our Religion propoſeth, are infinitely more ſtrong and convincing.

All the circumſtances we can imagine proper to evince the Truth of any Relation, do concur to place the matters recorded in Holy Scripture beyond the Reach of doubt or uncertainty.

We account the ſingle Teſtimony of an Hiſtorian a ſufficient proof that there was once a very famous Temple at *Delphos* or *Epheſus*; not-

withstanding that all the Monuments remaining at this day to confirm his relation be very doubtful and defective. Whereas I shall make it appear that an entire Nation, yea many Nations do attest the truth of those Matters which the Christian Religion proposes, and that all the Actions, Discourses, and whole Series of Events thereto relating, do furnish us with an infinite number of characters, which invincibly signalize the Truth of the Holy Scriptures.

CHAP. III.

Some General Remarks in order to establish the Truth of Holy Scripture.

FOrasmuch as I have undertaken to prove the truth of the Matters of Fact contain'd in our Religion from the testimony of the Penmen of the Old and New Testament, it will be proper, in order to the executing of my design to begin with a general proof of the Truth of the said Books, which will not be difficult if one makes the following remarks.

The First is, That it appears from the Five Books of *Moses*, that he wrote the History of the Creation of the World, and of the Promise of the Messiah; of the Deluge, the Rise and Pedigree of the several Nations of the World, of the Division of Tongues; and in particular the History of the Family of *Abraham* until the entring of the Children of *Israel* into *Palestina* 2552 years after the Creation of the World.

The

The Second is, That the following Books, *viz.* of *Joshua*, *Judges*, *Ruth*, the four Books of *Kings*, of *Chronicles*, with the Books of *Ezrah* and *Nehemiah*, are a Continuation of the said History, from the entring of the *Jews* into *Palestina*, until their re-establishment in the said Country, about the year of the World 3600. Here we read the Conquest of *Palestina* under the Conduct of *Joshua*, how it was divided amongst the Tribes after they had destroyed, drove out or subdued the Inhabitants thereof; how often they were brought into bondage by the bordering Nations, whose rise and pretensions *Moses* sets down. Here we have recorded the several Names and actions of the Judges, which God from time to time raised to the Israelites, to restore them to their first estate. Here we have an account of the establishment of a Kingly Government amongst them, which happened about the year 2909; as likewise of the division of this people into two Kingdomes, which for three Ages together were most opposite in their interests, and made great wars against each other, as well as against their neighbouring States. We find here the utter ruin of the most puissant of these two States, *viz.* That of *Israel* by the Arms of the Kings of *Assyria*, about the year of the World 3283, and after that, the destruction of that of *Judah*, by *Nebuchadnezar* King of the *Chaldeans*, *Anno Mundi* 3283. And last of all we have an account of the *Jews* Restoration by *Cyrus* King of *Persia*, and the State of the *Jews* under his Successors.

The

The Third thing obſervable is, That in the remaining Books of the Old Teſtament we find ſeveral hiſtorical Relations relating to both Kingdomes, with ſeveral prophecies relating to their decay and reſtoration, as likewiſe many Diſcourſes of Morality and Piety; and that all theſe relations and prophecies appear to have been writ at ſuch a time, and with thoſe circumſtances, which have a natural reference to what the other Books recite to us, and an eſſential Relation to the Books and Laws of *Moſes*, which we find to be the foundation of all theſe propheſies, relations, and whatſoever elſe we find there concerning their Government or Religion.

The Fourth is, That the Books of the New Teſtament contain an exact relation of the Life of Jeſus Chriſt, who appeared to the World under the Reign of *Tiberius*, of the eſtabliſhment of his Religion in the World, together with ſome diſputes with the Jews, who refuſed to own him for the Meſſiah promiſed by the Prophets; and laſtly Propheſies declaring what in in proceſs of time was to happen both to the Jews and Chriſtians until the end of the World. Theſe Books take the Truth of *Moſes*'s Writings every where for granted, as alſo of all the other Sacred Writings of the Old Teſtament, both Hiſtorical, Prophetical and Moral.

Theſe Four particulars do in a manner give us an intire Idea of the Holy Scripture; and we ſhall ſcarcely ſtand in need of ought elſe to manifeſt the Truth of thoſe Writings, if we conſi-

conſider thoſe undiſputable matters of fact I am now to ſpeak of, and will but make ſome very natural reflexions upon them.

The Firſt is, That the Chriſtians, notwithſtanding their being divided into ſeveral Sects and Parties, preſently after our Saviours time, have, and do ſtill, in all places, every firſt day of the Week, read the Books of the New Teſtament tranſlated into their reſpective Languages; ſo that it appears abſolutely impoſſible that any ſpurious Writings ſhould have been ſlipt in amongſt them.

The Second is, That as the Chriſtians have had the Books of the Old Teſtament amongſt them in Greek theſe 1600. years, ſo the Heathens had them in that Language 300. years before, being tranſlated by order of one of the *Ptolomy*'s Kings of *Egypt*, whither a conſiderable party of the Jews were carried, after that *Alexander* the Great had conquered the greateſt part of *Aſia*, having overthrown the Empire of *Perſia*, to which the Jews were in ſubjection.

The Third is, That tho' the Jews had not all the Books of the Old Teſtament from the beginning of their Commonwealth, they that followed the Party of *Jeroboam*, and formed the Kingdom of *Iſrael*, having only had the Five Books of *Moſes* amongſt them: yet notwithſtanding their irreconcilable hatred againſt the Houſe of *David*, they have moſt religiouſly preſerved the ſaid Books from *Anno Mundi* 3030. in which the diviſions of the two Kingdoms happen'd, even until this day.

The

The Fourth and laſt is, That as the Jews every where at this day, read the Books of *Moſes* and of the Prophets each Sabbath day (which is alſo obſerved by the Samaritanes) and the Chriſtians read them every firſt day of the week; ſo the Jews have always continued to read them for a long ſeries of Ages, as eſteeming it a great part of the ſanctification of the Sabbath. Beſides which they alſo ſolemnly read them every ſeventh year in obedience to a Law of *Moſes*, as being one of the principal parts of their Religion.

I ſay, that the ſole conſideration of theſe matters of fact (which are indiſputable) are ſufficient to prove in general the truth of the Books of the Old and New Teſtament.

Firſt then, I affirm, that it is as ridiculous to maintain, that the Books of the Old and New Teſtament, tranſlated into ſo many Languages, cited by an infinite number of Authors, and which have been the ſubject of various diſputes from the very times of the Apoſtles or ſoon after, ſhould be ſuppoſititious, as to aver, that the Books of *Juſtinian*, or *Mahomets* Alcoran, have been falſly obtruded on the World under their names. I ſpeak now only of the Books themſelves, not of the truth of the Hiſtory they contain.

Secondly, It is ridiculous to ſuppoſe, that the Books of the Old Teſtament were forged ſince the time of *Ptolomy Philadelphus*; forasmuch as they have been in the hands of the Heathens themſelves ever ſince that time.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, It is as inconſiſtent to ſuppoſe them contrived ſince the time of the ſeparation of the ten Tribes from *Judah*, becauſe we find the Books of *Moſes* among the Samaritanes, who have preſerved them ever ſince their Revolt, without any other change, but what is incident to all Manuſcripts, that paſs through many hands.

I grant indeed that the Samaritans have none of the other Books of the Old Teſtament; but this being to be look'd upon only as an effect of their departure from the Kingdom of *Judah*, it cannot in the leaſt ſhake the certainty we have of thoſe Books. For firſt, the three other Tribes had them and preſerv'd them with the greateſt care, eſteeming them of Divine Authority. Secondly, there were alſo reaſons of State, which made the Kings of *Iſrael*, not to regard the diviſions made by *Joſhuah* of the Land of *Canaan*, nor the authority of the Prieſthood; which Reaſons of State (hereafter mentioned) where the cauſe why the ten Tribes would not allow the ſame authority to ſome of thoſe Books, which were written before their Revolt, as thoſe of *Samuel*, and the writings of *David* and *Solomon*, which they did to the Pentateuch of *Moſes*. Moſt of the others we know were pen'd ſince the Diviſion of the two Kingdomes, and ſo did more particularly reſpect the Kingdom of *Judah*, and ſome them after the carrying away of the ten Tribes by the Aſſyrians.

Thus we ſee the Truth of theſe Books, and more eſpecially thoſe of *Moſes* confirmed till the

time

time of the revolt of the ten Tribes, and confirm'd beyond exception; at leaſt far beyond the certainty we can have of the truth of any other Book in the World. It remains only now to examine, whether as to the Books of *Moſes* we find not the ſame certainty, when we look back from the departure of the ten Tribes to the time of *Moſes*, that is to ſay whether there be the leaſt probability, that they were forged in any part of that interval of about 580 years.

I ſay then in the Fourth place, that it is no leſs ridiculous to ſuppoſe them forged during that period. Firſt, becauſe it is impoſſible, that theſe Books ſhould have been forged in the form we now ſee them, but that the Forgery muſt have been apparent to all the World. Nothing could be more notorious, than whether the Jews did read the Law of *Moſes* every Sabbath day in all their Families or Synagogues, and every Seventh year beſides: Nothing was of more eaſie obſervation than whether they did keep their three ſolemn Feaſts, *viz.* that of the Paſſover, Pentecoſt, and of Tabernacles: Nothing could be more apparent than whether the Jews did obey the Laws contained in the Pentateuch, whether relating to particular perſons, to Tribes, or their Lands, and the manner of poſſeſſing of them. Indeed nothing can be imagin'd more abſurd than to ſuppoſe an inſenſible change wrought either in in the Form of their Civil Government, or the Ceremonies of their Religion.

Indeed

Indeed it is an unſufferable peice of boldneſs to charge the Jews with forging theſe Books of *Moſes*, or adulterating of them in this period of time, when it appears they have kept them without any alteration for the ſpace of 2700 years, as hath been ſhewed already: If it be ſaid, that the Jews being divided into two Kingdomes, and diſperſed into diſtant Countreys, were not in a condition to forge or adulterate any of the ſaid Books, becauſe it might eaſily have been diſcovered; it may be anſwered, that the ſame reaſons took place in this interval of 580 years, for from the time of *Moſes* to *Rehoboam* they were not only greatly divided amongſt themſelves, but almoſt continually ſubject to neighbouring States, who ſubdued them by turns, as we ſee in the Book of *Judges*.

Moreover we are to take notice, Firſt that theſe Books of *Moſes* are the riſe and foundation of the Laws and Cuſtomes of the Heathens, as well as of their Fictions, which we ſhall have occaſion to point at in the ſequel of this Diſcourſe.

Secondly, That the Hiſtory contained in the Pentateuch, is evidently confirm'd by the following Books of *Joſhuah* and *Judges*, which have an eſſential reference to the ſame, and contain a relation of the publick acts of many Nations, atteſted, and acknowledged by Heathen Authors, who were the mortal Enemies of the Jews.

Thirdly, That the ſaid Books are ſo cloſely

ly

ly link'd and related to those publick and known actions, that it is impossible to separate the Laws they contain from the Matters of fact attested by Pagan History, or to be ignorant that the Form of the Jewish Government, was nothing else, but an execution of the Laws contained in the Pentateuch, which equally lays down that Platform of their Policy and worship.

My business at present only is to hint these general Reflexions concerning the Truth of the Books of the Old and New Testament; tho the sequel will oblige me to make some more particular Reflexions upon each Book, when I shall come to consider the several Relations they contain.

I now come to the Matter in hand, beginning with the Book of *Genesis*; where we find an account of the Creation of the World, the Forming of Man, the Fall, the Promise of the Messiah, the Propagation of Mankind, the Deluge, with other Matters until the Death of *Joseph*, which contains the History of the World for the space of 2369 years.

CHAP. IV.

That the Testimony of Moses *concerning the Creation of the World, and the Promise of the Messiah, is unquestionable.*

FOrasmuch as amongst those Matters which *Moses* relates in the Book of *Genesis*, that of

of the Creation of the World in seven days, and of the Promise of the *Messiah*, are such upon which all the rest do depend (as I shall shew hereafter) it is evident, that I must make it my business in a special manner to evince the truth of the same.

Towards the confirmation of which matters of fact, the one of which is, that God Created a first Man; the other, that God hath promised in due time to send the *Messiah* for Redemption of Mankind from the punishment of sin, I shall propose these following Remarks.

Moses the great Law-giver of the *Jews*, laid these two Matters of Fact as the Basis of the Laws he was to publish; and he relates them to us, as things which were not only known to him, and some others of the *Jewish* Nation, but to all the People of the World; and particularly the whole Nation amongst whom he lived.

To understand the force of this Argument we must mind three things; the First is, the Nature of the Matters themselves, the other is the Character of him that relates them; and the third, the use *Moses* makes of them.

For the first, nothing was more needful to be known than these two things before us; they were Matters which *concern* the whole World, and of which every one ought to be informed; they are Matters about which it is not easie to be deceived, every one being in a condition to satisfie himself about them, and of which consequently they could not but be most throughly informed.

I dare maintain that there are no Facts in Prophane History of importance, comparable to

theſe of the Creation of the World, and the Promiſe of the *Meſſiah*, as *Moſes* has related them.

2. And as for the Author, who relates theſe points, it is as plain that his Character did wonderfully contribute to the making of his Book famous. He was a Man Illuſtrious, as well by reaſon of his Education, as the Rank he held amongſt Men; a Man equally expos'd to the Judgment of Enemies and Friends, and who could not vent the leaſt thing contrary to truth, in Matters of great importance, without ſeeing himſelf immediately refuted, or rather without expoſing himſelf to publick ſcorn.

Beſides I aver, and am ready to maintain, that we find no Author of ſo illuſtrious a Character as *Moſes* was, or who is diſtinguiſh'd with ſo many eſſential marks of Faithfulneſs and Veracity, as appears throughout the whole Tenour of his Writings.

3. This will appear more evidently when we conſider the uſe to which *Moſes* deſigns theſe two Relations of the Creation of the World, and the Promiſe of the *Meſſiah*.

In a word, his deſign was not in furniſhing his Books with the Recitals of theſe important Facts to engage others to read them with more attention, or to get himſelf reputation, by exciting a Curioſity in people for his Books. This would not have been becoming the Gravity and Wiſdom of ſo great a Legiſlator, of whom all ſucceeding Ages have borrowed their Laws.

It is apparent, that his end in the recording of theſe Matters was to inſpire with a ſenſe of Piety and Religion, thoſe who were committed to his charge. This

This is that which in general we may obſerve about theſe Matters; but more particularly it is certain, that *Moſes* his end in recording the Oracles by which God promiſed to *Abraham* the eſtabliſhing his Poſterity in the land of *Canaan*, was to repreſent to the *Jews* the right they had to that Land, according to the deſign and intent of the Divine Wiſdom.

But without making this particular Reflexion, it is clear, that the Law took its beginning at the twelfth of *Exodus*, where God preſcribes to his People the manner of celebrating the Paſſover; at leaſt this is the firſt Law which God gave them through the Miniſtry of *Moſes*; but foraſmuch as *Moſes* his end was to juſtifie in the minds of his People, the deſign he had to make them leave *Egypt* as well as their pretenſions to the Land of *Canaan*, whither he was to lead them; it was natural for him to lay before them the ground of thoſe Pretenſions, which he could not do without relating the whole Series of the Hiſtory until the time of their Bondage in *Egypt*, which we read in *Geneſis*; the greateſt part of which only concerns the Anceſtors of that People, after that *Moſes* had firſt laid down the grounds of Religion, and that which was known to all Nations.

Let us now imagin to our ſelves a Man endeavouring all of a ſuddain to introduce into the World the belief of things ſo far diſtant from common apprehenſion as theſe two points muſt needs be, *viz.* That of the Creation, and the Promiſe of Chriſt, in caſe we ſuppoſe them generally unknown. Let us yet further conceive a Man not only relating thoſe things, but making

them the foundation of a new ſort of Laws never before heard of. Is there any Wit, or Judgment in ſuch an undertaking? Can we therefore ſuppoſe that *Moſes*, whoſe Writings teſtifie his great Wiſdom, ſhould ever have entertain'd ſuch unaccountable thoughts.

I dare aver that there was any never Legiſlator ſo ſtupid and inconſiderate, as to pretend to engage a whole people to ſubmit themſelves to the yoke of obedience, and to receive a great number of Laws reſpecting their Civil Government and Religion, by declaring to them two Fictions, of which they had never before had the leaſt Idea.

It is alſo very conſiderable, that theſe things are not recited by *Moſes* as a Preface to the Decalogue, as if then firſt they had been propoſed to *Moſes*, or the People by God; but *Moſes* ſets them down as Truths known to them all, and as Principles, univerſally admitted, and ſuch as the meer mentioning of them could not but ſtrongly engage the *Jews* to render a ready obedience to the Laws which God gave to *Moſes* in their preſence of the Divine Authority, of which their very Senſes were convinc'd.

Let us alſo conſider the nature of thoſe things, the Relation of which *Moſes* has joined with theſe two General Points, to make an impreſſion on the Minds of the *Jews*. Let us conſider the account he gives them of their Anceſtors, nearer or farther off, whom he repreſents as equally inform'd of theſe Matters, as having ſeverally delivered the knowledge of them to their Children, and having join'd to theſe firſt Truths of the Creation, and the Promiſe of a Saviour, many other

other Notions thereon depending, and which tied their hopes and expectations, to the Land of *Canaan*. And now judge whether *Moſes* were not to be accuſed of great folly and ſenſeleſneſs, if he had proceeded to make ſuch a vaſt People (all of the ſudden) to receive for Truths publickly and generally owned, what indeed was nothing but the moſt ridiculous and ill cohering Romance that ever was broached.

Now ſince as it is viſible (taking in the Circumſtances I have hinted) that the Authority of ſuch an Hiſtorian and Law-giver as *Moſes* was, relating ſuch importent Matters cannot be call'd in queſtion; it follows, that the Atheiſt can have nothing to object againſt his Teſtimony with the leaſt ſhadow or pretence of reaſon. So that we may already aſſert, that there is nothing better atteſted than the Creation of the World, and the Promiſe of Chriſt, which are the immoveable Foundations of the Chriſtian Religion.

Nevertheleſs for a more evident Conviction, we are willing, before we draw this Concluſion, to make it appear how weak and inconſiderable all thoſe Objections are, which Atheiſts can poſſibly frame againſt what *Moſes* relates concerning theſe Matters.

What can they with Reaſon object? Perhaps they'l ſay, that *Moſes* is not the Author of *Geneſis*, but that it was foiſted in under his Name, and conſequently, that whatſoever is built upon the Authority of *Moſes* and his evidence, is all without ground. Or they may object, that if *Moſes* be indeed the Author of *Geneſis*, that he lived at ſuch a

distance of time from the things which he relates, that it makes void the authority of his Writings. They may moreover alledge, that *Moses* relates things impossible, and of which therefore those that mentioned them before, the things themselves being so long since past and done, could not be fully inform'd of, and that they may well be suppos'd greatly changed and alter'd by a Tradition of so many Ages. They may also alledge, that according to the common Opinion, *Moses* penn'd not these things as an Historian, but as a Prophet; and that the apprehension of most concerning his Books are, that he wrote of things, whereof the knowledge before his time, was very obscure and confuse, or rather were generally unknown.

They may object against these relations of *Moses*, that which the most ancient People, such as the *Ægyptians*, *Chaldeans*, and *Chinese*, alledge for their Antiquity, which far surpasseth the date of the World according to *Moses*.

These are the principal ways to assault the Truths which *Moses* relates, either by maintaining with the Atheists on one hand, that the things which *Moses* relates, are indeed mentioned by other Authors, but that they forged them themselves; or that *Moses* being an able and refin'd Politician design'd by Creating a belief of these Matters in the *Jews*, to make them more submissive and obedient to him.

In a Word, it may be said, that supposing the Book of *Genesis* to be writ by *Moses*, it was an easie matter for him to dictate whatsoever he pleased to a People who were under a Law that made it

it Capital to call in question the truth of his Relations, or the Authority of his Laws.

This certainly is the fartherst, to which the height of Obstinacy can carry this matter, and the very last refuge of the strongest prejudice. But it is an easie matter to confound the Atheists and Libertines in every one of these Articles, and to shew that all their Objections do in effect serve for nothing else but to make a more lively impression of this Argument taken from Matter of fact, which I have undertaken to set forth in a full and clear light.

CHAP. V.

That Moses *is the Author of the Book of* Genesis.

I Shall in the Sequel of this Discourse make it appear, that we cannot with reason, contest the Authority of a Tradition which hath those Characters which we find in the Relations contain'd in the Book of *Genesis*: The only thing that can be question'd in this matter is, Whether *Moses* the great Captain of the *Israelites*, and Founder of their Common-wealth, be the Author of it. This therefore is the thing which we ought solidly to evince.

Tho it seems that we might dispense with this trouble: forasmuch as it is easie to shew, that the greatest part of the most considerable Events,

which are recorded in the Book of *Geneſis*, were generally believed by others, as well as the *Jews*.

At leaſt it muſt be granted, that theſe Matters have given occaſion to moſt of their Fables, *viz.* To that of the Chaos, to that of the Marriage of *Peleus* and *Thetis*, for the forming of Man to that of *Prometheus*, to that of *Jupiter*'s continued Laughter for the ſeven firſt days of his Life, which they look'd upon as the Original of the Solemnity of the ſeventh day, known amongſt the Heathens; to that of the Golden Age, and of the Deluge; to the Name of *Deucalion*, to the Fable of *Janus*, to that of the Diviſion of the World amongſt *Saturn*'s Sons, to the Name of *Jupiter Hammon*, to the Fable of the *Titans*, and of the changing of Women into Statues of Stone; to the Stories of the Inceſt the Gods committed with their Daughters; to that of the firing of the World by *Phaeton*; and to a great number of other Fictions, which cannot be otherwiſe explained, as the learned have ſhewn at large.

Whoſoever was the Author of *Geneſis*, whether *Moſes* or another, ſure it is that he was exactly inform'd of the Matters he relates, and that he lived ſoon after *Joſeph*.

Firſt then I ſay, that it appears he was fully inform'd of thoſe matters of which he treats; he ſets down the Names of the Heads or Fathers of the ſeveral Nations of the World, and does it ſo, that what he ſaith doth very well agree with what the moſt Ancient Hiſtorians have left us concerning that matter: He ſpeaks of theſe Nations, of the Countreys they poſſeſt, and their Kings,

Kings, as of things he was perfectly inform'd of: He very carefully diſtinguiſhes the Original of theſe ſeveral Nations; and the ſame being at that time commonly known, no Hiſtorian could repreſent them otherwiſe than they were, without expoſing himſelf to the laughter of all by endeavouring to mix Fables with Relations of this nature.

In the Second place, I ſay, that this Book was writ by a Man that lived ſoon after *Joſeph*: He ſpeaks very exactly of what *Joſeph* did in his place of chief Miniſter to *Pharaoh*; in particular, he ſets down the firſt Original of the fifth Penny which the *Egyptians* ſo many Ages after, continued to pay to their Kings, being a thing which no *Egyptian* could be ignorant of.

And Laſtly, It is viſible, that this Book ſerves for an Introduction to *Exodus*, and the following Books, which have no other Foundation, but the truth of thoſe things which are related to us there; and do throughout allude and refer to the ſeveral paſſages of it; and that all Matters of Religion and Worſhip, contained in them, are founded upon the truth of the Creation, and the Promiſe of the *Meſſiah*, which we find in *Geneſis*; and upon the truth of all thoſe other ſucceeding Matters of Fact, until the coming of the Children of *Iſrael* into *Egypt*, when *Joſeph* was chief Favourite, and Miniſter of *Pharaoh*.

But we have yet a more eaſie way to make out that *Moſes*, whoſe Hiſtory is contain'd in *Exodus*, and the following Books, is the Author of *Geneſis*.

For

For first, it cannot be deny'd, that the Heathens themselves have acknowledged *Moses* for the most antient Law-giver; for this, we have the Testimonies of *Plato*, *Polemus*, *Artapanus*, *Pythagoras*, *Theopompus*, and *Diodorus Siculus*, who places *Moses* in the front of Six of the most antient Law-givers thus; *Moses*, *Sauchnis*, *Sesonchosis*, *Bachoris*, *Amasis*, and *Darius* Father of *Xerxes*.

But further, if when the *Lacedemonians* tell us of the Laws of their Law-giver *Lycurgus*; and the *Athenians* of those of their *Solon*, we think our selves oblig'd to believe them; because naturally every Nation is suppos'd to be a faithful Depositary of the Laws of him who first founded their Government; yea, if we do not in the least doubt of these Relations, though there be no People at this day, who live according to the Laws of *Lycurgus*, or *Solon*; can any valuable reason be imagined, for us to doubt, whether *Moses* wrote the Book of *Genesis*, when an entire Nation have constantly averr'd, that he did so? I say, when all the *Jews*, who continue at this day, do in all places, where they are scatter'd throughout the World equally, and with one consent, maintain, that they received this Book from him, together with the Laws and Worship therein contain'd? Nay, when it is notorious, that many of them have suffer'd Martyrdom in confirmation of this Truth?

I omit now to mention the consent of the Christians, who tho' they be not descended of *Abraham*, and do not observe the greatest part of the Laws of *Moses*, yet do not cease highly to defend this truth throughout the World, the Gospel in their sense being nothing else, but the literal accomplishment of that Promise, *The Seed of the Woman, shall bruise the Head of the Serpent*. I shall shew in the Sequel of these my Reflexions, with how much Justice they assent to this Truth; but at present I tie my self only to the Testimonies of the *Jews*, and that which confirms the Authority thereof.

CHAP. VI.

That the Book of Genesis *could not be forged under the Name of* Moses.

I Should never have done, should I go about to set down all the Observations which might be made incomparing this Book of *Genesis*, with other Histories, commonly known to the World; and whose faithfulness is unquestionable. Without entring upon this comparison, we may boldly assert, that there is no History in the World, whose Author we can be so sure of, as that *Moses* was the Pen-man of *Genesis*.

But I go further, and assert, that the *Jews* could not be mistaken in the Testimonies they give to this Truth, which I prove by these two Remarks.

The First is, That their Observations both Civil and Religious, are at this day founded upon no other Principles, than those which we find in *Genesis*: As for instance, they compute the beginning of their day from the preceding Evening; they keep

distance of time from the things which he relates, that it makes void the authority of his Writings. They may moreover alledge, that *Moses* relates things impossible, and of which therefore those that mentioned them before, the things themselves being so long since past and done, could not be fully inform'd of, and that they may well be suppos'd greatly changed and alter'd by a Tradition of so many Ages. They may also alledge, that according to the common Opinion, *Moses* penn'd not these things as an Historian, but as a Prophet; and that the apprehension of most concerning his Books are, that he wrote of things, whereof the knowledge before his time, was very obscure and confuse, or rather were generally unknown.

They may object against these relations of *Moses*, that which the most ancient People, such as the *Ægyptians*, *Chaldeans*, and *Chinese*, alledge for their Antiquity, which far surpasseth the date of the World according to *Moses*.

These are the principal ways to assault the Truths which *Moses* relates, either by maintaining with the Atheists on one hand, that the things which *Moses* relates, are indeed mentioned by other Authors, but that they forged them themselves; or that *Moses* being an able and refin'd Politician design'd by Creating a belief of these Matters in the *Jews*, to make them more submissive and obedient to him.

In a Word, it may be said, that supposing the Book of *Genesis* to be writ by *Moses*, it was an easie matter for him to dictate whatsoever he pleased to a People who were under a Law that made it

it Capital to call in question the truth of his Relations, or the Authority of his Laws.

This certainly is the fartheſt, to which the height of Obstinacy can carry this matter, and the very last refuge of the strongest prejudice. But it is an easie matter to confound the Atheists and Libertines in every one of these Articles, and to shew that all their Objections do in effect serve for nothing else but to make a more lively impression of this Argument taken from Matter of fact, which I have undertaken to set forth in a full and clear light.

CHAP. V.

That Moses *is the Author of the Book of* Genesis.

I Shall in the Sequel of this Discourse make it appear, that we cannot with reason, contest the Authority of a Tradition which hath those Characters which we find in the Relations contain'd in the Book of *Genesis*: The only thing that can be question'd in this matter is, Whether *Moses* the great Captain of the *Israelites*, and Founder of their Common-wealth, be the Author of it. This therefore is the thing which we ought solidly to evince.

Tho it seems that we might dispense with this trouble: forasmuch as it is easie to shew, that the greatest part of the most considerable Events,

which are recorded in the Book of *Geneſis*, were generally believed by others, as well as the *Jews*.

At leaſt it muſt be granted, that theſe Matters have given occaſion to moſt of their Fables, *viz.* To that of the Chaos, to that of the Marriage of *Peleus* and *Thetis*, for the forming of Man to that of *Prometheus*, to that of *Jupiter*'s continued Laughter for the ſeven firſt days of his Life, which they look'd upon as the Original of the Solemnity of the ſeventh day, known amongſt the Heathens; to that of the Golden Age, and of the Deluge; to the Name of *Deucalion*, to the Fable of *Janus*, to that of the Diviſion of the World amongſt *Saturn*'s Sons, to the Name of *Jupiter Hammon*, to the Fable of the *Titans*, and of the changing of Women into Statues of Stone; to the Stories of the Inceſt the Gods committed with their Daughters; to that of the firing of the World by *Phaeton*; and to a great number of other Fictions, which cannot be otherwiſe explained, as the learned have ſhewn at large.

Whoſoever was the Author of *Geneſis*, whether *Moſes* or another, ſure it is that he was exactly inform'd of the Matters he relates, and that he lived ſoon after *Joſeph*.

Firſt then I ſay, that it appears he was fully inform'd of thoſe matters of which he treats; he ſets down the Names of the Heads or Fathers of the ſeveral Nations of the World, and does it ſo, that what he ſaith doth very well agree with what the moſt Ancient Hiſtorians have left us concerning that matter: He ſpeaks of theſe Nations, of the Countreys they poſſeſt, and their Kings,

Kings, as of things he was perfectly inform'd of: He very carefully diſtinguiſhes the Original of theſe ſeveral Nations; and the ſame being at that time commonly known, no Hiſtorian could repreſent them otherwiſe than they were, without expoſing himſelf to the laughter of all by endeavouring to mix Fables with Relations of this nature.

In the Second place, I ſay, that this Book was writ by a Man that lived ſoon after *Joſeph*: He ſpeaks very exactly of what *Joſeph* did in his place of chief Miniſter to *Pharaoh*; in particular, he ſets down the firſt Original of the fifth Penny which the *Egyptians* ſo many Ages after, continued to pay to their Kings, being a thing which no *Egyptian* could be ignorant of.

And Laſtly, It is viſible, that this Book ſerves for an Introduction to *Exodus*, and the following Books, which have no other Foundation, but the truth of thoſe things which are related to us there; and do throughout allude and refer to the ſeveral paſſages of it; and that all Matters of Religion and Worſhip, contained in them, are founded upon the truth of the Creation, and the Promiſe of the *Meſſiah*, which we find in *Geneſis*; and upon the truth of all thoſe other ſucceeding Matters of Fact, until the coming of the Children of *Iſrael* into *Egypt*, when *Joſeph* was chief Favourite, and Miniſter of *Pharaoh*.

But we have yet a more eaſie way to make out that *Moſes*, whoſe Hiſtory is contain'd in *Exodus*, and the following Books, is the Author of *Geneſis*.

For

For first, it cannot be deny'd, that the Heathens themselves have acknowledged *Moses* for the most antient Law-giver; for this, we have the Testimonies of *Plato*, *Polemus*, *Artapanus*, *Pythagoras*, *Theopompus*, and *Diodorus Siculus*, who places *Moses* in the front of Six of the most antient Law-givers thus; *Moses*, *Sauchnis*, *Sesonchosis*, *Bachoris*, *Amasis*, and *Darius* Father of *Xerxes*.

But further, if when the *Lacedemonians* tell us of the Laws of their Law-giver *Lycurgus*; and the *Athenians* of those of their *Solon*, we think our selves oblig'd to believe them; because naturally every Nation is suppos'd to be a faithful Depositary of the Laws of him who first founded their Government; yea, if we do not in the least doubt of these Relations, though there be no People at this day, who live according to the Laws of *Lycurgus*, or *Solon*; can any valuable reason be imagined, for us to doubt, whether *Moses* wrote the Book of *Genesis*, when an entire Nation have constantly averr'd, that he did so? I say, when all the *Jews*, who continue at this day, do in all places, where they are scatter'd throughout the World equally, and with one consent, maintain, that they received this Book from him, together with the Laws and Worship therein contain'd? Nay, when it is notorious, that many of them have suffer'd Martyrdom in confirmation of this Truth?

I omit now to mention the consent of the Christians, who tho' they be not descended of *Abraham*, and do not observe the greatest part of the Laws of *Moses*, yet do not cease highly to defend this truth throughout the World, the Gospel in their sense being nothing else, but the literal accomplishment of that Promise, *The Seed of the Woman, shall bruise the Head of the Serpent*. I shall shew in the Sequel of these my Reflexions, with how much Justice they assent to this Truth; but at present I tie my self only to the Testimonies of the *Jews*, and that which confirms the Authority thereof.

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But I go further, and assert, that the *Jews* could not be mistaken in the Testimonies they give to this Truth, which I prove by these two Remarks.

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keep the Sabbath, they obſerve Circumciſion, they abſtain from eating the Muſcle which is in the hollow of the Thigh, *&c.* The Obſervation of which Laws is indeed preſcrib'd to them in the other Books of *Moſes*, but the occaſion and ground of them all, is no where to be found but in *Geneſis*, to which all theſe Laws have a natural Relation.

The Second is, That the Book of *Geneſis*, taking for granted, that the Poſterity of *Abraham*, as well as his Anceſtors, had always obſerv'd the Sabbath and Circumciſion; and the Books of *Moſes*, ordering the ſame to be conſtantly read in every Family, to which the Sabbath day was more peculiarly appropriated, and the whole to be read over every ſeventh year, as we know the *Jews* practice was according to the Law of *Moſes*; the firſt of which Injunctions they practice ſtill in all places, and have left off the other, only becauſe they cannot do it now they are out of their own Land: I ſay, ſuppoſing all this, it is abſolutely impoſſible, that any other than *Moſes*, could have made this Book to be received.

The forgery at the beginning, would have been palpable, even to Children themſelves: As for Example, let us ſuppoſe that *Solomon* had form'd a deſign of deceiving the People, in publiſhing the Book of *Geneſis*, for a Book of *Moſes*; Is it poſſible he ſhould ſo far impoſe on his People, as to make them to receive the ſaid Book all at once, as that which had been conſtantly read in their Families every ſeventh day, and year, and that for 600 years before his time? and therefore, as

as a Book that had been ſo long in all their Families, tho' indeed it was never heard of by them before that time.

If an Impoſtor can create a Belief in others, that he hath ſome ſecret Communication with the Deity; thoſe who are thus perſwaded by him, will eaſily ſubmit themſelves to his Laws; but it is abſolutely impoſſible, that a whole People ſhould all at once, forget whatſoever they have learn'd, or heard of their Parents and Fore-Fathers, and inſtead thereof, admit of Tales forged at pleaſure.

Some Nations have been ſo ridiculous, to derive themſelves from a Fabulous Original, but they never fell into ſuch Miſtakes about thoſe things which were at no great diſtance from the time in which they lived.

Beſides, we know that theſe Fabulous Originals never made ſo lively an impreſſion upon the Minds of a whole Nations, eſpecially the Learned amongſt them, as generally to be believed; but we rather find, that they have endeavoured to reconcile them to truth, by ſhewing ſomething elſe was hinted thereby, as we may ſee by the Explication the Heathens themſelves have given us of all their Fables, and utterly rejected thoſe which they could not reconcile to good ſenſe.

But in this caſe we find a whole Nation to this very day maintaining all the Matters of Fact related in *Geneſis*, and in particular, that of the Creation, as of Matters whoſe Memorial they have conſtantly celebrated every ſeventh day, ſince the time they firſt happened.

Laſtly,

Laſtly, It cannot be deny'd, but that this Book was conſtantly uſed to be read amongſt the *Jews*, eſpecially on the Sabbath day, and that under the Name of *Moſes*: For inſtance, ſince the time of Jeſus Chriſt, or ſince that of *David*. Neither can it be denied, but this conſtant reading was obſerv'd by virtue of a Law contain'd in the ſaid Book: Now if this Law has always been in this Book from the firſt appearing of it, which cannot be queſtion'd; how was it poſſible to forge and foiſt in this Book under the Name of *Moſes* the Founder of the *Jewiſh* Government. I ſay, this Book, which beſides all this, contains ſuch extraordinary Matters, and is the very Foundation of all their Religion.

I will not repeat here what I mention'd in the third Chapter, to make the Vanity of thoſe Men appear, who imagine the Book of *Geneſis*, and the four that follow it, might have been forged by others, under *Moſes* his Name: Yet I think I ought, before I proceed further, to remove a ſeeming difficulty, which is often alledg'd by this ſort of People: For ſay they, it cannot be, that theſe Books were ever read, with that care and conſtancy we ſpeak of, becauſe a time can be pointed at, wherein the ſaid Book was wholly unknown in the Kingdom of *Judah*; and indeed, the Hiſtory plainly informs us, that the Book of the Law was found again in the Reign of *Joſias*, from whence they infer, that if it were then unknown, it might as well be forged.

But indeed, they may conclude from hence, that which willingly we allow them, that there was a time wherein Ungodlineſs did prevail, and Idola-

Idolatry was publickly eſtabliſh'd in the Kingdom of *Judah* it ſelf, yet can they not from this inſtance draw any other Conſequence which might ſupport their pretenſions.

They muſt needs acknowledge firſt, that the Books of *Moſes* were not only amongſt the three Tribes, but alſo amongſt the ten, ſince the time of their Revolt under *Rehoboam*; that they who were carried by *Salmanaſſar*, into the Land of *Aſſyria*, had the ſaid Books amongſt them, as well as thoſe of the ten Tribes, who were left in their own Countrey. Thus we ſee, that when the King of *Aſſyria* ſent ſome of the Prieſts of *Samaria* to inſtruct the Colony which he had ſetled in their Countrey, in the Law of God; it is not ſaid, that thoſe Prieſts went to borrow the Law of *Moſes* from them of *Judah*, nor that the ſaid Laws was altogether unknown in that Countrey; but only that they had formerly violated the Law of God, in ſerving ſtrange Gods, as they ſtill did, but that withal, they kept the Law of God, which to this day is yet found among their Poſterity.

Secondly, It is evident that tho the wickedneſs and violence of *Manaſſeh*, cauſed a great change in Matters of Religion, yet not ſo great, but that his Subjects notwithſtanding, had ſtill the Books of *Moſes* amongſt them; the Blood which he ſhed in *Jeruſalem*, was an evident ſign, that there were ſome Godly men left amongſt them, who continued true to their Religion, and obſerved the Laws of God. Beſides, if we conſider his Repentance, we muſt conclude, that towards the end of his Reign, he did in ſome degree, re-eſtabliſh the purity of that Religion he had before pro-

prophaned, a main part of which, was the expounding and reading of the Books of *Moſes*, according to thoſe Laws before mention'd.

In the third place it is viſible, that the reaſon why *Hilkiah*, having found the Book of the Law in the Temple as they were cleanſing and repairing it, ſent the ſame to *Joſiah*, was not becauſe there was no other ſuch Book left in *Judah*, but becauſe the ſaid Book being written by the hand of *Moſes* himſelf, there ſeem'd to be ſomething very extraordinary in the finding of it at that very time, when they were endeavouring a Reformation; and it was this Circumſtance which did in a more particular manner excite the Zeal of this good Prince. And indeed, if we ſuppoſe that *Joſiah* had never before ſeen the Book of the Law, how could he have apply'd himſelf to the reforming of his Countrey, his People, and the Temple, in the manner which is recorded in the Book of Kings? How could a ſufficient number of Copies of it be diſperſed over all his Kingdom in an inſtant, to inform the People about the Ceremonials of the Paſſover, which ſoon after was ſo Solemnly celebrated by them? Or, how is it poſſible, that the *Levites*, the Prieſts, and People, could have been all of the ſuddain inſtructed in all the points to be obſerved in the performing of that Holy Solempity.

It is apparent, that the Sacred Hiſtorian did for no other reaſon take notice of this Circumſtance, that the Book found, was of *Moſes* own hand Writing, but to make it appear, that their devout reſpect for this Book, was not wholly ſtifled, as having been by them carefully hid from the fury

fury of their Idolatrous Kings, and laid up in ſome ſecret place of the Temple, where now they had ſo happily found it again.

Over and above what hath been ſaid already, we are to obſerve, that how great ſoever the wickedneſs of the Kings of *Juda* and *Iſrael* was, as well as that of their Subjects, yet the ſame generally conſiſted in nothing elſe, but the imitation of the Worſhip of their Neighbour Nations, as to ſome particulars, which tho they were forbid by the Law, yet they left the far greater part of their Religion in full force. This we have an inſtance of in the time of *Ahab*, where we find *Elijah* reproaching the *Iſraelites* with the Monſtrous Alliance they had made betwixt the Worſhip of God, and that of *Baal*, which Queen *Jeſabel* had introduc'd.

All this clearly proves, that the Book of *Geneſis*, which is the firſt of the Books of *Moſes*, was never forged under his Name, ſince it was always owned as the Writing of that Famous Author, and is ſtill ſo acknowledged by the *Jews* at this day.

CHAP. VII.

That it appears from Geneſis, *that the Sabbath was conſtantly obſerved from the beginning of the World until* Moſes.

THe other Objection of the Atheiſts (ſuppoſing that *Moſes* was the Author of *Geneſis*, as we have now proved) is this, that it ſeems abſurd to give credit to the Relations of a Perſon who lived ſo many Ages diſtant from the things he recites. To anſwer this Objection we muſt firſt of all declare to them, by what means the Memory of the Fact which *Moſes* relates was preſerv'd ſo lively and entire, as to give *Moſes* ſo diſtinct a knowledge of them, and that it was not in his power to forge or add any thing of his own, it being a thing known to the whole World, as well as himſelf.

There is no way whereby we can more ſolidly evince, that it is impoſſible the Creation of the World ſhould be forged by *Moſes*, than by making it appear, that the Law of the Sabbath hath a natural Relation to the Creation of the World, and that it hath been always conſtantly obſerved from that time until *Moſes*. The ſame alſo will help us clearly to conceive after what manner the Memory of the Promiſe of the *Meſſiah* hath been preſerv'd ſo diſtinct amongſt thoſe that lived ſince the Creation until *Moſes*. We are no ſooner inform'd that the Sabbath is a ſolemn day, ordain'd

dain'd at firſt to celebrate and perpetuate the Memory of the Creation, but we judge it impoſſible, that ſo important an event commemorated every ſeventh day, by vertue of a Divine Law, ſhould be an impoſture. But foraſmuch as this impoſſibility is grounded on theſe two Propoſitions; the one, that God gave this Law of the Sabbath to the firſt Man; the other, that the ſame was obſerved by his Poſterity ever ſince, till the time of *Moſes*; and that God only renew'd it in the Law given from Mount *Sinai*: theſe are the Truths I am now to clear, and it is of more importance to be proved, becauſe, tho the generality of Authors, Ancient and Modern, *Jews* as well as *Chriſtians*, are of this Opinion, yet there are ſome of the Chriſtian Fathers who ſeem to deny that the Sabbath was ever obſerv'd by the Patriarchs. But it will be an eaſie matter to prove from *Moſes*, that the Antiquity of the Sabbath is ſuch as I aſſert, and at the ſame time to demonſtrate the truth of the Creation, as well as of the Promiſe of the *Meſſiah*, which in a manner immediately follow'd it.

Moſes in the ſecond Chapter of *Geneſis*, expreſſes himſelf thus: *And God bleſſed the ſeventh day and Sanctified it, becauſe that in it, he had reſted from all his work, which he had Created*: Which words clearly evince a Solemn Conſecration of the ſeventh day to God's Service, by its being made a Commemoration of his finiſhing the Creation of the Heavens and the Earth. Gen. II. 3.

But becauſe it may be ſaid, that the intent of *Moſes* in this place was only to ſet down the reaſon why God ſet apart this day, of all others, to his Service, by the Law at Mount *Sinai*, we

are to take notice, that this appointment was made for Man's sake already placed in the Garden of *Eden*. This we may gather from the order *Moses* observes. For he sets down first the Formation of Man on the sixth day, and his being plac'd in Paradise, which he gives a more particular account of in the second Chapter, and after these, he relates God's resting from his Works, and the Consecration of the Sabbath with the reason of that Law which he impos'd on Man; and then adds, *These are the Generations of the Heavens and of the Earth, when they were Created, in the day that the Lord God made the Heaven and the Earth.* All that precedes these words, is only a Relation of what pass'd in the seven first days, and that which *Moses* sets down concerning Gods blessing of the seventh day, and his Consecrating it, ought as well to be accounted a Law appointing the seventh day for his Service, as those other Blessings, given to the Creatures according to their kinds, are acknowledged as inviolable Laws of God, by virtue whereof they subsist, and are perpetuated each according to their kind, by the way of Generation.

In the second place, it is very remarkable, that the Patriarchs, maintain'd a Publick Worship, at least since the time of *Seth*; which it was necessary should be determined to some certain day; and since we find, that even at this time they distinguish'd between Beasts clean and unclean, with respect to their Sacrifices (which they could not do but from Revelation) we have much more reason to conclude, that God had set apart a time for own Worship and Service.

And

And indeed, there are many evident signs, that even then the 7 day was observed. I will not here peremptorily assert that antient Tradition of the *Jews*, which tells us, that the ninety second Psalm, whose Title is *a Psalm for the Sabbath*, was made by *Adam* himself, who was made on the Evening of the Sabbath: But this I dare assert, that it is apparent, that what we read in the eighth Chapter of *Genesis* about the Deluge, doth refer to this custom, where we find *Noah* sending forth the Dove and the Raven on the seventh day, which plainly hints to us his observing of that day; for it seems, that *Noah* having, in an especial manner, on that solemn day, implored the assistance of God in the Assembly of his Family, he expected a particular Blessing from it.

Kimchi Præfat. in Psalmos.

Gen. VIII. 10. 12.

And we cannot but make some Reflexion on that which we read in the XXIX of *Genesis* concerning the term of a Week set apart to the Nuptials of *Leah*, where at the twenty seventh Verse *Laban* thus expresses himself. *Fulfil her Week, and we will give thee this also, for the Service which thou shalt serve with me yet seven other Years.* This Week here doth so plainly signifie a Week of days that it cannot be more naturally express'd; and indeed, all generally understand by this Week of the Marriage Feast of *Leah*, that term of time which in succeeding Ages hath been customary to allot to Nuptial Festivals, as appears from the Book of *Esther*, where the Wedding Feast of *Vasthi* lasted seven days, this term of seven days having so long since been Consecrated to Nuptial Rejoycings.

Gen. XXIX. 27.

The same we may also gather from the time

which was ordinarily allotted to mourning for the Dead, to which we find the Patriarchs allotted a term proportion'd to that of their rejoicing. For as we see that the *Egyptians* mourned ten Weeks for *Jacob*, because of his Quality, as being the Father of *Joseph*, so we find that *Joseph*, and those that accompanied him, mourned seven days at his Enterment in the Land of *Canaan*: And as we find, that this Custom was perpetually afterwards observ'd by the *Jews*, as appears from *Ecclesiasticus* XXII. 12. so likewise we find the same observed by the *Asiaticks*, as may be seen in the History of *Ammianus Marcellinus*, at the beginning of his nineteenth Book, and from them it passed to the Christians, as we find in St. *Ambrose*.

De fide Resur. in obitu Sat. p. 321.

Thirdly, It appears from *Exod.* VII. 25. that God observed seven days after he had smote the River to change the Waters thereof into Blood; from whence the *Jews* conclude, that the three Plagues *Viz.* that of Blood, of Frogs, and of Lice, abode on the Land of *Egypt* six days, and were withdrawn on the seventh, which is the Sabbath.

Seven days were fulfilled after that the Lord had smote the River. *Talkut* in h. l.

We may also gather, if we calculate the time exactly, that the *Jews* in *Egypt* observed the Sabbath. We find from the History of their departure out of *Egypt*, that the same happened on a *Thursday*, being the fifteenth of the Month *Nisan*, and the day in which they sung those Hymns of Deliverance, was the Sabbath which God had particularly set apart for this Week.

It is also evident from *Exod.* XVI. that the keeping of the Sabbath was observ'd by the *Israelites*, before the Law was given on Mount *Sinai*. For we find God speaking there concerning the Sabbath,

bath, not as of a thing newly instituted, but as of an antient Law, which they were not to transgress by gathering the Manna on that day; for he orders them to gather a double portion the sixth day, and not to gather any on the seventh. We see that the *Israelites* resting on the seventh day is here supposed a known and customary thing, prescribed to them by a Law of old.

They who went forth to gather Manna on the seventh day are represented as Transgressors of a known Law, as appears from the words of the Lord to *Moses*: *How long refuse ye to keep my Commandments and my Laws?* *Moses* also speaks of the Sabbath which was to be the next day, as of a thing customary, and received amongst them. *To morrow* (saith he, at *v.* 23.) *is the rest of the Sabbath of holiness unto the Lord*; words which would have been unintelligible to the *Israelites*, and express'd a Law, altogether impracticable, in case they had been destitute of any further knowledge concerning it, and had not been acquainted, that it was the very day in which the great work of Creation had been finished.

My fourth Observation I take from the very words of the Decalogue, where first of all we find God speaking in this manner, *Remember the Sabbath day*; which words clearly import, that the Law he gave, was not a new Law, but indeed as old as the World, and which had been observed by their Forefathers. It seems probable also, that God expresses himself in these terms, because the Tyranny of *Pharaoh* had forc'd them to break this Law, by obliging them to deliver their Tale of Bricks every day, without excepting the Sabbath,

Exod. XX. 8.

bath, which before he had allowed them to keep.

This is explained very distinctly in the fifth of *Exodus*, and seems to have been the occasion of *Moses*'s demanding Straw of *Pharaoh*, for the *Israelites* to go and Sacrifice, in answer to which demand, *Pharaoh* expresses himself in terms which shew that formerly they had observed a rest on that day: However it be, yet thus much is apparent, that God commands them to make their Bond Servants to observe the Sabbath, because the *Egyptians* by their example inclin'd them not to be very careful in exempting them from all labour on that day.

Exod. V. 5.

Moreover, in the second place, we are to take notice, that in the last words of the fourth Commandment, God speaks of it as of a thing formerly appointed and determin'd by him, saying, *For in six days the Lord made Heaven and Earth, and rested the seventh day, wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it*; which words have a manifest and undeniable reference to that which happen'd the seventh day after the Creation, and to the Law then given to Man concerning it.

We may gather from the fourth Chapter of the Epistle to the *Hebrews*, that the sense which we have put upon the third Verse of the second of *Genesis*, is the same which the *Jews* have always had of it. The Apostle discoursing from those words of *David*, Psal. XCV. *To whom I sware in my wrath, that they should not enter into my rest*, doth suppose a threefold rest, the first of which, is the rest of the Sabbath, of which mention is made in the second of *Genesis*, where we have the first institution of it; the second was the rest in the Land of

of *Canaan* promised to the *Jews* upon their enduring all those Tryals in the Wilderness: the third, the rest in Heaven, of which the two foregoing were but the Figures. He argues therefore, that these words of *David* could not be understood, concerning the Sabbath day; forasmuch as from the beginning of the World Men entred into that rest of the Sabbath; and he proves this, by that passage in *Genesis*, of which he only cites the first words, *viz.* That *God rested the seventh day from all his works*, as supposing that the *Jews*, to whom he wrote, had no need of having the following words quoted to them, which tell us, that *God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it*: that is, he Consecrated the same to his worship and service, forasmuch as nothing was more publickly and universally known amongst them, the Observation of the Sabbath being a thing generally received, even before the giving of the Law.

And indeed, the *Philo* the *Jew* be of opinion, that the practice of Solemnizing that day, had suffer'd some interruption; and that for this reason, the Law of the Sabbath was given to *Moses*, yet it is well known first of all, that *Aristobulus* the *Peripatetick*, in a Treatise dedicated by him to *Ptolemy*, surnamed *Philadelphus*, cites several Passages of *Homer*, *Hesiod*, and *Linus*, Heathen Poets, which mention the seventh day as a Festival, and Solemn day, because all things were finished in the same.

Euseb præp Evang. l. 13. c. 12.

In the next place, it is notorious, that if some of the Fathers, as *Justin Martyr* and *Tertullian* writing against the *Jews*, have deny'd that the Patriarchs observed the seventh day, they did so rather

rather with regard to the rigor of that Law, which forbad all manner of work on that day upon pain of Death, (which was superadded by God to the first Law of the Sabbath) than to the Observation of the Sabbath, as it was a day appointed to make a Solemn Commemoration of the Creation of the World.

In a word, we are to take notice, that the difference which God makes between the Sabbath, observ'd by the Patriarchs, and that which he appointed to the *Jews*, did consist in two things: First, in that God did impose an absolute necessity upon the *Jews* to abstain from all manner of work, even to the very dressing of Meat, necessary for the support of Life. We find this distinction clearly expres'd in the Law which God gave concerning the first and seventh day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, for he absolutely forbids all manner of work on these two days, as much as on the Sabbath, even the preparing of necessary food, which he permits the five other days, forbidding only Servil Laborious Works.

Secondly, In that the working on that day by the Law, is made punishable with death, which was not so before; which Innovation, and new rigour of the Law, established by God, was authorized, by the punishing of him who had gathered Sticks on the Sabbath day; whereas we find, that before the Law was given upon Mount *Sinai*, God did not command those *Jews* to be punished with death, who went forth the seventh day to gather Manna, according to their ancient Custom of dressing their Meat on that day.

Let

Let me add this further, that tho the Apostles had abolished the rigour of the Law concerning the Sabbath, introduced by *Moses*, yet they themselves observed it; which practise of theirs, in all probability, gave occasion to the Christians, for almost four Centuries, to keep the Sabbath as well as the first day of the Week, Solemnizing both those days, the one as a Commemoration of the Creation of the World, and the other of the Resurrection of our Saviour Jesus Christ.

But what ever Judgment may be past on this last Remark, it is very evident from *Genesis* and *Exodus*: First, that the Law of the Sabbath was observed before *Moses*: Secondly, that this Observation was by the first Patriarchs propagated among the Heathens also, as well as the Idea of the Creation; or as the practice of Sacrificing, with the other parts of Religious Worship, the Original whereof, may be seen in the Book of *Genesis*, as we shall make appear in our following Discourse.

After all this, we must conclude against the Atheist, that either *Moses* must imprudently have laid a Snare for himself, in forging a matter of fact, of which, not only the *Jews*, but all the World were able to convince him, since there were none amongst them but must needs be Conscious whether they had observed the Sabbath in Commemoration of the Creation, as he relates it, or no; or else, that the Creation of the World, being a matter of fact so generally known, and the Memorial of it Solemnized every seventh day by all those who preceded him, must needs be an uncontested and immoveable truth, which I shall

farther

farther evince by those Observations which I shall raise from the dependance and connexion, which the Matters related by *Moses* in *Genesis*, have with the Creation, and the Promise of the *Messiah*. This is my business at present, in performing of which I shall make it appear, that nothing can be imagin'd more rational and coherent, than the Relations of *Moses*, in which the Atheists imagine, that they discover so great Absurdities.

CHAP. VIII.

That Adam *was convinced of his Creation, by Reason and Authority.*

THo' it might be thought more natural in these our Disquisitions about the History of *Genesis*, to begin with those matters which happened near the time of *Moses*, and from them to pass to those at a greater distance, yet I have chosen rather to follow the Thread of *Moses* his Discourse, hoping that this Method will afford more light to these our Reflexions: At least, it will spare me the trouble of frequent Repetitions, which in the other way I should be necessarily oblig'd to. I begin then with this, *That* Adam *was convinced of his Creation, both by Reason and Authority.*

The Creation of *Adam* being a thing of that nature, that he must first be convinced of it himself, before he could perswade his Posterity to entertain the belief of it, it is worth our enquiry to know

know what ways he had to assure himself, that he was indeed Created in that manner as *Moses* relates. And, forasmuch as the certainty of this Tradition depends upon the Authority of *Adam*, whom *Moses* supposes to have been the first Deliverer of it: It is plain, that we must be assured that *Adam* could not deceive himself in this matter, as it is evident enough that he would not deceive his Children, when he took care to instruct them concerning it.

As to his own Existence, he could not but be as strongly perswaded of it, as we are of ours, all the difficulty lying in the manner how he came to exist. Now there were two ways by which *Adam* might inform himself of this, *viz.* by Reason, and the Testimony of Authority. He could easily find out this Secret by a rational Reflexion: Or, he might also be perswaded of it by God himself, who had Created him, not to mention now any information which he might have from the Angels who were Witnesses of his Creation.

It appears, that *Adam*, whose Tradition *Moses* has recorded, supposes, that he had learnt of God himself the manner of his own Formation. God speaks to *Adam*, and Sanctifies the seventh day; that is, obliges *Adam* to keep the Memorial of his Creation, he ties him by a Law to Commemorate his Creation fifty two times a Year, and to render him continual thanks for the Being he had received.

But, forasmuch as *Adam* was capable of making Reflexions upon those several matters, which God had made known to him concerning his Creation; I say, it cannot be imagin'd, but that he must have

have taken these things into consideration, and have been convinc'd of the truth of them, by the light of Reason.

The truth of a Relation consisting in its Conformity, with the matter related, it appears clearly, that *Adam* could certainly know the truth of what God had declared to him, by examining the things themselves.

We may distinguish several Propositions in the Revelation God made to him concerning the manner of his Creation.

The first was, That his Body was taken from the Earth.

The next, That his Soul was not framed before his Body.

The Third, That his Soul had been joyned to his Body to constitute one individual Person.

The Fourth, That he was Created in a full and perfect Age.

The Fifth, That his Wife was formed of a Rib, taken out of his side, during the time that he was cast into a deep Sleep.

These are the Truths I propose as instances, the rather because there is not one of them of which *Adam* himself could be a Witness.

And yet I affirm, there is none of these which he could not be assured of by the light of reason, being convinc'd of them by the same means which assured him of the Existence of his Soul and Body. The Consideration therefore of these two Matters, was of good use to confirm the Revelation which God had vouchsafed him concerning his Creation, of which he could not be a Witness himself.

That

That his Body was taken from the Earth, *Adam* might easily infer, from the food that maintain'd it; for what is the matter of Man's nourishment, but a digested, and disguised Earth? And finding himself, at first, in a perfect estate, it was natural for him to Judge that his Body had been thus at once framed of the Earth, without passing those several degrees of growth, whereby Children arrive to their just Stature.

And he might as easily be assured, that his Soul was not formed before his Body. The Soul is a Being, conscious of his own Operations and Thoughts, wherefore he needed only make this Reflexion: *My Soul has had neither knowledge nor thoughts before it was united to my Body; therefore my Soul did not exist before it.* No great study was required to make so natural a Conclusion as this is.

Again, how could he be ignorant of the union of his Soul with the Body? Was it not obvious for him to be assur'd hereof, by the ready obedience which he saw his Body yield unto his Soul? He had the Idea of a Tree, as well as the Idea of his Foot or Arm, whence it was easie for him to reflect thus: *How comes it to pass, that I command my Feet and my Arms, and that I cannot do the same to a Stone or Tree, tho' I have the Idea of the one, as well as of the other?* Must not this proceed from, a nearer union it hath with the one, than with the other? He knew that this union continued during his Sleep, and was independent of his Will. In a word, he had the same proofs of this union, which we have of it at present, only they were in him much more lively, because our Infancy makes

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us in some sort ignorant of the Nature of our Souls, our Souls accustoming themselves by little and little, to depend upon the Senses, so as not to be able to raise themselves, without some trouble, above their Operations.

Neither was it less evident to *Adam*, that he was produced at a perfect Age: He saw that his Food maintain'd Life, and he knew assuredly, that he had not taken any but very lately: How then could he attain to that Stature without that help? Or how was it that he found himself now ready to faint, if he deferr'd to take it, which formerly he had not felt the want of? These Reflexions made it unquestionable to him that he was formed in a perfect Age.

And Lastly, it was yet more easie for him to be perswaded of the truth of God's Revelation concerning the forming of *Eve*, he needed but to count his own Ribs, and those of his Wife, for he could not find one less in himself than in his Wife, without being fully satisfied in that Matter.

These Propositions, with many others of like nature, being such as *Adam* could be assur'd of the truth of, by making Reflexion either on himself, or on Plants, or living Creatures, greatly confirming his belief in the Divine Testimony, concerning his Creation, we may easily infer, that *Adam* could not deceive himself about that Matter.

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

That Adam *was confirmed by his own Experience, in the perswasion he had entertain'd concerning his Creation.*

WHen I take for granted, that *Adam* could satisfie himself concerning the truth of God's Revelation, by some natural and easie Reflexions, I don't find how any can think strange of this Hypothesis, except some, perchance, might think that I make *Adam* too Contemplative.

But if any will be pleas'd to make these following Observations, they will justifie me, that I have attributed nothing to him, but what agrees exactly with his Character.

The First is, That *Adam* finding himself immediately upon his Creation, at his full and perfect Age, he was void of those Prejudices, which the ignorance and weakness of his Infancy are the cause of; his Mind was not tainted with Popular Errors, which oft are so great a hindrance to the knowledge of truth: He had not yet received any ill impression; and when afterwards he was so credulous as to give way to a Temptation, his Experience prov'd a most powerful means to inform his Reason, and withdraw him from his Error.

Besides, we suppose here, that the Divine Testimonie, which acquainted him with the particular Circumstances of his Creation, was precedent to the Reflexions *Adam* made, and indeed,

was the cauſe of them. If we ſuppoſe ſome Countrey-man, not capable of diſcovering of himſelf, all on a ſuddain, the manner how ſuch a thing came to paſs, yet this is certain, that his Reaſon alone will be able to ſatisfie him, whether the thing happened in that manner which the Relation of it imports, he needs but conſult the Rules of Probability to be determin'd in this Matter.

Adam had not only the advantage of being formed at a perfect Age, of being acquainted by the Mouth of God himſelf, about the Creation of the World, *&c.* and of living ſo many Ages, which gave him leiſure enough to conſider the probability of what God had revealed to him, to examine the grounds and certainty of it, and in a word, to judge whether the ſaid Reflexions were to be rejected as Fabulous, or to be relyed on as of moſt certain and evident truth: But over and above all this, *Adam* could rationally aſſure himſelf of the Manner how the things (which he had not ſeen) were done by the experience he had of other Matters, which were comprehended in the Divine Revelation.

The manner how his Body had been formed of the Earth, was, I confeſs, a thing difficult to be conceiv'd, but the production of an Infant like to himſelf, by the way of Generation, which he afterwards was aſſured of by experience, was ſufficient to confirm his mind in the belief of the Divine Revelation: The way of Generation, being at leaſt as much, if not more difficult to comprehend, as the manner of his Creation.

We have great reaſon to ſuppoſe, that as it was *Adam*'s Duty, that ſo he did really make thoſe Reflexions,

Reflexions, I have attributed to him, if we conſider, that God gave him a Law proportion'd to the ſtate in which he was Created: For this Law ſuppoſes that *Adam* own'd himſelf God's Subject; that he conſider'd God as his great Benefactor, that he hop'd for Rewards from him, and fear'd to be puniſh'd by him.

And Laſtly, If I ſhould grant that theſe Reflexions did not at firſt make ſo deep an impreſſion in his heart, yet at leaſt, it cannot be deny'd, but that after his Fall, he was in a manner neceſſitated to meditate on theſe truths: God appeared to him in a viſible manner, God paſſed Sentence upon him, his Wife, and the Serpent; God condemn'd the Serpent, and afforded his Grace to Man; God made him a Promiſe proportion'd to the evil into which he was fallen. The Woman had deceiv'd her Husband, which did naturally tend to diſunite them, but God uniting himſelf again with *Adam*, made the effect of his Promiſe to depend upon *Adam*'s re-union with his Wife, having aſſured him, that the Offſpring of his Wife ſhould be his Redeemer: God threatned the Woman with extream Pains in Child-bearing, he drave them out of the Garden of *Eden*, and placed a Flame of Fire to guard the entrance there.

All this without doubt, would never ſuffer *Adam* ſlightly to paſs over Matters of ſo great importance as his Creation, and the manner of his being formed out of the Earth. Things being thus ſtated, it is eaſie to judge whether we have ſuppoſed *Adam* too Subtil and Contemplative by attributing the foreſaid Reflexions to him.

CHAP. X.

That the Children of Adam *had reaſon to be convinc'd of the Creation.*

IT is apparent, that as ſoon as the Children of *Adam* were arrived to years of underſtanding, they were in a condition to make Reflexions on the manner of their production, according to the information receiv'd of their Parents. They were able to compare the twofold Original of Man; the one, in which the Body was immediately taken from the Earth; the other, in which it was produc'd by Generation, and were able to judge if either of them were improbable; and in particular, whether the formation of their Parents, with other Matters conſequent, and depending on it, could be ſufficiently proved and confirm'd.

For it was eaſie for them to judge, that their Parents, of whoſe tenderneſs and care they had ſo great experience, could not have had the leaſt deſign to deceive them in what they had deliver'd to them concerning the Creation. They had alſo leiſure enough during the long Lives they enjoy'd, to examine the Solidity of thoſe Reaſons which perſwaded their Parents of the truth of their Creation.

For inſtance, they could eaſily inform themſelves whether there were any more Men and Women than their Father and Mother, that had been before them, whether they were produced from the

the Earth, or by a fortuitous concourſe of Atoms, whether there were any other Language beſides that which they ſpake? Whether there were any Ruins of Buildings, or other remains which ſignified that Arts had been formerly Cultivated? And in a word, whether there were any reaſon to perſwade them, that the World had not its beginning at the time which their Parents aſſigned for it?

Neither were they only in a condition to judge of the truth of theſe things, but their Senſes were able to convince them of it: As for inſtance, by ſeeing the firſt Trees, the production of others from them, and the different degrees of their growth.

But beſides all this, they could experience moſt of theſe things in their own Perſons, they could know whether God had aſſigned to Man the Fruit of Trees, and Grain for their Food, as *Moſes* has recorded, only by examining their own Mouths, which were formed to chew Fruits, and not to tear the raw fleſh of Animals, which requires ſharper and ſtronger Sets of Teeth, than thoſe they found themſelves provided with, the eating of fleſh not being introduced till after the Deluge.

Thus after the Act of Generation, they ſaw their Children Born, as it was repreſented to them, that they themſelves had been formed.

They had alſo before their eyes ſenſible ſigns of the truth of the Matters related to them: As for inſtance, the continual Miracle of a Flame of Fire, which kept them from entring into Paradiſe, was a certain Argument of the firſt ſin, of which they had not been Eye-witneſſes.

The Pains of a Woman in Child-bearing, did the more confirm the truth of the Divine Sentence, becauſe it was not obvious for them to apprehend ſuch Conſequences from an act which was pleaſing to their Senſual Appetites.

And Laſtly, Foraſmuch as they kept a Solemn day to Celebrate the Memory of the World's Nativity, on which ſeventh day, their Parents repeated to them no leſs than two and fifty times a Year, the ſame thing, informing them of the manner of their Formation; 'tis impoſſible to ſuppoſe, that they ſhould let theſe things paſs without making any Reflexion on the truth of them, and the rather becauſe we cannot rationally conceive, that they ſhould have been ſerious in any Duties of Religion, without having firſt examin'd the truth of the Creation, and of the Promiſe of a Redeemer, which are the true Grounds of all Religious Acts whatſoever.

CHAP. XI.

That the Children of Adam *were actually convinced of the Truth of the Creation, and the Promiſe of the* Meſſiah.

I Suppoſe it is ſufficiently evident, that the immediate Poſterity of *Adam* could eaſily be aſſured of the manner how their Parents had been produc'd, from whom they deriv'd their Beings. They could likewiſe be fully ſatisfied about the truth of their ſin, and the Promiſe God had made them,

them, *That one of their Poſterity ſhould deſtroy the Enemy of Mankind.*

My buſineſs therefore next, is to ſhew that they were actually aſſured of the truth of theſe Matters: this will appear if we conſider two things.

The firſt is, that as theſe Matters were the chief Objects of their Meditation, becauſe of their extraordinary importance, ſo it is evident that they acted as Perſons fully ſatisfied of the truth of them.

The other is, That as they had been inſtructed in theſe Truths by their Parents, ſo they deliver'd the ſame to their Poſterity, to whom they tranſmitted the belief of theſe Matters, as of things altogether unqueſtionable.

I ſay then, that they acted as thoſe who were fully aſſured of the truth of theſe Matters, which appears throughout the whole courſe of their Lives, not only when they did that which was good, but when they were overtaken with ſin: And this alone, methinks, is ſufficient to evidence the deep impreſſion, the belief of the Creation, and the Promiſe of the *Meſſiah*, had made on their Hearts.

Sacrifices are Acts of Religious Worſhip; and this Cuſtom therefore of Sacrificing, which we find amongſt the Children of *Adam*, was an evident mark of their Piety; and this their Religious Inclination was, without doubt, the effect of their being perſwaded of the truth of the Creation, and firſt Promiſe.

The ſin of *Cain* in killing his Brother, ſhews the ſame perſwaſion: The Divine Oracle, *The Seed of the Woman, ſhall bruiſe the Serpent's head,*

being expreſs'd in very general terms, was applicable, either to the firſt Son of *Eve*, or to his Poſterity; or elſe, to ſome other who might be called her Seed, becauſe born from one of her Poſterity.

It is natural for us, to paſs from one meaning to another, when we are in ſearch for the true ſenſe of ſuch *general propoſitions* as theſe. Now it appears from the Name which *Eve* gave to *Cain*, that ſhe took the words of this Oracle in the firſt ſenſe, that is, ſhe looked upon *Cain* to be the Son that had been promis'd her, as appears from her own words. *I have* (ſaith ſhe) *gotten a Man from the Lord.* And it cannot be doubted, that being in this Opinion her ſelf, ſhe was not wanting to cheriſh and flatter this hope in her Son, that he was to fulfil the firſt Prophecy or Divine Oracle: Neither is it any whit ſtranger to ſuppoſe this, than to imagine, that *Mandane* did inſtil into her Son *Cyrus* aſpiring thoughts for the Empire of *Aſia*, from the Dream of his Father *Aſtyages*, which ſhe look'd upon as a Divine foreboding.

Gen. IV. 1.

When we read therefore, that *Cain* ſlew his Brother, ſeeing him preferr'd of God by a very diſtinguiſhing mark in the Act of their Sacrificing, through the jealouſie and hatred he had conceived againſt him: May we not very naturally conclude from thence, that as he had never doubted of the truth of the Promiſe, ſo he could not endure to ſee another come to diſpute his Pretenſions of being the fulfiller of that firſt Oracle.

A like Reflexion we may make upon the Name which *Eve* gave to *Seth*, and indeed, the *Jews* in their antient Commentaries on *Geneſis*, lead us to it;

it: *She called his Name* Seth, *for God* (ſaid ſhe) *has appointed me another Seed.* *R. Tanchuma* following the Notion of *R. Samuel*, ſaith, That ſhe had regard to that Seed which was to proceed from another, or a ſtrange place; and what Seed is that? ſaith he. 'Tis the King, the *Meſſiah*.

Rabboth fol. 27. col. 2. par. 23. *& alibi.*

I pretend not to maintain the Solidity of the Reflexions they make upon the words, *Another Seed.* They ſeem rather to have pleas'd themſelves in ſporting with a word which admits of both ſignifications, *other* and *ſtrange*, than to give us an exact and diſtinct notion of the importance of that word. Thus much at leaſt, we cannot deny, but that *Eve* conſidering her Son *Seth*, as him whom God had given her inſtead of *Abel*, ſhe could do no leſs than acquaint him with her hopes; and indeed, this information was that which not only diſpoſed *Seth* and his Poſterity for Piety and the Spirit of Religion, but did alſo in a particular manner incline them to ſeparate from the Race of *Cain*, as from thoſe whom God had bereft of the right of fulfilling the firſt Oracle, to which naturally they might pretend.

It appears from the Example of *Enoch*, that the Children of *Adam* lived in the exerciſe of Religious Worſhip: And we know that the ſaid Worſhip ſuppoſeth the Creation of the World, and Promiſe of the *Meſſiah*, and that all the Acts of Religion are employ'd either in Commemorating theſe Truths every ſeventh day, or in unfolding the Wonders therein contain'd, or in teſtifying our thankfulneſs to God for the ſame.

We may add here, that the inſtance of *Lamech*'s *Polygamy* does in ſome ſort make out to us the force of this perſwaſion.

Cain

Cain being rejected by God, and diſtinguiſh'd by an exemplary Puniſhment, for killing his Brother *Abel*, it is evident, that no man could any longer interpret that Promiſe in the firſt ſenſe, by applying it to *Adam*'s firſt Son, or his Poſterity. This being ſo plain, as none could be ignorant of it, it was therefore natural to ſeek for another meaning of that Promiſe, and to place the fulfilling of it in a Poſterity at a greater diſtance, or more numerous.

And indeed ſo it happen'd; for the Exemplary puniſhment which God inflicted on *Cain* during the ſeven firſt Generations, according to thoſe words, That *he ſhould be puniſhed ſevenfold*, made his Poſterity apprehend, that God (for the ſin he had committed) had juſtly debarr'd him of the right he might otherwiſe have had of fulfilling the Promiſe.

But yet at the ſame time they conceived alſo, that this Right, which belong'd more properly to the eldeſt or firſt-born, than to the younger Brothers, was now to return to his Poſterity after the ſeventh Generation. And in this view it ſeems, that *Lamech* affected Polygamy, as if by multiplying his Poſterity, he had hoped to ſee that Promiſe fulfill'd by ſome one or other of them.

It cannot be deny'd, but that he imitated the Crimes of *Cain*, and therefore may well be ſuppos'd to have been leven'd alſo with his falſe Maxims. But how greatly ſoever he was corrupted, yet foraſmuch as he had been educated in the hopes of his Father, and in converſe with the Family of *Seth*, who many Ages before had formed Publick Aſſemblies for Religious Exerciſes, we can't well imagine, but that he muſt have had the ſame Pretenſions. It

It appears therefore, that the Polygamy of *Lamech* may juſtly be eſteemed an effect of his Miſapprehenſions concerning the ſence of the firſt Promiſe; thoſe means which he conceived moſt likely, he made choiſe of, to give him a ſhare in the fulfilling of that Promiſe, which pointed at a Son to be Born. So that the irregularity he was guilty of in Marryiſig two Wives at the ſame time, may paſs for a proof of his being perſwaded not only of the Promiſe, *That the Seed of the Woman ſhould break the Serpent's Head*, but alſo of the Creation of the World.

It ſeems, that according to theſe Principles, we may give a very plauſible account, as well of thoſe Violences which were exerciſed in the old World, and of their ſtrong Inclinations to ſenſuality, as of thoſe Alliances between the Family of *Seth*, and that of *Cain*; which did not happen till ſeven Generations after *Cain*; that is to ſay, at a time when the Family of *Cain* pretended to be reſtored again to his antient right, from which he had been ſuſpended during ſeven Generations: The Family of *Seth* by theſe Alliances with the Family of *Cain*, ſeeming deſirous to ſecure their hopes and pretenſions. It will not be thought ſtrange, that I look upon the Jealouſie of *Cain* towards his Brother (as thinking himſelf ſupplanted by him of his right to accompliſh the Promiſe) and the Polygamy of *Lamech*, as an effect of this perſwaſion; if it be conſider'd, that in all likelyhood this belief was more ſtrong at the beginning of the World, the Idea of the Promiſe being more freſh and lively in the minds of Men, as a thing at no great diſtance from thoſe times: And that we find in the Holy Family

mily in general, manifold instances of this Spirit of Jealousie, and burning desire of a Posterity.

We find also, much about the same time, another *Lamech*, the Father of *Noah*, declaring by the Name he gave his Son, the hopes he had that
Gen. V. 29. he might probably be the Person who was to comfort Mankind concerning all the Misery sin had brought into the World.

Thus it appears clearly, that for above sixteen Ages from the Creation of the World to the Deluge, we find in all the actions of the Children of *Adam* a strong impression of the belief of the Creation of the World, and the Promise of the *Messiah*. And till this time we find not the least instance which might seem to convince the Relation of *Moses* of the least Absurdity. We see men acting from the perswasion of these two Matters of Fact; we must conclude therefore, that they were distinctly inform'd of them; yea, we see all men in general, acting according to this Perswasion: it is evident therefore, they were known to all, and the weekly observance of the Sabbath day continually representing those Truths to the Eyes and Minds of all, takes away all possibility of Forgery in these Matters.

Let us now enquire whether after the Deluge these Ideas were effaced; or, whether they have not exerted the same efficacy in the Spirit of *Noah*, and the Actions of all his Posterity.

CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

That Noah *was fully perswaded of the Creation of the World, and the Promise of the* Messiah.

IF we find that the Children of *Adam*, and their Posterity, could be exactly informed of the Creation and the Promise of the *Messiah*, and that indeed they were so, it will follow that *Noah* could not be unacquainted with the same Truths.

Noah was six hundred Years old when the Deluge came: He had Conversed with *Lamech* his Father, who had seen *Adam* and his Children, as being fifty six years of Age when *Adam* died; he had Conversed with *Methusalem* his Grandfather, who died that very year the Flood came, and who being three hundred and forty three years old when *Adam* died, had without doubt instructed *Noah*, during so vast an interval of time, in like manner as himself had been instructed by *Adam* for many Ages.

And as *Methusalem* had lived a long time with *Seth*, who died in the year of the World 1042, so it is evident, that *Noah* who was born in the year 1056, had not only seen *Lamech* and *Methusalem*, but many also of their Ancestors, whose Discourses he heard, examin'd their Traditions, and imitated their way of Worship.

Moreover, *Noah* saw that there were no men in his time, who did not deduce their Genealogy from

from *Adam*. All his Contemporaries could convince him of it. Every one of them having as exact a knowledge of their Anceſtors as he could have of his.

Now, that this was a matter which they might be eaſily aſſur'd of, appears on theſe two accounts: the one is the long life which the men of that Age enjoyed; and the other, the ſhort interval of time which was between the Creation and the Deluge, the whole amounting only to 1656 years. *Adam* died in the year 930, and the Deluge happened in the 600 year of *Noah*'s Life. *Adam* died 126 years before the Birth of *Noah*, ſo as *Adam* muſt have been ſeen and known by *Methuſalem*, *Lamech*, and thouſands of others who were Contemporarys with *Noah*.

To theſe we may add a third Remark, and that is the Jealouſie and Hatred which was between the two Families of *Cain* and *Seth*: *Cain*'s Poſterity were altogether corrupted, and the greateſt part of *Seth*'s alſo: *Noah* being of the Poſterity of *Seth*, had no reaſon to call thoſe Matters in queſtion, which he ſaw generally own'd and received of thoſe to whom their Wickedneſs and Crimes ſuggeſted Objections againſt them. And I do not know, whether I might not ſuppoſe that *Noah* had before his eyes Paradiſe, with the Cherubims who guarded the entrance thereof, and made it inacceſſible, which if ſo, was an authentick proof of the Truths in queſtion: That Garden, as far as we can judge, being not deſtroy'd, nor the Guardian Angel diſcharged till the time of the Flood.

Be it as it will, yet *Noah* being a Man fearing God

God, was honoured with an extraordinary Call to exhort Men to Repentance, he was commanded to build an Ark; he ſaw the Deluge happening, according to what God had foretold, he ſaw the Beaſts, of their own accord, gather themſelves together, to enter into the Ark, in like manner as he had been told that they came to *Adam*. He ſaw the Deluge ceaſe according to the Divine Declaration, he ſaw fire from Heaven conſuming the Sacrifice he offer'd in acknowledgment to God, in like manner, as the words of *Moſes* ſeem to imply, that it happened at the Sacrifice of *Abel*. He ſaw himſelf choſen in a peculiar manner, to be the Depoſitary of the Promiſe which *Adam* had left to his Poſterity, tho he never had the ſatisfaction of ſeeing it fulfilled himſelf, God having reſerved the Accompliſhment of it for another time, and to one of his Poſterity at a great diſtance.

It is very evident, that all theſe Particulars could not but conduce to preſerve the Memory of theſe firſt moſt important Matters of Fact of the Creation and the Promiſe of the *Meſſiah*, and therefore, that *Noah* muſt of neceſſity be convinced of the certainty and truth of them. Let us now ſee whether *Noah*'s Offſpring had the ſame perſwaſion concerning theſe things.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIII.

That the Children of Noah *were convinced of the truth of these Matters.*

THe Children of *Noah* were an hundred years old when the Deluge happened, and consequently had converſed a long ſpace of time with *Methuſalem*, and many other of their Anceſtors and Relations of the old World, and had frequented the Religious Aſſemblies, obſerved every Sabbath day in the Family of *Seth*, whence they were deſcended; and had been inſtructed there by thoſe who had ſeen *Adam* and his Poſterity; it is evident therefore, beyond all conteſt, that they could not be ignorant of the Creation, and Promiſe of the *Meſſiah*.

Now, that they had a diſtinct knowledge of thoſe Matters, we may evidently conclude, not only becauſe they had ſeen God, when he bleſſed them, and a ſecond time ſaid to them, as after a new Creation, *increaſe and multiply*: Nor only upon the account of his giving them a poſitive Law, forbidding them to eat the blood of living Creatures, whoſe fleſh they were permitted to feed on, as he had forbid *Adam*, to eat of the Fruit of the Tree in the midſt of the Garden, when he left the reſt to their free uſe: Not only, for that he had given the Rainbow, as a new ſign of his Covenant with Mankind; nor only becauſe they had practis'd thoſe Acts of Religion, to which

Gen IX. 1.

Gen. IX 5.

which they had been Educated by their Parents and Anceſtors before the Deluge: But becauſe the ſame may be inferred from that action which drew upon *Cham* his Father's Curſe.

What is the meaning of *Cham*'s deriding the Nakedneſs of his Father, and of his Father's taking occaſion from thence to Curſe him ſo ſolemnly, and that in the perſon of *Canaan* his Firſt-born? If it were only a piece of irreverence in the Father, what reaſon had *Noah* to Curſe the Son on that account? Or, was it (as ſome have ſuppos'd) that *Canaan* had given occaſion firſt to his Fathers Irreverence, by acquainting him with the diſorder in which he had found his Grandfather *Noah*? Without doubt, there is ſomething more than ordinary in this Hiſtory. Sure it is, that the account given us of *Cham*, repreſents him as a prophane perſon, and deeply tinctured with the Maxims of *Cain* and his Poſterity, and ſeems to hint to us, that he ſuppoſing the Promiſe of the *Meſſiah* either fruſtrated by the Death of *Abel*, or altogether falſe, he made his Father's Nakedneſs the ſubject of his Mockery; who ſeem'd to be incapable of begetting any more Children, and therefore incapable of contributing to the accompliſhment of the Promiſe of the *Meſſiah*, in hopes of which, he accounted himſelf ſo happy, that he had eſcaped the Deluge.

What means it alſo, that *Noah* pronounceth ſo terrible a Curſe, againſt the Poſterity of *Cham* by *Canaan*, who were ſo far from giving an accompliſhment to that Promiſe, that they were in a manner wholly exterminated by *Joſhuah*, when God put the Poſterity of *Shem* by *Abraham* in

possession of the Land of *Canaan*? It is very natural for us to conceive, that *Noah* consider'd his Son *Cham*'s deriding of him, not only as contrary to the respect which was due to him as his Father, but also as the effect of a horrid Impiety, which attack'd God himself, as making that Promise, *The Seed of the Woman shall bruise the Serpent's Head*, a subject of Raillery.

This Reflexion upon the action of *Cham*, and the Curse of *Noah* consequent to it, does appear very natural, if we consider that *Noah* could not but reflect upon the Name his Father had given him, and the special favour shewed to him, in being alone preserved of all the posterity of *Adam*, and consequently, the onely person in the World, by whom this Promise was to be fulfill'd. At least, it can't be deny'd, but that this Reflexion is as natural as it would have been just in reference to the Fact of cruel *Astyages*, if when he had (as he thought) sufficiently eluded his Dream, which presaged the glory of the Son of *Mandane* his Daughter, he had found her indecently uncovered and had taken thence occasion, deridingly to reflect, with his other Children, upon a Dream which seem'd to promise to the Son of *Mandane* the Throne of all *Asia*, and threaten the ruine of his own.

Herod lib. 1. *Justin Hist.* lib. 1. *Valer Max* lib. 1.

'Tis a thing worth our noting, that in the time of *Ezra*, the *Samaritans* had so fresh a memory of *Cham*'s sin, which they supposed to be generally preserv'd amongst other Nations, that in their Letter to King *Artaxerxes* against the *Jews* who rebuilt *Jerusalem*, they declare, they would not discover the King's Nakedness; implying, that they

Ezra IV. 14

they could not consent to the injury he might receive from the *Jews* in suffering *Jerusalem* to be rebuilt. It is not needful to repeat those other Arguments which prove, that the Children of *Noah* had reason to be, and were actually as much convinced of the Creation and first Promise, as their Ancestors were; for seeing that these Arguments were the very same which their Fathers had to perswade themselves of the truth of these things, we had better proceed to the Enquiry, whether their Posterity that follow'd them, had the same Perswasion they had? which may easily be proved, in making some Reflexions on the following Ages, and upon those who descended from *Noah* and his Children.

CHAP. XIV.

That the Posterity of Noah's *Children were perswaded of the truth of the Creation, and first Promise.*

IF *Noah* saw *Methusalem*, who had seen *Adam* and his Posterity before the Deluge; *Abraham* saw *Shem* and his Children, who were unquestionable Witnesses of what had passed before and since the Flood.

Noah dying 350 years after the Deluge, it appears, that his Death happened in the year of the World 2006; so that *Noah* died only two years

before the Birth of *Abraham*, he being born in the year 2008.

Abraham lived 150 years with *Shem*, who died in the year 2158, and 88 years with *Arphaxad* the Son of *Shem*, who died in the year 2096, he lived 118 years with *Selah* Son of *Arphaxad*, who died in the year 2126, and 179 years with *Heber* the Son of *Selah*, who died in the year 2187.

Isaac being born in the year 2108, might see *Shem*, *Selah*, and *Heber*, who for some hundreds of years had conversed with *Noah* and his other Children; I say we may suppose him to have conversed with those Patriarchs, or at least with those who being their Contemporaries, discoursed of *Noah* as a Man but of yesterday, and from his Relation, and his Children's, were informed of the Creation of *Adam*, his Fall, the Promise of the Holy Seed, the Death of *Abel*, the Miracle of Paradise, the Preaching of *Noah*, the Deluge, *&c.* And who, in obedience to the Law of God, observed by their Ancestors, did meet together fifty two times every year, to Celebrate the Memorial of these Wonders, and to teach them to their Posterity.

We may take notice of three things here which conduce much to the preservation of a distinct knowledge of these Matters.

De Dea Syra p. 1060. The First is, That the Ark it self might be seen by all the World, as a certain Monument of the Deluge, and the saving of *Noah* and his Sons. This Monument continued very many Ages after *Abraham*, and was a means to preserve the Memory of the Deluge amongst the *Pagans*, as *Lucian*, to name no more acquaints us.

The

The Second is, That it was as easie for any of *Abraham*'s Contemporaries, as for *Abraham*, to deduce his Genealogy from *Noah* and his Children.

And this was the more easie, because the first Division of the World amongst the three Sons of *Noah*, was followed by another Partition amongst their Posterity, in the year of the World 1758, a Division which gave them a just Title of possession to that part of the Earth, where they were seated, in defence of which, it seems probable, that the War of *Chedorlaomer* (mention'd the XIII of *Genesis*) was undertaken, the Family of *Cham* having invaded the Land of *Canaan*, which was part of the Inheritance of *Shem*, as we shall make appear elsewhere.

The Third and last thing is, That it was not easie to impose a forgery upon those times, because their Lives were yet of a great extent, tho' inferiour to those who lived before the Flood.

To these we may add this further Consideration, that as the Jealousie which was between the Family of *Seth* and of *Cain*, was a great means to preserve inviolably the important Truths of the Creation and first Promise; a like Jealousie now being risen amongst the Sons of *Noah*, *Cham* being Accursed of his own Father in the person of *Canaan*, and the same being propagated to their Posterity, it could not but effectually contribute to rescue these important Truths from Oblivion, and particularly the Promise of the *Messiah*, conceived in these words, *The Seed of the Woman shall bruise the Serpent's head.*

In a word, we may not only in reference to the matter in hand, take notice of what *Lucian* relates concerning the Religion of the *Assyrians*, which did so lively preserve the memory of the Deluge, and of what was done to *Noah* by his Son *Cham*, when he scoffed at the Nakedness of his Father; but also, that the God of the *Sichemites* was called *Baalberith*, whose Symbol was the figure of the Privy parts of a Man, which seems a manifest allusion to their descent from the Family of *Cham*, the *Sichemites* being some of the Posterity of *Canaan*.

Judg. VIII. 23. & IX. 8. *Talm. Hier.* fol. 11 col. 4 *& gloss. in h. l. & Abodazara* c. III. fol. 43. col. 1. *De Dea Syr.* p. 1069.

It is also very natural to conceive, First of all, that it was from those old Pretensions that the *Canaanites* took occasion to prophane the most holy things, with such shameful Idea's.

Secondly, That it was in detestation of these Idea's, that God ordered the killing of the Priests of *Baal*. And

Thirdly, That it was for the same reason, that the *Jews* were commanded to destroy them utterly.

Fourthly, This was also the reason why the *Israelites* were so often desirous of imitating their Crimes.

In the Fifth place, As we see that upon the like account the *Moabites* and *Ammonites* took *Chemosh* for their God, and that the Women of those Nations were very zealous to propagate their Religion, of which we have an Instance in *Jezabel* the Wife of *Ahab*, so God was also willing to inspire his People with Horrour and Detestation, for their Religion or any Alliance with them.

Lastly, As there does appear a very great Conformity

formity and resemblance, between the first Birth of the World from the first Chaos, and its being born again after the Deluge; between *Adam* the first Man, and *Noah* the second, and between the Jealousies sprung up in both their Families upon the account of the Promise of the *Messiah*: So this conformity could not but very naturally contribute, to preserve the Memory of those Ancient Events which *Noah* and his Children had delivered to their Posterity with all the care which is taken to preserve the Tradition of the fundamentals of Religion.

CHAP. XV.

That we find the Family of Abraham *and his Posterity till* Jacob *fully perswaded of those Truths.*

IT is no less easie to conceive how the distinct knowledge of these Truths, was in process of time handed down to *Jacob* and his Posterity. This I shall briefly explain.

I need not take notice here, that the Religion practis'd by *Abraham* and his Posterity suppose these Matters as constantly owned and known.

It cannot be deny'd, but that *Lot* having followed *Terah* and *Abraham*, when God called the latter out of *Chaldea*, might thence suppose, that this Heavenly Call did separate and distinguish him

from the reſt of the Poſterity of *Shem*, and gave him a right as well as *Abraham*, to pretend to the priviledge of fulfilling the Promiſe of the *Meſſiah*, or at leaſt to ſee it fulfill'd in his Poſterity. This we may infer from the Inceſt of *Lot*'s Daughters; their Crime, which in another view appears very monſtrous, doth clearly prove, that they were ſtrongly poſſeſs'd with this hope which their Father had raiſed in them.

Lyra in Geneſ. XIX.

I know that ſome Interpreters ſuppoſe, that they were moved to commit this Inceſt from a pious intention of preſerving Mankind, as imagining to themſelves, that as the Deluge had drowned all Men, beſides *Noah* and his Family, ſo the Flames which deſtroy'd *Sodom*, had conſumed all Mankind; which they were the more ready to believe, becauſe they might have heard from their Father, that the World one day was to periſh by Fire. But indeed, it may be conſider'd as proceeding from a very different Motive, the *Jewiſh* Doctors plainly averring, that this was done by them in hopes of bringing forth the promiſed Redeemer.

Bereſ. Rab. part 23.

And if we look upon this action of theirs in this view, with reference to the Promiſe of the *Meſſiah*, which was the grand object of the hopes of all thoſe that fear'd God; it is natural to conceive, that conſidering their Father, as one whom God had peculiarly choſen from amongſt the Poſterity of *Shem*, to execute the Promiſe of the *Meſſiah*, and ſeeing that their Mother was changed into a Statue of Salt, they conceived themſelves in ſome ſort authoriz'd to ſurprize their Father in that manner; and the rather, becauſe they conceived on the one hand,

hand, that none of the *Canaanites* (upon whom God had now begun to pour forth ſo hideous a Vengeance, as a beginning of the Execution of the Curſe againſt *Cham*) having any part in this chiefeſt of Bleſſings, could ever Marry them, after that God had ſo manifeſtly ſeparated and call'd forth their Father from amongſt them; and on the other hand, ſuppoſing that God would diſpence with the irregularity of this action, by reaſon of their being reduced to an extremity.

There be three Circumſtances which greatly confirm this my remark upon the Motive of their Inceſt.

The Firſt is, That they are repreſented to us as thoſe who had behaved themſelves very chaſtly, in the midſt of the Impurities of *Sodom*; and that beſides we find they deſign'd no ſuch thing, till after the Death of their Mother.

The other is, That we ſee them contriving the thing together, and that in a Matter which naturally is apt to ſeparate the greateſt Friends, where the Motive proceeds from a Spirit of uncleanneſs: Nor indeed, do we find that they continued in this Inceſt.

The Third is, That they were ſo far from being aſham'd of an action, in it ſelf ſo criminal, or concealing the knowledge of it from Poſterity, that they gave thoſe Names to the Children born of this their Inceſt, that might perpetuate and divulge the memory of this their action, the one calling her Son *Moab*, as much as to ſay, *Born of my Father*, and the other hers *Benammi*; a Name of a like ſignification with the former.

This Obſervation is very neceſſary, becauſe theſe

these two Sons became the heads of two great People, the *Moabites*, and the *Ammonites*, whose Kingdoms lasted above 1300 years, and lived on the Borders of the Holy Land, and were jealous of *Abraham* and his Posterity, as pretending that *Abraham* could not be chosen before *Lot* their Father, who being the Son of *Abraham*'s Elder Brother, was to be consider'd as the first-born of *Terah*, and who were apt, without doubt, to take it for granted, that if God had brought *Abraham* out of *Chaldea*, and rescued him from *Ur*, he had in a more peculiar manner, saved *Lot* alone from the Conflagration of *Sodom*, by the Ministry of Angels, and that *Abraham* and *Lot* being equally descended from *Terah*, the right of accomplishing the Promise, did equally belong to them.

And indeed, we find that in all succeeding times, these thoughts did predominate with them, as may easily be made out from the History of *Balaam*.

We see therefore, that the *Moabites* who were descended from the Eldest Daughter of *Lot*, look'd upon the pretensions of the *Israelites*, that the *Messiah* was to be born of their Seed, in Exclusion to all others, with great impatience, and it was for this reason, that they sent for *Baladm*, to decide (by Divine Authority) the difference between them, concerning the right of the promised Blessing.

We may make very near the same Reflexions upon the calling of *Ruth* the *Moabitess*, when she saith to *Naomi* her Mother-in-Law, *Thy God shall be my God, and thy People shall be my People*; which signifies a renouncing of the Pretensions of her own

own People, and an acquiescing in the Justice of those of the *Israelites*, and it was upon this occasion, that *Ruth* is more particularly taken notice of in the Genealogy of our Saviour, as I shall have occasion to shew hereafter.

That which I have hinted concerning the intention and aim of the Daughters of *Lot*, hath been observed before by the *Jewish* Rabbins, as we may see in the most ancient of their Commentaries upon these words of *Genesis*, Chap. XIX. v. 32. *Come let us make our Father drink Wine*, &c. Upon which words, *R. Tanchumah* following the footsteps of *R. Samuel*, makes this Reflexion, *That we may preserve Seed of our Father*; it is not said, that we may preserve a Son from our Father, but that we may renew the Posterity of our Father, *because* (saith he) *they had regard to that Seed, which was to proceed from a strange place, and what Seed is that? It is the King* Messiah.

After this Observation upon this action of *Lot*'s Daughters, it can no longer rationally be doubted, but that the violent passion which *Sarah* had for a Son, proceeded from the very same impression which made her contrary to the Inclinations of that Sex, to deliver her Servant into her Husband's Bosom, especially if we join to this the particular Promise God had made to *Abraham*, which she could not be ignorant of.

Sarah sees her self destitute of Children, and her Barrenness having continued so long a time, she had no hopes of ever being a Mother, what remain'd therefore for her, but to think of adopting a Son of her Bond-woman? And in consideration of this, she perswades her Husband, who had no incli-

inclination to any ſuch thing by any thing that appears (at leaſt precedent to this deſire of his Wife) to take her unto him. *He ſought the Seed of God*, that is, the Seed which God had promiſed, as *Malachy* expreſſes it, *Mal.* II. 15.

Targ. Jonath. in h. l. *& Kimchi* in h. l.

At leaſt it is certain, that the *Jews* have taken theſe words of *Malachy* in this ſenſe for a very long time, as they do ſtill to this day.

We may eaſily perceive, that this was a predominant impreſſion throughout that whole Family, if to what we have already obſerv'd of *Lot*'s Daughters and of *Sarah*, we do but add the ſorrow *Rebecca* conceived becauſe of her Barrenneſs, and the Contentions happening between the Wives of *Jacob*, for their Husband's Company, without which ſuppoſal, the relation of ſuch a Matter, would be a thing of no importance.

Certainly, as it would be ridiculous to ſuppoſe, that ſo wiſe an Hiſtorian as *Moſes* was, ſhould ſtoop to the recital of ſuch mean and low particulars (not to ſpeak worſe of them) without aiming at ſomething very high and conſiderable, ſo it is rational to believe, that in all theſe Relations, he pointed at the Promiſe of the *Meſſiah*, which at that time was the great Object of the Religion of the Faithful, which God in proceſs of time did explain by little and little more diſtinctly.

The Jealouſie alſo which aroſe between *Iſhmael* and *Iſaac*, is no leſs conſiderable. *Iſhmael* was the eldeſt Son of *Abraham*, and Circumcis'd as well as *Iſaac*; he was ſaved from Death by the Miniſtry of an Angel; and was the head of a great People, who from that time to this very day, have always been Circumciſed.

It

It may be alſo of great uſe to take notice here, that *Iſhmael* could not but be inſtructed by *Abraham* concerning the Promiſe God had made to him, to which he pretended, as being the Elder, and therefore mocked at the great ſtir was made at the weaning of *Iſaac*, as thinking that he being the Eldeſt, could not be deprived of the natural right of his Primogeniture. At leaſt, it is very probable, that except it had been thus, *Sarah*'s anger (approved by God himſelf) would not have prov'd ſo violent, as well againſt *Iſhmael*, as *Hagar*, who flatter'd him in theſe pretenſions, nor would *Abraham* ſo far have comply'd with it.

And foraſmuch, as *Iſaac* on the other ſide, was born to fulfil a particular Promiſe, was Circumciſed, and ſaved from death by an Angel; and that beſides all this, *Iſhmael* and he had been equally educated in the practice of Religion, 'tis impoſſible, but that this Conformity of Events (which has been the cauſe of ſuch laſting Conteſts between them and their Poſterity) muſt have engaged them to inquire into the truth of the Creation, and the Promiſe of the *Meſſiah*, and into all other Matters which did any way concern them.

We have a like inſtance, if not ſtronger for our purpoſe, in *Eſau* and *Jacob*, who were both born of the ſame Mother, but *Eſau* being the firſt-born, we find the ſame Jealouſie ariſing between them, as before between *Iſhmael* and *Iſaac*. *Sarah* ſeem'd ſomewhat cruel in caſting out her adopted Son *Iſhmael*, and here we ſee that *Rebecca* preferred *Jacob* before *Eſau* her Firſt-born, and aſſiſted him in

robbing

robbing his Elder Brother of the Bleſſing due to him of right: But without queſtion, her deſign in all this was to entail this Bleſſing on her Family, by making it fall on *Jacob*, as being afraid (and that not without cauſe) that *Eſau* by his Sins and his Marriage with the *Canaanites*, had made himſelf uncapable thereof.

Now as this was the occaſion of a great diſpute between theſe two Patriarchs educated in the ſame Belief and Religion, ſo it plainly ſhews us how ſtrong a perſwaſion they had of the Creation, and the Promiſe of the *Meſſiah*.

And beſides, it is further very remarkable.

Firſt, That *Moſes* repreſents *Eſau* as a prophane perſon, for which, not only this reaſon may be alledged, that he ſold his Birth-right for a Meſs of Pottage, to which Birth-right the Prieſthood was always annexed, but we muſt further take notice.

That he being educated by his Father in the hopes of this Bleſſing, he ſeem'd to laugh at it in all his Actions; for firſt he Married the Daughter of *Heth*, by which he ſufficiently intimated, that he neither minded the Bleſſing nor the Curſe of God; for *Canaan* and his Poſterity had in a very ſolemn manner been Curſed by *Noah*, with a particular regard to the Promiſe of the *Meſſiah*, as I hinted before.

In the Second place, he Married a Daughter of *Iſhmael*, as if he intended to renew the Pretenſions of *Iſhmael* againſt *Iſaac* his Father.

In the Third place we ſee, that when he repented of this prophane humor, he was pierced with extream ſorrow for the Crime he had committed, becauſe he could not obtain pardon for it.

This

This Jealouſie and difference between *Eſau* and *Jacob*, is the more conſiderable, becauſe *Eſau* was the head of a great Nation, *viz.* the *Edomites*, a People Circumciſed as well as the *Jews*, Jealous of the Poſterity of *Jacob*, and living upon the Borders of *Judea*, as well as the *Moabites*, *Ammonites*, and *Iſhmaelites*, but yet put by their hopes by that Oracle, *The greater People ſhall ſerve the leſſer.*

Were it needful to afford a greater Light to theſe Reflexions, I might here add a very natural one, from the Oath which *Abraham* made his Servant *Eliezer* take, when he ſent him to *Padan Aram*, to procure a Wife for *Iſaac*. We may eaſily judge, that he was not willing he ſhould marry a *Canaanite* as *Lot* had done; and that for fear of forfeiting his hopes, and weakening the juſt Pretenſions of *Iſaac* to the right of accompliſhing the Promiſe, from whence the *Canaanites* were excluded by the Prophecy deliver'd by *Noah*. But that which made *Abraham* to oblige his Servant to ſwear, putting his Hand under his Thigh; that is, touching that part which was the Subject of Circumciſion, and which bore the mark of the Covenant, deſerves a further Conſideration. St. *Jerom.*

We find firſt of all, that the Patriarch *Jacob*, obſerves the ſame Cuſtom, when he made his Son *Joſeph* to take an Oath, that he ſhould not bury him in *Egypt*.

Secondly, We find that this Cuſtom of beholding that Member which received Circumciſion, as a part Conſecrated to Religion, did by little and little take place in the Land of *Canaan*, and gave occaſion to the Worſhip of *Baal Peor*, ſo famous

mous among the *Moabites* and *Ammonites*; a very ſurpriſing and ſtrange Worſhip indeed, and yet Celebrated with Feſtivals, and Hymns, and was the riſe of that Worſhip which the Heathens afterwards gave to *Priapus*. What I have here obſerved, hath been in part acknowledged by the *Jews*, where they ſpeak of the Worſhip of *Baal Peor*, and the reaſon which made God preſcribe to the Prieſt the uſe of Linnen Drawers, that their Nakedneſs might not appear during the Functions of their Miniſtry.

After all that I have now ſaid, concerning thoſe Jealouſies which *Moſes* relates with ſo much care, it ſeems that the Solidity of theſe Obſervations cannot be diſputed. Eſpecially if we conſider, that it is theſe Jealouſies, and theſe Pretenſions to the Promiſe of the *Meſſiah* that gave riſe to the Cuſtom of calling God, the God of *Abraham*, the God of *Iſaac*, and the God of *Jacob*: for tho' he might as well have been called the God of *Adam*, the God of *Enoch*, and the God of *Noah*, foraſmuch as all theſe Patriarchs were alſo Depoſitaries of the Promiſe of the *Meſſiah*: Yet it is probable that God was called ſo, becauſe of the particular promiſes which had been made firſt to *Abraham*, ſecondly to *Iſaac*, and laſtly to *Jacob*, and in oppoſition to the pretenſions of ſome people near Neighbours to the *Iſraelites*, and jealous of their hopes: The God of *Abraham*, and not of *Lot*, as the *Ammonites* and *Moabites* *Lot*'s Poſterity, pretended; the God of *Iſaac*, and not of *Iſhmael*, as the *Iſhmaelites* pretended; the God of *Jacob* and not of *Eſau*, as the *Edomites* who were the Offſpring of *Eſau* pretended.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVI.

That this very Perſwaſion ſeems to have been kept up amongſt the Poſterity of Jacob, *until* Moſes's *time.*

IT is yet eaſier to ſhew, that the diſtinct knowledge of the Creation, and of the Promiſe of the *Meſſiah*, did continue from *Jacob* to *Joſeph*, and ſo on to *Moſes*.

The following Arguments will clearly demonſtrate it.

Firſt of all, we ſee that *Jacob* being poſſeſs'd of the Bleſſing, and ſo Depoſitary of the Promiſe, obey'd *Iſaac*'s Command, who forbad him to take a Wife, but out of his own Family; and that accordingly he went to *Padan-Aram*, to ſeek and get a Wife amongſt thoſe of his Kindred, as *Abraham* had formerly ſent for one of the ſame Countrey for his Son *Iſaac*. Geneſ. XXVIII.

We ſee in the Second place, this Patriarch imitated *Lamech* in ſome reſpect, by his falling into Polygamy: For who can doubt but he, who was conſcious to himſelf of having ſurpriz'd, as he thought, the Bleſſing deſign'd for his Elder Brother, did act in this occaſion by the ſame principle which *Lamech* had formerly acted by? Thus we ſee that Barren *Rachel* follows *Sarah*'s Example, and adopts the Son of that Maid-Servant, whom ſhe gave to *Jacob*; wherein *Leah* follow'd her, Geneſ. XXIX.

and gave one of her Maids to her Husband: All this was evidently grounded upon the same Principle which afterwards bred those Dissensions betwixt *Jacob*'s Wives about the getting Children by him: For it is very natural to believe, that *Jacob* did not conceal from his Wives his advantages and hopes.

It appears, that *Jacob*'s Children which were born, for the most part in *Laban*'s House in *Chaldea*, where they had seen *Abraham*'s Native Countrey, and those of their own Kindred, from among whom God had commanded *Abraham* to depart, and to go into *Canaan*, did entertain very lively Notions of those important Truths, especially after they were strengthened and confirm'd by the Cares and Instructions of old *Isaac*, to whom they were brought by *Jacob*; and after they began to practice in *Canaan*, the Worship and Religion of their own Family, and to compare it with the Doctrine they had learnt in *Chaldea*.

Those several Voyages which God obliged the Patriarchs to undertake, as that of *Abraham* out of *Ur* of *Chaldea*; that of *Jacob* out of *Canaan* (we ought to make the same judgement of *Moses*'s forty years sojourning amongst the *Midianites*) did evidently oblige them to examine more carefully, what was the Tradition received in the several Countries into which they travelled, and so to imprint the more deeply into their minds the belief of those important Truths, which were the Foundation of their Religion. and the sole object of the Meditations of the faithful.

One sees in short, the effects of these Impressions.

1. By

1. By that Custom which seems to have begun in *Jacob*'s time, and which afterwards got the authority of a Law, I mean the custom of taking to Wife ones own Brother's Widow to raise him up Seed.

2. The Sin of *Onan* is represented so odious, only because by it, he acted against the belief of the Promise.

3. We see the same thing in the action of *Thamar*, *Juda*'s Daughter-in-Law; for having been deceived by *Judah*, she in exchange, surpriz'd him into an Incest, the Commission whereof, according to the Observation of a Greek Commentator, she sought to perpetuate, only because she had a vehement desire to get Children out of a Family, which she lookt upon as solely intrusted with the Promise of the *Messiah*, and out of which he was accordingly to be born. *Theoph.* in Mat. c. 1.

It is necessary to make that Observation, because we ought always to remember, that she was formerly a *Canaanite*, and that consequently she left off and renounc'd the Impiety and Idolatry of her Kindred, when she embrac'd the Religion and hopes of *Jacob*'s Family. Therefore we see that particular mention is made of her in our Saviour's Genealogy, and of *Ruth* who likewise gave over all the pretensions of her own People, and so forsook her Religion to enter into the Tribe of *Judah*, as well as of *Bathshebah*, who was Wife to a *Hittite*; whereupon an ancient Father hath very well observed, according to the *Jewish* Opinion, that *Shimei*'s Revilings against *David*, when he went out of *Jerusalem*, during *Absalom*'s Rebellion, reflected upon his Birth out of the Po- *S. Hieronym. in Tradit. Heb* ad 1. Reg. 3.

ſterity of *Ruth* the *Moabiteſs*, as the *Jews* even to this very day do underſtand it.

We may make the ſame Reflexion upon the Conſideration of that implacable jealouſie which *Joſeph*'s Dreams raiſed in the Minds of his Brethren.

1. We may reaſonably conceive, that he being the Firſt-born of *Rachel*, and the Wife which *Jacob* his Father had firſt made Love to, he had been brought up with hopes of the Birth-right, as well as *Iſaac*, who was but the ſecond Son of *Abraham*

But 2. He might beſides, very well ſuppoſe, that the Crimes of his Brethren born of *Leah* (whom in all likelihood he lookt upon as the ſole, Legitimate Heirs, the others being born of Maid-Servants) did rank them with *Eſau*, whom God had rejected. That outragious Fury which *Joſeph*'s Brethren ſhew'd againſt him, becauſe they lookt upon him as preferred of God by thoſe Dreams to thoſe that were born before him, is ſo like that of *Cain*, of *Lot*, of *Iſmael*, and of *Eſau*; that it had, in all probability, the ſame Cauſe and Original.

Do we not ſee afterwards, another effect of the ſame jealouſie, in the affectation that *Jacob* and his Family ſhew'd in the Land of *Egypt*, when they refuſed to live promiſcuouſly with the *Egyptians*, which were the Poſterity of *Ham*, and begg'd of them a Countrey where they might live by themſelves; as we ſee on the contrary, the *Egyptians* ſhewing an extream averſion againſt *Jacob* and his Family, which was of *Sem*'s Poſterity.

Certainly

Certainly it cannot be denied, that as this ſeparation was an effect of the Antipathy of thoſe Nations, ſo it might alſo be in ſome reſpect, the conſequence of *Jacob* and his Childrens pretenſions upon the Promiſe of the *Meſſiah*, the execution and accompliſhment whereof, they ſtood up for as belonging to themſelves.

To all this we may add, that the Perſecution of the *Egyptians* againſt the *Iſraelites* obliged them to make particular Reflexions upon the Promiſe which *Jacob* on his Death-Bed made to them from God: That Perſecution was chiefly intended againſt the Male Children, *Pharaoh* commanding the extirpation of them, becauſe he was afraid of the *Jews* growing too ſtrong for him, and of their joyning with his Enemies; and perhaps alſo, becauſe the *Jews* entertaining a certain expectation of the *Meſſiah*'s coming, and ſo boaſting and glorying of it upon all occaſions, the *Egyptians* deſign'd to fruſtrate, and cut off their hope thus, by hindering the accompliſhment of the Promiſe.

However there was no real difficulty to keep up the diſtinct remembrance of thoſe important Facts. *Jacob* died in the year of the World, 2315. *Joſeph* died in the year of the World, 2428. There are then but 58 years between *Joſeph*'s Death, and *Moſes*'s Birth: *Moſes* might have ſeen not only *Amram* his own Father, who had ſeen *Levi*, but alſo *Kohath* his Grandfather, who had ſeen *Jacob*.

And it is for that reaſon, that *Moſes* ſeems to have obſerv'd, that *Joſeph* ſaw his own Children's Children; that is to ſay, the third Generation. Gen. L. 23.

One cannot imagine any Circumſtances more conducible than theſe, to the preſerving the di-

ſtinct knowledge of thoſe important Truths which were the Foundations of Religion.

CHAP. XVII.

That the Tradition which gives us an Account of the Perſwaſion which the Ancients had of the truth of the Creation of the World, and of the Promiſe of the Meſſiah, *before* Moſes *cannot be ſuſpected.*

I Have ſhew'd, I think, evidently enough, that both the Creation, and the Promiſe of the *Meſſiah*, with all the other things depending upon them, might have been known certainly by *Adam* and his Children, and ſo afterwards be handed down to all his Poſterity till *Moſes*'s time.

From *Adam* to *Noah* there is but one Man, *viz. Methuſalah*, who joyned hands with both.

From *Noah* to *Abraham*, there is but one Man, *viz. Sem*, who ſaw them both for a conſiderable time.

From *Abraham* to *Joſeph*, there is but one Man, *viz. Iſaac*, *Joſeph*'s Grandfather.

From *Joſeph* to *Moſes*, there is but one Man, *viz. Amram*, who might have ſeen *Joſeph* long enough.

Thoſe Characters of time which *Moſes* hath ſo carefully obſerved, do plainly evidence, that the Creation, and the Promiſe of the *Meſſiah*, might be diſtinctly known: For if we ſuppoſe a continued ſucceſſion of *Adam*'s Offſpring, it was not eaſie to impoſe upon Men in that matter; and that, becauſe every one of thoſe who were Contemporaries with *Moſes*, being able to run up his own Pedigree as far as the Flood, nay, even up to *Adam*, by as compendious a way as *Moſes* could do his own; they would have treated thoſe with the utmoſt degree of ſcorn, who ſhould have attempted to forge any thing contrary to what was publickly and univerſally known; and ſo it was equally impoſſible, that the truth of things ſo important as the Creation, and the Promiſe of the *Meſſiah* were, ſhould be unknown.

Beſides, I think I have plainly ſhew'd, that many actions recorded by *Moſes*, tho' very ſtrange in themſelves, and which the Atheiſts look upon as abſurd and ridiculous, have proceeded from no other principle than from the ſtrong perſwaſion of the truth of thoſe Facts, according as in a long Series of Ages, every one of the Ancients following his own humour and prejudices, framed to himſelf a particular Idea differing from the true ſenſe of the Promiſe of the *Meſſiah*.

It cannot reaſonably be objected, that all this is only grounded upon the uncertain authority of Tradition: For tho' I grant that Tradition, as to Facts of another nature, be dubious and uncertain, and not to be too much relyed upon in matter of Belief, yet this hath ſuch very particular Characters as keep up its own authority.

Firſt, it ſuppoſeth a ſmall number of perſons from *Adam* to *Moſes*, who put it in Writing.

Secondly, It ſuppoſeth, that thoſe who have preſerved this Tradition, lived very long, and

for the moſt part, for many Centuries of Years.

Thirdly, It relates to ſuch Facts as every one is deſirous to be rightly inform'd of, and which he is particularly concern'd to examine, as relating to his own private Intereſt, becauſe they are the Principles of his Actions, and the rules of his Conduct both in Civil and Religious Matters.

Fourthly, it ſuppoſeth ſuch real Marks as ſerved to keep it up; ſuch as the pains of Child-bearing, the Paradiſe before the Flood, the duration of the Ark after the Flood.

Fifthly, It ſuppoſeth a Publick Service and Worſhip, whoſe Celebration is repeated fifty two times a year, that the remembrance of it ſhould be preſerved by all Poſterity.

Sixthly, It was preſerved entire by paſſing from Father to Son, and we know that Fathers or Mothers do not naturally engage in a Deſign of deceiving their Children.

Seventhly, It ſuppoſeth ſtrange Controverſies betwixt Brothers, the Elder having almoſt all been excluded, and the younger, as *Abel*, *Seth*, *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, *Jacob*, *Juda*, choſen to accompliſh the Promiſe of the *Meſſiah*, which bred great Jealouſies, and tended much to preſerve thoſe Ideas of the truth.

Laſtly, It ſuppoſeth great Conteſts betwixt whole Nations, who all ſtrove one with another for the advantage of being the Heirs of the Promiſe, and Depoſitaries of thoſe Verities; as the *Moabites*, for inſtance, the *Ammonites*, the *Iſhmaelites*, the *Edomites*, and the *Jews*: each of them pretending to a preference before the others, by God

God himſelf, and ſo making it a matter of Credit and Honour to themſelves. All theſe Characters contribute to the diſtinct preſervation of the knowledge of any truth.

CHAP. XVIII.

An Explication of Moſes's *way of Writing; where it is ſhew'd, that in writing the Book of* Geneſis, *he mentioned nothing but what was then generally known.*

THis is a truth which at firſt I took for granted, and afterwards proved it, the reaſons whereof I explained particularly as I went on. But it ought to be fixed as ſolidly as the Matter will bear, becauſe it often happens, that thoſe who do not foreſee the Conſequences which may be drawn from the contrary Opinion, do contradict it before they are aware of it; and that too under pretence of exalting the Divine Authority of the Book of *Geneſis*: which gives occaſion to the Atheiſts to look upon it no otherwiſe than as learned Men do, on the greateſt part of Legends.

The Prophetical Spirit acts in two manners.

The Firſt is by way of Revelation, in reſpect of thoſe things the Prophet hath no knowledge of.

Thus

Thus the *Evangeliſt* St. *John* hath foretold thoſe Events, which we read of in the *Revelations*: For thoſe Events being all hidden under the ſhadows of Futurity, it was impoſſible for him to have foretold them, unleſs the Spirit of God had immediately revealed them to him.

The Second is by way of direction, in reſpect of thoſe things with which the Prophet was himſelf acquainted, either becauſe he was an Eye-Witneſs of them himſelf, or becauſe he learnt them from thoſe who were ſo.

Now this direction of the Spirit conſiſts in the guiding the Prophets ſo as that he may write of his Subject, juſt as it was either ſpoken or done. Thus the Evangeliſts St. *Matthew*, and St. *John*, drew up an Abridgment of thoſe Sermons of our Saviour, which they had heard, and of thoſe Miracles which they had ſeen.

And thus St. *Luke*, and St. *Mark*, have written of thoſe things which they had heard from thoſe that were Eye-Witneſſes of them, as St. *Luke* particularly tells us.

Now I affirm, that when *Moſes* wrote the Book of *Geneſis*, he had only the ſecond ſort of Prophetical Influences, and not the firſt; Although in our Diſputes againſt Atheiſts, to convince them by Arguments from Matters of Fact, we may conſider him only as an Hiſtorian, who might have written his Book without any other particular direction, and might have preſerved in it the memory of thoſe ancient Events which were then generally known.

Now what ſide ſoever Divines may take in their Diſputes againſt the Atheiſts, I may eaſily eſtabliſh

eſtabliſh my Aſſertion: Firſt, becauſe it is not neceſſary to ſuppoſe an entire Revelation, where Tradition being diſtinct enough, is ſufficient to preſerve a clear Remembrance of all thoſe Facts.

Now it cannot be denied, but that the Tradition concerning the Creation and the Promiſe of the Meſſiah was of this nature, eſpecially if we conſider the little Extent of it, and the immediate Succeſſion of *Moſes*'s Anceſtors, down to himſelf.

Secondly, If *Abraham*'s and *Jacob*'s Travels through ſo many places, were, as I have obſerved already, very uſeful to give them a further view of the common belief of all the ſeveral Nations deſcended from *Noah*, and of their agreement in this Tradition, it were unjuſt to ſuppoſe that *Moſes*'s forty years ſojourning in the Country of *Midian*, and that too when he was forty years old, and conſequently had that ripeneſs of Age and Judgment as is fitteſt for ſuch Obſervations, did not ſerve to acquaint him with the ſeveral Paſſages he records of *Abraham*, as well as of the ſeveral Diviſions of his Poſterity.

Thirdly, We may obſerve in the Book of *Geneſis* a way of writing very different from that which we ſee in the greateſt part of *Exodus*, and in the following Books; for whereas God ſpeaks to him in thoſe latter Books, which he always did *vivâ voce*. (And the *Jews* have wiſely obſerved, that herein conſiſted *Moſes*'s advantage above the other Prophets to whom God was uſed to ſpeak only in Dreams and Viſions) He uſes

commonly thoſe words, *And the Lord ſpake unto me.* He marks out the place where God ſpoke to him, as well as the time and occaſion of God's ſpeaking to him, which he do's not in his Book of *Geneſis*,

Fourthly, The Book of *Geneſis* is not divided into ſeveral Revelations, as all Prophecies are, wherein the ſeveral returns of the Holy Spirit of God are all exactly ſet down; which was abſolutely neceſſary, not only to eaſe the Reader, who might be tired, if he was to carry a long Series of Predictions in his mind at once, as if it were only one ſingle Viſion or Revelation; but alſo to condeſcend to the nature of the minds of men: For according to the Rules of probability, we cannot ſuppoſe them to be filled with ſo many differing Idea's at the ſame time, but a great confuſion muſt neceſſarily follow.

But ſuppoſing that theſe Obſervations ſhould be thought inſufficient, yet thoſe that follow will ſeem capable of convincing the minds of all. There are in the Book of *Geneſis* certain Characters of its being written in that way which I ſpake of. Firſt, one needs only juſt look into that Book, and he will ſee that the ancienteſt Facts, which are thoſe of which we moſt deſire a particular account, are there deſcribed in a very ſhort and conciſe manner. The Hiſtory of 1656 years is all contained in Eight Chapters; There are no Actions deſcribed therein with more Circumſtances, than only ſome few of the moſt important, the remembrance whereof was ſtill freſh amongſt them. The Hiſtory of *Lamech*'s Polygamy, and the Murders of which he was guilty, is there ſet down ſo compendiouſly, that it is very obſcure.

Secondly, One ſees that he ſpeaks more copiouſly of all that had been tranſacted near his time: He explains and mentions all the particulars and circumſtances thereof. He ſpeaks ſo ſhortly of *Melchiſedeck*, that it is doubted to this day, whether he was not the Patriarch *Sem*, or ſome other faithful worſhipper of the true God ſettled in the Land of *Canaan*; whereas he ſets down at length all the particulars of the Hiſtory of *Abraham*, of *Iſaac*, and of *Jacob*, whoſe laſt Oracles which he ſpoke on his Death-bed, he carefully records.

Thirdly, He deſcribes with the ſame exactneſs all the Genealogies of the *Edomites*, their ſeveral Tribes, and the Names of their Heads and Captains, *&c.* As when he ſpeaks of thoſe of the people of *Iſrael*, which indeed he could eaſily do, having liv'd forty years of his life amongſt thoſe Nations, as well as he had other forty years amongſt the *Iſraelites*.

Thoſe who maintain the contrary Opinion, muſt of neceſſity ſuppoſe, Firſt, That Tradition is of no uſe at all to preſerve the Idea of any illuſtrious Action.

Secondly, That in *Moſes*'s time there were none who knew any particulars of the Hiſtory of the Flood, *&c.* of the Tower of *Babel*, of the diviſion of Tongues; tho' we ſee plainly, both by the nature of the Facts themſelves, in which all Nations were concern'd, and by *Moſes* his deſcription, that the generality of Mankind were ſufficiently inſtructed in them already.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, It must be supposed that *Moses* hath set down the manner how that Tradition was infallibly preserved so carefully to no purpose, tho' he took notice of all the Circumstances necessary for that effect.

Fourthly, They must suppose that *Moses*, whilst he sojourned in the Land of *Midian*, heard nothing either of their Original and Pedigree, nor yet of the other neighbouring Nations who were descended from *Abraham*, altho' all these Nations valued themselves upon their being descended from that Patriarch, and kept up their several Pedigrees, by which they could trace their Original with the same care as the *Israelites* did theirs, because they had the same pretensions that the *Israelites* had.

Lastly, We must absolutely take away the Authority of the Oracles recorded by *Moses* in *Genesis*. These Oracles promise to *Abraham* the possession of the Land of *Canaan* for his Posterity, and threaten the *Canaanites* with several Curses: *Jacob* by his Will bequeathed *Sichem* to the Tribe of *Joseph*. He expresly marks out the Country which one of the Tribes was to possess; he gives a description of the Character and Rank of every Tribe. The accomplishment of those Oracles, tho' never so exact and admirable, is of no manner of consequence, if we suppose that these particular Predictions were absolutely unknown in *Abraham*'s Family, whereas their accomplishment, which he carefully describes from time to time, is the most solid demonstration which can be desired, to establish the Divinity of those Revelations, as well as of *Moses* his other Books.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIX.

An Answer to an Objection which may be drawn from the Histories of the Egyptians *and* Chaldeans, *concerning the Antiquity of the World.*

WHat I have already represented is sufficient to prove that *Moses* writ nothing in the Book of *Genesis*, but what was then generally known by all the World. And I know nothing that can be objected with any probability, but what we read in the most ancient Authors concerning the *Egyptian* and *Chaldean* History, and in the Modern ones concerning that of *China*. We must then examin both the one and the other with attention, that we may leave no Difficulties in so important a Subject.

All that the Atheists can object against the History of *Moses*, concerning the *Epocha* of the Creation of the World as he hath fixed it, is what *Diodorus Siculus* relates, that in the time of *Alexander* the Great, there were some *Egyptians* that reckon'd up Three and twenty thousand years from the Reign of the Sun to *Alexander*'s time, and that those who reckon'd least, yet reckon'd somewhat more than Ten thousand years, which account exceeds the Antiquity which *Moses* ascribes to the World in the Book of *Genesis*, by many Ages, where he represents the Creation as,

a Fact which happened some few years more than Two thousand five hundred before he wrote that Book. How then did *Moses* write of things universally acknowledged by all the World? And they may here further aggravate, what the same *Diodorus* hath observed, That the History of the *Egyptians* was not written like that of the *Greeks*; amongst whom, those who came first wrote their own Histories, every man according to his own private humour, which caused that great variety amongst their Historians: whereas amongst the *Egyptians* none wrote but by publick Authority; the Priests alone having that particular employment reserved for them to write their Histories in their several Generations.

This Objection is easily confuted in two words: In short, How could the *Egyptians* have always had men to write their Histories by publick Authority in all their succeeding Generations, seeing there were, as *Diodorus* observes, such a strange and vast Divisions amongst themselves? If there were but two or three Ages difference more or less, no body would look upon it, as a material Exception against the History of such a long Series of time; But who can imagine that those men who differ no less than Thirteen thousand years in their Accounts of the Duration of the same interval of time, had yet certain Histories upon which these things were grounded.

This shews sufficiently, that as *Varro* the greatest Scholar the *Romans* ever had, hath divided Antiquity into Fabulous and Historical, which he begins from the first *Olympiad*, leaving all which went before to the fabulous part; so we must

must of necessity make the same distinction in the Matter of the Antiquities of *Egypt*.

But I intend to do some thing more, and to consider this *Egyptian* History with a little more attention; out of which, I think, I may draw good Arguments to confute the vanity of those Passages in it opposed to *Moses*, and to confirm the Authority of his Book of *Genesis*, and the truth of the chiefest Transactions recorded in it.

I shall not at present take notice, that altho' the *Egyptians*, about their latter times, have maintain'd that the Elements were eternal, yet they have sufficiently acknowledged that the World had a beginning, seeing they make no mention of any thing before their thirty Dynasties, which in all, did at the most amount to no more then 36525 years.

Neither do I think necessary to mention here that they have sufficiently acknowledged the beginning of Mankind, seeing they held that men were first born in *Egypt*; altho' they endeavoured to make good their pretensions by that sottish Assertion of the easie production of Frogs out of the mud of their Fen's, as the same *Diodorus* tells us.

But there are three things which I must here take notice of, because they do most certainly decide the question.

The first is, That by that long Reign which they ascribe to their Gods and Hero's, there is nothing else meant but the motion of the Stars, and nothing like a real Kingdom. That prodigious number of years does not relate to the duration of the World, as if it had subsisted so long;

but to the return of the Sun, and the Moon, and the five other Planets, and of the Heavens, to the ſame point from whence, according to the Opinion of the *Egyptians*, they firſt began their Courſe: In a word, it is only the great Aſtronomical Year, about which, as *Ariſtole* tells us, the Ancients have had ſo many different Opinions, and the *Egyptians* have ſo little agreed, as the Hiſtory of their Antiquities, related by *Diodorus*, plainly ſhews. One thing evidently proves what I here alledge, which is, that they have reckon'd up but fifteen Dynaſties to *Jupiter* the laſt of the Heroes, that is to ſay, but fifteen perſons to *Jupiter*, who is *Ham* the third Son of *Noah*.

This comes very near *Moſes*'s Calculation, who reckoneth *Noah* as the tenth man from *Adam*: for it is very likely, that thoſe ignorant people, after a long proceſs of time, have joyned *Cain* and *Abel* with *Sem* and *Japhet*, and *Miſraim* the Son of *Ham*, which makes up the ſixteen Dynaſties, except we chuſe to ſay that the *Egyptians* thought fit to joyn the ſeven Generations of *Cain* to thoſe before the Flood, which comes very near to the ſame Account. All this, according to the phantaſtick Notions of thoſe ancient people, who deified the firſt men, and gave them afterwards the Names of ſome Stars, to impreſs upon their Poſterity a greater veneration for them; and in particular, according to the groundleſs imagination of the *Egyptians*, who were reſolved to maintain that the firſt men were formed in their own Country. And in ſhort, we find that thoſe Dynaſties for the moſt part, if we except thoſe of *Vulcan*, and of the Sun, have been but of a very ſhort

ſhort continuance, and even ſhorter than that which *Moſes* aſcribes to the lives of the ancient Patriarchs, which we have already ſet down.

The ſecond thing that is obſervable in the confutation of this falſe Antiquity, if one would take what the *Egyptians* have related of their Dynaſties before *Menes*, and *Jupiter* the laſt of their Heroes in a Hiſtorical ſenſe, is, that there are ſtill ſufficient marks of the newneſs of the World, as *Moſes* hath deſcribed it, in the remaining Fragments of the true *Egyptian* Hiſtory.

Firſt, We ſee that *Egypt* hath conſtantly carried the Name of *Ham* amongſt the *Gentiles*, as well as in the Holy Scriptures. It was called ſo in *Plutarch*'s time: The *Egyptian Thebes* was called *Hammon No Ezech.* 30. which is the Name of the *Egyptian Jupiter*, as the Heathen Authors *Herodotus* and *Plutarch* teſtifie. Now it is viſible, that all this was for no other reaſon, but becauſe *Egypt* had fallen to the ſhare of *Ham*, *Noah*'s third Son, who ſettled there, and whoſe Poſterity did afterwards people *Africa*, and gave it their ſeveral Names, as *Moſes* particularly obſerves.

Secondly, One ſee's that *Egypt* hath more particularly born the Name of *Mizraim*, which it bares ſtill, and which was given to it, in reſpect of one of its parts, becauſe of *Mizraim* the Son of *Ham*. And it would be ridiculous for one to imagine that thoſe Characters given by *Moſes*, had been allowed of in the World, except he had had good grounds to deſcribe their original in the ſame manner as he hath already done.

Thirdly, One ſee's that all the Dynaſties of *Egypt*, that is to ſay, all the ſeveral Branches of the

Kings who have reign'd over the ſeveral parts of *Egypt*, did all acknowledge *Menes* for their Common Founder.

This *Menes* being the ſame with that *Mizraim* of *Moſes*, as I ſhall ſhew hereafter; It is viſible that the *Egyptians*, who in all likelyhood have aſcribed to *Menes* what they might more juſtly have aſcribed to *Jupiter Hammon*, becauſe they would diſtinguiſh their Kings from Hero's, have exactly followed the Idea's of *Moſes*, in repreſenting one as the common Father of all the ſeveral Branches of Kings who divided *Egypt* amongſt themſelves.

Fourthly, One ſee's that the Invention of the Arts moſt neceſſary to Human Life, have been attributed either to *Menes* the firſt King of *Egypt*, or to his Succeſſors. It was this *Menes*, or one of his Succeſſors, who invented Laws, Letters, Aſtronomy, Muſick, Wreſtling, Phyſick, Hieroglyphicks, Anatomy, and Architecture. All this plainly ſhews that the *Egyptians* had been miſtaken, if they had aſcribed to the World as great an Antiquity as one would think they did, by the vaſt extent of time which they aſcribed to the Dynaſties of their Gods and Hero's. How could the World have continued above Thirty thouſand years without thoſe Arts which are ſo neceſſary for the convenience of Human Life? How could men not have found out, during ſuch a prodigious ſucceſſion of Ages, thoſe Arts, the invention whereof the *Egyptians* do aſcribe to their firſt King, or to one or two of his Succeſſors, during a very ſhort interval of time.

Fifthly, One ſee's in the Hiſtory of *Egypt* the ſame

ſame decay in Religion that *Moſes* ſpeaks of. The Ancients unanimouſly agree that the *Egyptians* had at firſt neither Statues nor Images in their Temples, which perfectly agrees with what *Moſes* tells us of the times after the Flood: But they tell us alſo, That the *Egyptians* afterwards made ſome Statues, and conſecrated in their Temples the Figures of great numbers of Animals. Some are of opinion, and that probably enough, that this came from the belief which they entertained afterwards of the Tranſmigration of Souls into other Animals, an opinion which they thought did neceſſarily flow from the Doctrine of the Immortality of the Soul. *Herod* Lib. II. cap 4. *Lucian* de Dea Syr.

Sixthly, However, one ſees in the ſixth place, That as *Moſes* repreſents *Nimrod* one of *Ham*'s Poſterity, as the Founder of an Empire in *Aſſyria*, where he formed the manners of the Inhabitants according to the Platform of the *Egyptian* Principles; ſo the Ancients have obſerved, That the famous *Aſſyrian Belus* came out of *Egypt*; And it is natural to conceive, that there he planted Idolatry, which began even before *Abraham*'s time; If it be true as the *Jews* obſerve, that the Tower of *Babel* was a Temple wherein an Idol was conſecrated to worſhip him. At leaſt, that conjecture hath a very ſolid ground, if we conſider the Idolatry of the *Babylonians* towards this *Bel*, whom they worſhipped as a God, according to the Pagans Cuſtom of Adoring the Founders of Kingdoms after their deceaſe as Gods. *Pauſan.* in *Meſſen* p. 261.

The third thing we are here to take notice of contains a Demonſtration of the Truth of the Book *Geneſis*, if that which is recorded in it concerning the

time of the Flood, be compared with the Dynasties of the *Egyptian* Kings. I will not say that those *Egyptians*, who had any knowledge of the Flood, did exactly mark out the time of it, as *Moses* doth. But I believe I may be able to shew out of their common opinion's, something very near equivalent.

They are all agreed that *Menes* was the first King of *Egypt*, and lived about Fourteen hundred years before the famous *Sesostris*, as *Herodotus* and *Diodorus Siculus* do both relate it: Now, who should this King of *Egypt* be, whom some call *Sesonchosis*, unless he is the same with *Shishak* whom the Scripture speaks of in the History of *Rehoboam*, even the same famous Conquerer who took *Jerusalem* in the fifth year of *Rehoboam*'s Reign. If one calculates the time from the Flood, to the fifth year of *Rehoboam*, he will find that this *Menes* the first King of *Egypt*, is no other than the *Ham* of *Moses*; and on the other side, that there is very little difference in respect of that interval of time betwixt the Chronology of the *Egyptians* and that of the Scriptures? Thus the *Egyptian* Account confirms *Moses*'s Narrative, and the Authority of the Holy Writers, who are very particular in stating the times of every thing: whereas the *Egyptians* taking all in great, could never arrive at that exactness.

1 Kings XIV. 26.

This Observation is of very great use, to shew the certainty of *Moses*'s Chronology according to the *Hebrew* Text: For that of the *Septuagint*, reckons up above two thousand years, from the Flood to *Sesostris*, whereas the *Egyptians* did reckon up but a little above fourteen hundred years from *Menes* the first King of *Egypt* to *Sesostris*.

There is yet less difficulty to answer the Objection, which may be made against the Book of *Genesis* from the pretended Antiquity of the *Chaldeans*. The same *Diodorus Siculus*, who saith, that the *Egyptians* proposed so great an Antiquity of the World, tells us also, that the *Chaldeans* believed it eternal, and that they boasted in *Alexander*'s time, that they had learnt Astronomy by Tradition from their Ancestors, who had all successively made it their study for four hundred seventy two thousand years together. But there is nothing vainer than these Pretences. *Diodor.* l. 2. Sect. 30, 31.

I shall not stand to shew here the folly of their Opinions about the Eternity of the World: If *Aristotle* seems to have authoriz'd it, yet it is enough to confute that Opinion, to consider, that it is repugnant to the common notion of all the Nations of the World: So that *Democritus* himself, who pretended that the World was made by chance, yet durst not oppose the common and general Opinion of the Worlds being new, tho' he had the boldness to reject the Author of it, and that action by which it was Created.

Neither do I intend to be prolix here in confuting the supposition of the *Chaldeans*, about their Ancestors following the Study of Astrology for 472000 year successively: The impossibility of the thing in it self is apparent by the certainty of the Flood, which was acknowledged by all those Nations, of whom we have any Antiquities, tho' never so little considerable in *Pagan* Authors.

But I shall make two Observations, whereof one shews the folly of the *Chaldean* Hypothesis, and

the other doth invincibly eſtabliſh the Authority of the Book of *Geneſis*, if it be compared with what we know for certain, and in the *Chaldean* Hiſtory.

The Firſt is, That the moſt Ancient Authors are of Opinion, that the *Chaldeans* are deſcended from the *Egyptians*, who lookt upon them as a Colony of their own. *Diodorus Siculus* ſaith, that the *Egyptians* maintained, that they had ſent out ſeveral Colonies into ſeveral parts of the World; that *Belus* the Son of *Neptune* and *Lybia* had conducted one into *Babylon*, and that having fixed it near *Euphrates*, he eſtabliſh'd ſome Prieſts among them according to the *Egyptian* Cuſtom, who were free from all publick Charges and Offices, whom the *Babylonians* do call *Chaldeans*, and who according to the Example of the *Egyptian* Prieſts, Philoſophers, and Aſtrologers, did apply themſelves to the obſervation of the Stars. *Heſtiæus*, and *Pauſanias*, ſay the ſame with *Diodorus*.

Ap. Joſeph. Antiq. l. 1. c. 5. *Pauſan. Meſſen.* p. 261.

Now one needs only examine here, what the *Egyptians* do ſay about the invention of *Aſtrology*, which they aſcribe to *Menes*, that is to ſay, to *Ham*, or to *Mizraim*, who lived after the Flood, thereby to diſcover the Fooliſh Vanity of the *Chaldeans*.

It is plain, that the *Chaldeans* grew ſo vain, by the growth of ſo conſiderable an Empire as theirs was, that they would be no longer beholding to the *Egyptian* Aſtrologers, whom all other Nations have lookt upon as the firſt Inventors of that Science, to the inventing and perfecting of which, all Men know that the *Egyptian* Climate, where the Skie is always free from Clouds, did very much contribute. And

And it is very conſiderable, that both the *Chaldeans* and the *Egyptians* began their Year with the ſame Month, according to *Cenſorinus*'s Obſervation, c. XXI. *de die Nat.*

I know very well, the Ancient Heathens were miſtaken when they pretended, that the *Chaldeans* went out of *Egypt*, as a Plantation: There is, no doubt, a kind of Illuſion in this their Opinion; but yet the ground and Origine of it is uncontroulable, becauſe the *Chaldeans* are deſcended from *Cuſh*, *Ham*'s Eldeſt Son, as *Moſes* tells, *Gen.* X. Therefore tho' we ſhould grant, that the *Chaldeans* were the firſt Inventors of Aſtrology, yet this would be always certain, that it was found out only ſince *Ham*'s time, whom the *Egyptians* did look upon as the laſt of their Heroes, or as the firſt of their Kings.

The other Obſervation which ought to be well minded here, is taken out of the true and genuine *Chaldean* Antiquities. One may prove by the Aſtronomical Demonſtrations of the *Chaldeans*, which the People of *Iſrael* was altogether unacquainted with, that *Moſes* followed a Calculation which was then generally known.

Ariſtotle the firſt *Grecian*, that ever taught the Eternity of the World, contrary to *Moſes*'s Hiſtory, is the Man who furniſhes us with it. He took care to ſend over into *Greece* the Aſtronomical Obſervations of the *Chaldeans*, by which it appeared, that *Babylon* was taken by *Alexander* about 1903 years after its Foundation. Now that Calculation agrees exactly with that of *Moſes*, who gives us the Deſcription of the Tower of *Babel*, and explains the Original of the Name of that City, which

Simplic. in l. 2. *de cœlo.*

Gen. XI.

which was built some Ages after, by the Confusion of Tongues which then happened. And truly, it would be very admirable, that the Heavens in their Motions should have entered into a Confederacy with *Moses*, to justifie a Chronology invented by him in sport, without keeping to any Rules, but writing by chance, and without any certain Principle.

CHAP. XX.

An Answer to the Objection which may be drawn out of the History of China, *against the Mosaick Hypothesis, concerning the newness of the World.*

I Come now to the other Objection which may be made against *Moses*'s Calculation, according to the *Hebrew* Text, as we have it now. It is drawn from the History of *China*, whose uninterrupted Series runs up the Succession of their Emperors to *Fohius* who Reign'd about four hundred years before the Flood. Some Learned Men have already made use of that Argument, to discredit the Mosaick Chronology according to the *Hebrew* Text, and to cry up the Calculation of the Septuagint, which exceeds that of the *Hebrew* Text, in

in the History before the Flood, by 800 years, and above 700 in the History from the Flood to *Moses*. This Objection appears very strong to those who read in the History of *Martinius*, that there is not the least interruption in the Catalogue of the Kings of *China* from *Fohius*; that the History of their actions is so certain, having always been written by a Publick Authority, that no Man can reasonably entertain any doubt about it: And the Missionaries in *China*, have thought that there was no other way to reconcile the Mosaick Chronology, with the *Chinese*; but in making use of the Septuagint's Account; and wherein they agree with all the Asiatick Christians, and even those in *Europe*, who follow the *Septuagint* in their reckoning up the years of the World, for the most part: Though St. *Hierome*'s Translation, which follows the *Hebrew* Text exactly, is received in the West.

But after all, there is little difficulty in answering this Objection, and we may hereupon easily satisfie, those who do not dispute only for disputing sake, but are ready to examine this Question, with that equity which is requisite in the examination of all Questions of that nature.

I confess ingeniously, that this History, which is one of the most ancient in the World, hath many Illustrious Characters of certainty, especially if we give credit to all that *Martinius* relates of it.

First, It marks out exactly the Series and Succession of all the Kings of *China*, from the very beginning and original of that Nation.

Secondly, It records in what Year of each Cycle

cle of threescore years, every King began his Reign and did such or such an action.

Thirdly, It relates some Astronomical Observations, older than any that have been made by the most Ancient Astronomers in other Nations.

Fourthly, It was written by a Publick Authority, and by such Authors as lived in the time when the things which they record, were transacted; the immediate Successor to the Empire taking always care, that the History of his Predecessor should be written.

Nay, to all this we must add, that the *Chinese*'s way of writing, making no use of Letters, but of Hieroglyphicks, may have prevented these alterations which might otherwise have been made in their History; the whole Life of a Man being hardly sufficient to attain to the perfect knowledge, of a Tongue which hath above Threescore Thousand Figures which must be all learnt before a Man can be able only to Read and Write.

But, besides that, all this depends upon the sole Authority of *Martinius*, no body else beside him having given us, as yet any opportunities of examining those ancient Monuments of *China*; we may find out of this very History some strong Proofs, to confirm that of *Moses*, and so easily resolve the Difficulties which may be raised out of it, against the Book of *Genesis*.

First, *F. Martinius* observes, that the common Opinion of the *Chinese*, is, that the World had a beginning: And tho' there be some of them of *Epicurus*'s Opinion, yet there was never any amongst them, that was for the Eternity of the World,

World, but since the Incarnation of Christ, and the Introduction of Idolatry amongst them.

Secondly, He tells us, that they commonly acknowledge a God, whom they call *Xangti*, which is not the Name, but the Epithet of God, this word signifying Supream Governour of Heaven and Earth.

Thirdly, He saith that they acknowledge a first Man brought forth out of the Chaos, in one Night in the Spring, which opinion some amongst them have made intricate by the addition of their own Fables.

Fourthly, He shews that Sacrifices have been in use amongst them.

Fifthly, That they believe a certainty of Punishments and Rewards after this Life, for Vice and Vertue.

Sixthly, That they believe the existence of good and bad Angels.

Seventhly, That they assign to some of them the protection of Cities and Provinces, and pay them great Veneration at the Instalment of their Magistrates.

Eighthly, That they acknowledge them to be Incorporeal Beings, and that it is but of late, that they have Erected and Consecrated Statues to them.

And Lastly, That they have a very great knowledge of the Flood, which in their account happened about 3500 years before Jesus Christ.

Here are, we see many truths which are the grounds of Religion, and which were known to them; from whence we may easily judge, in comparing those Truths with the History of *Moses*, that

that the ancient *Chineſe* did agree with all other Nations, in the believing the firſt Principles of Religion, laid down by *Moſes*.

We may likewiſe obſerve, that thoſe Antiquities of *China*, for the moſt part, are as like thoſe recorded by *Moſes*, as a Tradition (which cannot but have received many alterations during ſuch a long interval of time) can be like to an exact Narrative of Matters of Fact drawn up by an Author who knew very well what he writ.

Firſt, It appears that what they ſay, concerning the Thirteen Succeſſors of the firſt man named *Puoncuus*, all deſcended from him, is agreeable enough to the Hiſtory of *Geneſis*, which ſets down the ſucceſſive Patriarchs from Father to Son: All the difference is, that the *Chineſe*, by a fooliſh Ambition of appropriating all to themſelves, maintain that thoſe Thirteen Kings were all in *China*.

Secondly, What they tell us of the World being civiliz'd under the ſecond of thoſe Kings, call'd *Thienhoang*, after the death of the great Dragon that had diſturbed Heaven and Earth, agrees very well with the Hiſtory of *Seth*, who began to form Mankind to a right notion of the worſhip of God, when he ſeparated them from *Cain*'s Family.

Thirdly, It is very probable that when the *Chineſe* have reckoned up thirteen Kings lineally deſcended from the firſt man, and his Succeſſors, they have included in that number *Cain* and *Abel*, who tho' they were both the Sons of the firſt man, yet were not reckon'd up by *Moſes*, becauſe his Scope was only to give an Account of the Lineal

neal Deſcent of *Adam*'s Poſterity by *Seth*.

They believe that under *Ginhohang* there was a kind of Golden Age, the Earth being then fruitful to admiration, and that under his Succeſſor Men being extreamly ſimple, and altogether ignorant of the ſeveral Arts neceſſary to Human Life, as of Characters and Letters, one *Sujus*, to ſupply the want of them, contrived a way of keeping up the memory of things, by tying ſeveral ſorts of knots upon a Cord.

All which ſufficiently evinces, that the belief of the Worlds being lately created according to *Moſes*'s Deſcription, was as much received by the ancient People of *China*, as by all other Nations.

And here it is further obſervable, That the *Chineeſe* themſelves according to *Martinius*'s account, do ſuſpect all the Hiſtorical Records of their Empire, before King *Fobius*, looking upon them as falſe and ridiculous; and indeed the People of that Country before *Fobius*, living like brute Beaſts, without any ſettled Government, Laws, or Arts: This alone is enough to confute thoſe amongſt the *Chineſe*, who maintain now adays, that the duration of the World before *Confucius*, who lived about 500 years before *Jeſus Chriſt*, was of no leſs than Three millions two hundred threeſcore and ſeven thouſand years. For hereby it clearly appears, That they have fooliſhly affected to ſurpaſs the *Chaldeans* in their vanity, who believing the Eternity of the World, pretended in order both to prove their Antiquity, and to give credit to their Aſtrological Obſervations, that Aſtrology had been exercis'd amongſt them for 472000 years

years before *Alexander*'s entring into *Asia*.

After all, it is certain that their Calculation of 3000 years, from *Fohius* to Jesus Christ, is only incompatible with *Moses*'s Chronology, according to the *Hebrew* Text, and not at all with that of the *Septuagint*.

But moreover, what can be more palpably fabulous than the whole History of *Fohius*, whom the *Chineſe* ſuppoſe to have begun his Reign 2952 years before Jeſus Chriſt? Firſt, he is call'd the Son of Heaven, becauſe, they ſay, he had a Mother and no Father; and that his Mother conceived him by the Banks of a Lake near the Town of *Lanthieu*, where as ſhe was walking, ſhe ſaw the footſteps of a man upon the Sand, and was at the ſame time ſurrounded on a ſuddain with a Rainbow.

Secondly, The Situation of that Town which is in the Weſt of *China*, do's demonſtrate that the firſt Inhabitants of *China* came thither from the Weſtern parts of the World, and that conſequently they were of *Shem*'s Poſterity, according to *Moſes*'s account in the Tenth of *Geneſis*.

Thirdly, Altho' there be perhaps no incongruity in their aſcribing to him the Study of Aſtronomy, and the invention of ſeveral Inſtitutions neceſſary to Human Society, as Laws, *&c.* yet what they add, that he was the firſt inventer of ſeveral Figures, which he had ſeen upon the back of a Dragon, ſufficiently ſhews, that either the whole ſtory is but a Fable, or that he was a Cheat, and impoſed upon the ſimplicity of ignorant people.

What probability is there (ſeeing it is ſuppoſed *China*

China, was then all over infeſted and overgrown with Barbariſm) that in his time it ſhould be recorded in writing, 1. That he invented, inſtead of thoſe Knots before mentioned, the *Hieroglyphicks*, which are almoſt as obſcure. 2. That Men were then diſtinguiſhed from Women by the difference of their Garments. 3. That Marriages were then fixed and regulated which before were as promiſcuous amongſt Men as amongſt Beaſts.

What they ſay of his being the Author of a Muſical Inſtrument of 36 Cords, ſhews evidently the falſhood of the Story; for there is nothing more improbable, than to ſuppoſe that he ſhould arrive to ſuch perfection of improvement in Muſick as that comes to, when that Art had but very lately been invented. It is all that men could attain unto, after they have long improved this Art, the beginnings whereof, without doubt, as of all other Arts, were very rough and imperfect.

Surely the *Egyptians* were more reaſonable when they attributed the invention of the *Lyre* with three ſtrings to *Mercury*, *Saturn*'s Secretary, who is the ſame with *Noah*.

The Hiſtory of *China* takes notice that the beginning of Husbandry and Phyſick was under *Fohius*'s Succeſſor, it do's not mention whether he was his Son, or no; but it only gives an account of the firſt War, wherein he was routed by a petty King, one of his Subjects, who ſucceeded him in the Empire.

And what is moſt ſingular in that Record, is, that therein is aſcribed to that Uſurper, 1. The

invention of the *Cycle* of 60 years, which serves to fix their Chronology. 2. The method of regulating Weights and Measures. 3. That it was by his means and encouragement that some of his contemporary Subjects found out the Sphere, Arithmetick, Laws, Judicial Astrology, several Musical Instruments, the Art of Dying, and of Coining, the Joyners and Carpenters Trade, so far as to make Boats and Bridges. They pretend that he never dy'd, but that he was translated alive into that place which the *Chinese* do assign for Eternal Happiness. 'Tis *Pliny*'s observation, that this way and custom of Deifying the first Inventors of Arts, necessary to Human Life, is very ancient; but if it be an old Custom, it is also a pregnant sign of the Ignorance that reigned amongst those ancient people that used it. Therefore we may as justly suspect the History of the *Chinese*, among whom it is in use, as the *Egyptian* Accounts, which were much of the same nature in *Alexander*'s time, as we are informed by *Diodorus Siculus*. The Posterity or the Successors of those famous men have always affected in process of time, by such means, to immortalize their Names, to the end they might raise up themselves and their Families as well to Power and Authority, as to Honour and Veneration, above all other men with whom they conversed.

Lib. II. cap. 7. Hist. Nat.

But however, we may reasonably conjecture that those several passages recorded in that History, having for the greatest part of them, a great conformity with the Transactions related in *Moses* History, which was not unknown to the *Chaldeans*, with whom the *Chinese* had Communication and Correspondence; all those Pretences and claims of theirs to the invention of these Arts, is an honour which they have borrow'd from others to lend it to the Founders of their Empire; just as the *Egyptians* have appropriated to their first Kings, some Arts which were found out by the Patriarchs before the Flood; or as the *Greeks* have made their first Princes the first Inventors of those very Arts, the Invention of which the *Egyptians* ascribed to their first Kings.

And this Reflexion will appear the more probable and natural, if we consider what they relate, that under the fourth Successor of *Fohius*, there arose an Impostor Famous by his Delusions, who endeavoured to alter the Religion of the *Chinese*, and to bring in Idolatry amongst them; which brought great Misfortunes upon *China*. For hereby it is evident, that the *Chinese* in their History have disguised, and so appropriated to themselves, some Passages which relate to *Nimrod*'s time, since the Original of Idolatry is to be referr'd to the time of building of the Tower of *Babel*, which was intended for an Idol Temple, if we will believe what passes for a received Opinion amongst the *Jews*.

Chuenhious is said to have been the Restorer of the Worship of one God, and to have annexed the Priesthood to the Kingly Power; and to have regulated the *Calendar*, and to have found out the Ephemerides of the five Planets, after an intire Conjunction of those five Planets, before the day of the Conjunction of the Sun with the Moon, and to have fixed to that day, the beginning of the year, which agrees with our beginning the year in *January*.

But yet it is to be obſerved,

1. That notwithſtanding this pretended Aſtronomical Obſervation, there have been ſeveral Alterations made of the beginning of the year according to the fanſie and pleaſure of ſeveral Emperors, which ſhews that there was no conſtant rule obſerved in that Countrey.

2. That *Martinius* ſeems to have approved of the Calculation of this Conjunction of five Planets in *Aquarius*, to accommodate the falſe Aſtrological prejudice of the *Chineſe*, with that of ſeveral Authors, who looking upon the Flood as a natural event, have groundleſly imagined, that it was brought to paſs by the virtue and influence of ſuch a Conjunction, and that it was a certain ſign of a Flood. 'Tis this fooliſh and whimſical Fanſie which hath made ſome *Grecians* prepoſterouſly ſedulous in ſeeking out that dreadful year, the Winter whereof, was to drown the World with a Flood, and the Summer to burn it with a general Conflagration, as *Cenſorinus** and † *Ariſtotle* have obſerved it. 'Tis a Judicious Remark which *Origanus* ‖ hath made upon the Obſervations of thoſe Aſtrologers, who from the Conjunction of the Planets in Humid Signs, uſe to foretel prodigious Rains, for he ſhews, that there is nothing more groundleſs and uncertain than ſuch Obſervations: And he gives a famous and remarkable Inſtance of that uncertainty to the eternal ſhame of Aſtrology, which is this; *John Staffler*, as *Cardan* tells us, having obſerved ſuch a Conjunction of all the Planets in *Piſces*, in the year 1524. foretold that there ſhould come a general Flood, whereof ſeveral People being afraid, retired to the tops of high

* *Cenſ. de die nat. c.* 18
† *Ariſt L.* 1. *meteor. c.* 14.
‖ *Tom.* 1. *Ephemer. P.* 481.

high Mountains; but without any cauſe, for there was never ſeen a greater Serenity of Weather.

3. *Martinius* was certainly miſtaken, when he aſcribed to *Chuenhious* the regulating the *Ephemerides* of the five leſſer Planets; ſeeing there are no ſuch *Ephemerides* in *China*, according to all the Relations we have of that Countrey; nor yet any of the Sun and Moon ſo exact, as we have in *Europe*; a pregnant Demonſtration of which, is that the Miſſionary Jeſuits have been raiſed up to the dignity of the chiefeſt *Mandarins* in *China*, only becauſe their skill and learning in Aſtrology, was found to exceed that of any the moſt Learned Men amongſt the *Chineſe*, by many degrees.

Theſe things I thought fit to obſerve, to ſhew that there is nothing in the Hiſtory of *China*, which they ſo much cry up, that can any ways invalidate the Authority of *Moſes*'s Accounts in his Book of *Geneſis*, but what rather confirms it, if it be conſidered with attention.

It was not without reaſon, that I have ſuppoſed, that the memory of thoſe Ancient Tranſactions, was conveyed, tho' confuſedly, to the *Chineſe*; we have already intimated one of thoſe probable means of conveyance of this Tradition, by their Commerce which the *Chaldeans*, who were well informed of the greateſt part of thoſe ſeveral Tranſactions, and who had great intercourſe with the remoteſt Nations of *Aſia*, towards the Eaſt. To this we may add another Argument, yet more certain and ſure; which is the continual Commerce, that hath always been betwixt the *Indies* and *China*, and the Communication which the Inhabitants of the Neighbouring Countries of

the Red Sea, have always had with all the Eastern Nations of the World. For it is plain, that this Commerce gave a great opportunity of Communicating to those Eastern Nations, the knowledge of all those Passages which were known to the *Chaldeans:* Just as the like Commerce with the Western Nations of the World, proved a means of conveying to them the knowledge of the most part of the same things, which in process of time became the ground of the most Ancient Fables amongst the *Greeks,* among whom those Fables made up the best part of their Divinity.

But besides all this, we may mention here another very likely means of conveyance, *viz.* the Commerce of the *Chinese* with the *Tartars,* among whom the *Jews* of the ten Tribes were dispersed and setled, within a short time after their Captivity in *Assyria.* For as those *Jews* had with them the Books of *Moses,* so they easily gave a great insight and knowledge in ancient History to those Nations, that have appropriated it to themselves, as may be made out, by comparing their Fabulous History, with those Books of *Moses,* which contain in effect, all that relates to the Original of those Nations.

But whatever judgment be made of those forementioned means of conveying the Ancient Tradition to the *Chinese,* I think that I have good ground to affirm,

1. That the Historians that have written the Lives of the first Emperors of *China,* were not Contemporaries with those Emperors, and that consequently they have not recorded things so well known, as it was supposed.

2. That

2. That the Fables intermixt in their Histories do sufficiently evidence the easie and credulous temper of those Authors, which takes away from them all credit and belief.

3. That the greatest care of those Authors was to perswade the World of the pretended Antiquity of their Nation, and so to raise the Honour and Reputation of it by glorious Stories and Fables.

4. That their affectation in giving us an Account of Astronomy and Judiciary Astrology, was only to bring into Credit and Reputation those Arts, the end and scope of which is to impose upon Simple Men; which is a ridiculous Affectation, and such as hath exposed the *Chaldeans* and *Egyptians* to the just Contempt and Derision of all other Nations.

5. That there is amongst them a Diversity of Opinions contrary to one another, about their Antiquity; just as there were some amongst the *Egyptians,* who reckoned up 23000 years from the Reign of the Sun to *Alexander*; when some others reckoned but a little above 10000 years.

6. That the *Chinese* according to one of their own Opinions, must say, that the Earth was without almost any Inhabitants for 30000 years together, and above; whereas we see that in the space of five or six thousand years, it is become inhabited as we see it; and that within a little more, it will be so overstockt, as that it will not be able to yield Provisions enough for all its Inhabitants, as a Learned *English* Man hath of late proved it by a Mathematical Demonstration;

which shews, that the *Chinese* wanted certain grounds to go upon, in several Accounts which they give of many Transactions, and in the relating of which, they are besides most confident.

Lastly, That therefore, what is reported, that these *Chinese* Authors did all write with publick allowance after every King's Decease, might indeed be so about the latter times, as it was practic'd in *Egypt*; but that it is as absolutely false, that the *Chinese* had ever in former times, such Publick Historians, and as it is false, that the *Egyptians* had formerly any such, although they were as confident to say they had, in *Alexander*'s time, as the *Chinese* are now.

But this, I think, is sufficient for the clearing of that matter. We must now answer the last Objection of *Atheists* against the Authority of the Book of *Genesis*.

CHAP. XXI.

Wherein the last Objection of Atheists, is answered.

AS I intend to clear all the Difficulties which may arise about this important Matter, in the Minds of those that shall peruse these Observations; I think my self obliged to prevent and resolve,

resolve, the only plausible Objection, I know remaining, after all what I have said upon this Subject.

Perhaps some will be apt to reply here, that they indeed confess *Moses* to be the Author of *Genesis*, and that, if that Book had really been Suppositious, it could never have gone under his Name, nor be received as his, in after Ages. But that yet all this does not prove sufficiently the truth of those Transactions recorded in that Book. Because *Moses* may have forced upon the People of *Israel*, the belief of them, by those Laws that he enacted amongst them, by which it was Death for any Man to dare to contest the truth of any thing he had written in his Books. This I think, is all, that the most Contentious *Atheists* can think of, to undermine the Authority of *Moses*'s History.

But this Objection is easily answered, for it confutes it self. For,

First, It supposes the truth of these great Miracles, by which God establish'd *Moses* the Head and Captain of the People of *Israel*; which Miracles are every whit as hard to believe, as the several Accounts of other things which we read of, in the Book of *Genesis*.

We find accordingly, amongst the Heathens themselves many Monuments of those Miracles done by the Ministry of *Moses*, when he brought the *Israelites* out of *Egypt*: As I intend to shew in my Observations upon the other four Books of *Moses*.

Secondly, They must at least suppose, that *Moses* hath given a true account of several Passages, in which he could not impose upon other Nations,

Nations, which did not acknowledge his Authority, as for example, all that relates to the building of the Ark, the greateſt piece of Architecture that was then in the World; and to the raiſing of the Tower of *Babel*, the greateſt Building that ever was, and part of which is yet extant, for all theſe things were as ſo many Witneſſes of the truth of thoſe Tranſactions which he related.

Thirdly, They muſt likewiſe ſuppoſe, that he hath related ſeveral other Paſſages as exactly as he did thoſe, as for Example, That of the Diviſion of Tongues, which is an Appendix of the Hiſtory of the Tower of *Babel*; that of the Deſtruction of *Sodom*, the Original of the Neighbouring Nations of *Canaan*, that of the *Jews*, of the *Moabites*, of the *Ammonites*, of the *Iſhmaelites*, and *Edomites*; for it is ridiculous to conceive, that this Law-giver ſhould ever hope to perſwade other Nations to believe any falſe Stories about Matters ſo well, and ſo generally known, as thoſe were amongſt themſelves.

Fourthly, They muſt ſuppoſe further, that he hath given a true account of the Original of the *Iſraelites*, whoſe Head and Governor he was. How great and abſolute ſoever the Authority of *Moſes* might be, it is ridiculous to imagine, that ever he would have derived the Original of the *Iſraelites* from any other, than from their true Anceſtors. This appears the more neceſſary in that we ſee by the accounts he gives of things, and Pedigrees in *Geneſis*, that he wrote that Book eſpecially from the Hiſtory of *Abraham*, on to the end of it, only to ſhew the Rights, and juſt Pretenſions

tenſions of the *Iſraelites*, upon the Land of *Canaan*.

Fifthly, They muſt yet further acknowledge, whither they will or not, the truth of the accounts he gives, concerning the Original of the Pretenſions and Diviſions, which were kept up amongſt the Twelve Tribes of *Iſrael*; now theſe Pretenſions having no other ground, than the Oracles which are related in his Hiſtory; they ſufficiently prove the Authority of thoſe Oracles againſt all the Pretenſions and Objections of the Atheiſts.

What violence ſoever they may pretend that *Moſes* might uſe to force an Implicit Belief of his Hiſtory and blind Obedience to his Laws, yet no Man of common Senſe and Reaſon can ever think, that he would have fill'd the Accounts he gives of things of that nature, with Lies, or that if he had done it, he could ever have expected, that his falſe Accounts of them, ſhould ever have been credited by the Neighbouring Nations, or even by his own Subjects.

But without urging here ſeveral other Abſurdities, which plainly ſhew, that there is no diſtinction to be found, betwixt the Accounts of things which *Moſes* recites as publickly known, and thoſe which he relates of his own Head, and private knowledge; there being, as I have already ſhew'd, betwixt all thoſe ſeveral Accounts, ſuch a natural Coherence, and neceſſary Concatenation, that they cannot be divided from one another, without deſtroying the whole frame of his Hiſtory: I ſay, that it is impoſſible, that the Law, by which he makes it death, for any one to conteſt the truth of his

his Narration, ſhould make the ſincerity of it ſuſpected.

I do not urge here, that there is an evident Abſurdity to ſuppoſe, that *Moſes* would ever have related together all thoſe Tranſactions, as the grounds of Religion, if they had been abſolutely unknown in the World before him.

Neither do I mention here, that ſuppoſe *Moſes* had been ſo imprudent, as to attempt ſuch an undertaking, yet there is no reaſon to believe, that a whole Nation, and that a very numerous one, would have long perſevered in a Profeſſion forced upon them by meer Violence and Tyranny.

Nor do I think it neceſſary to obſerve here, that the People of *Iſrael* were neither ſo patient, nor ſo eaſily perſwaded by *Moſes*, nor yet ſo ſubmiſſive to him, as theſe Objectors do imagine.

That is plain, and apparent enough from all their Seditions and Conſpiracies againſt him.

Nor do I judge it neceſſary to obſerve here what is plain enough of it ſelf, *viz.* that *Moſes* had no Succeſſor any ways concern'd, to countenance and defend theſe pretended Fictions and Fables of his Hiſtory, *Joſhua* his immediate Succeſſor was of another Tribe; and ſo were all the ſucceeding Governors of *Iſrael*, until the *Maccabees* came.

But what I think deſerves beſt to be obſerved here, is, that after *Moſes* and *Joſhua*'s Deceaſe, the People of *Iſrael* was brought under the Subjection of the *Canaanites*, and conſequently freed from

from the Terror of that Law of *Moſes*'s making, by which it was Death for any one to conteſt the Authority of his Laws, and the truth of all his Writings; there is but a little more than forty years interval betwixt the Conqueſt of *Canaan* by *Joſhua*, and the Bondage of the *Iſraelites* under the Neighbouring Nations. Had it not been a fit time then, to caſt off the Yoak of *Moſes*'s Laws, and to publiſh the pretended Lies and Impoſtures of his Hiſtory? Was not the Compariſon which the *Iſraelites* could eaſily make betwixt the *Moſaick* Writings, and the Tradition generally received in the Countrey of their Captivity, a natural and ready means to undeceive them.

Yet notwithſtanding all this, we ſee that they obſtinately entertain the belief of the ſeveral Tranſactions recorded by *Moſes*, and ſtand firmly to all their Pretenſions: Nay, we ſee them have recourſe to the Remedy of Repentance which *Moſes* preſcribed them to uſe in thoſe ſad Misfortunes which he foretold ſhould befal them, and out of which he promis'd, at the ſame time, that God would miraculouſly deliver them; which indeed was done accordingly, even fourteen times within leſs than four hundred years, as is manifeſt from the Book of *Judges*.

Can there then be a more pregnant Argument, that if *Moſes* made it Death by one of his Sanctions, for any of the *Iſraelites*, to conteſt the truth either of his Writings, or of his Oracles, and Miracles, it was not to force the belief of them without examination, but rather only to prevent the corruption of that People, and their mingling and confounding themſelves with the Heathens, which God

God intended to hinder on purpose, because he would have the Messiah to be born according to his Promise, out of that Nation, which to effect, he thought fit in his infinite Wisdom, to employ the rigour of some Capital Laws, to keep that people unmixt and distinguish'd from all other Nations of the World, till the Messiah was born.

CHAP. XXII.

The Consequences of what we have proved in our foregoing Observations upon the Book of Genesis.

THese several Observations which I have made upon the Book of *Genesis*, are all, I think, very natural and easie; and if I am not mistaken, sufficient to prove solidly, the truth of *Moses*'s Account, of the Creation of the World, and of the Promise of the Messiah, which is the foundation of the Christian Religion.

The Conclusion that I draw out of the Premises is, That,

First, I assert, that *Moses* that famous *Hebrew*, who was design'd to be the Heir of *Pharaoh*'s Daughter, is the true and sole Author of the Book of *Genesis*.

Secondly, I maintain, that this being once granted,

granted, he could not, according to his way of Writing, record those important Transactions, he relates otherwise than they really came to pass.

Thirdly, I maintain, that tho he had not been an Eye-Witness of the Creation of the World, yet he hath made the Description of it according to such an Authentick Tradition, as cannot be reasonably doubted of, because it was then the Universal Tradition, not only of the *Moabites*, of the *Ammonites*, of the *Ishmaelites*, and of the *Edomites*, who were all of *Sem*'s Posterity, and amongst whom he had been travelling for forty years together; but also of the *Egyptians*, of his own People, and in a word, of all Men then living in the World.

Fourthly, I maintain, that he never was found fault with, nor contradicted, till true Reason and Sence, if I may say so, was lost and banish'd from amongst Mankind, till the *Egyptians*, for example, they who used before, to look upon the *Greeks* as meer Children and Ideots, were fallen into so great a Stupidity and Deprivation of Sence, as to believe and maintain, that Men were first born in *Egypt*, because forsooth, Frogs did naturally, as they thought, breed out of their Muddy Fenns and Marshes.

Fifthly, I maintain, that for many Ages after *Moses*, no body did ever publickly declare for the Eternity of the World, nor yet for its Fortuitous Production. These Opinions are meer Absurdities and Chimeras, brought forth into the World by the *Chaldeans* and *Greeks*, only about *Alexander*'s time, or perhaps an hundred years before him,

him, *i. e.* about eleven or twelve hundred years after *Moſes*'s Deceaſe.

Sixthly, I maintain, that ſeeing there is no particular time to be found, wherein the reading of the Law was interrupted and diſcontinued for any conſiderable time amongſt the *Jews*, ſeeing it continues ſtill to this very hour amongſt them every Sabbath day, in the ſeveral places of the World, wherein they are diſperſed; and ſeeing beſides, that it is certain, that this Law, which enjoyns the Obſervation of the Sabbath, in remembrance of the Creation, could never be impoſed upon them, without their perceiving and declaring preſently the Novelty and Suppoſition of that Account, and conſequently of the Book wherein it is related.

Seeing all this is certain, I do poſitively maintain, that the truth of the Creation can never be better proved, than it is by the Book of *Geneſis*, becauſe in it *Moſes* hath followed the Tradition of all the Ages that preceded him, and only recorded in Writing, what was then generally known of all Men in the World; and that in a time when every Man was able to run his own Pedigree up to *Adam*.

Laſtly, I maintain, that as the certainty of the Creation cannot reaſonably be doubted of, without rejecting at the ſame time all thoſe Proofs from Facts which I have brought to ſtrengthen my Aſſertion. So there is all the reaſon in the World to entertain the belief of it, as of a matter of Fact which is indiſputable: As being Related by the moſt Ancient Hiſtorian, Confirmed by the moſt Ancient Tradition, Believed by the moſt

moſt Ancient People of the World, who did not only believe it, but alſo, had always had, according to God's Command, the Memory of it Celebrated amongſt them and their Anceſtors, in all their Generations fifty two times in a Year, from the very beginning of the World.

REFLEXIONS

Upon the Four Laſt

BOOKS

OF

MOSES,

To Eſtabliſh the

TRUTH

OF THE

CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

PREFACE.

When I began at first these Reflexions upon the Book of Genesis, *I design'd only to demonstrate the certainty of the Creation of the first Man, and so to shew by Arguments from matters of Fact, that neither the Creation of the World, nor yet the Promise of the Messiah, which God made to Man after his sin, can reasonably be disputed or doubted of.*

I design'd after that, to establish the truth of Christ's Resurrection, by such another undeniable Argument, viz. *by shewing, that the Apostles were Eye Witnesses of it, and instituted a solemn Day in every Week, to celebrate and perpetuate the Memory of it, amongst Men, from their time down to the end of the World. And this I thought was sufficient to demonstrate the truth of the Christian Religion: For as the* Jews *by the continual Celebration of the Sabbath, every Week, could easily run back to the Creation of the World, which was the occasion of the Institution of the Sabbath, so the Christians may by the Weekly Observation of the Lord's day prove Christ's Resurrection, which occasioned the Institution of*

the Lord's day. If we consider the thing in it self, there is no less Absurdity to dispute our Saviour's Resurrection, than the Creation of the first Man.

Now if this Argument holds, as there can be no easier, so neither can there be a stronger proof of the truth of the Christian Religion for provided we be once well assured of the certainty of Christ's Resurrection, we must acknowledge him to be the true Messiah, and consequently embrace his Religion.

But it seems in the heat of Meditation, I was insensibly carried further, in my Observations upon the Promise of the Messiah, than I thought at first to be. Therefore, instead of passing now, as I proposed in the beginning, to the proof of Christ's Resurrection, which is a solid and compendious way of demonstrating the truth of his Religion, I find my self engaged according to my present Method, to continue to make the like Reflexions upon the other Books of Holy Scripture, that I may yet more fully demonstrate, that Jesus Christ is the true Messiah, whom God promised to Man immediately after his sin.

And this I intend to shew so plainly, as will make it evident, that God hath really accomplished his first designs, and exactly performed all his Promises relating to the Messiah, according to the first Idea's, he gave of his coming to the Ancient Patriarchs.

First, Then I design to trace up the Method that

that God was pleased to use, to make the Messiah known without mistake, when ever he should come into the World.

Secondly, I will make some Reflexions upon the several Notions he gave of him long before in his Oracles, to Characterize his Person, his Offices, his Actions, his Sufferings, his Glory, &c.

Last of all I will shew, that we have all this whole Project and Design exactly accomplished in the History of the Gospel, as it was written by Christ's Disciples. Now as this Method which God hath particularly chosen to make the Messiah known, appears also in the other Books of Moses. *So I think it will not be amiss for me particularly to view and examine these Books, that I may have occasion to illustrate several things in them, which deserve a particular attention, especially when they are considered together, and as it were at one view.*

For the Prophecies being thus consider'd together in their Connexion and Progress, do more plainly evidence God's Design, and may better convince or confound the Jews. *Therefore I intend accordingly to consider those Oracles with attention, and to join them together, that so they may in their Conjunction cast forth the brighter Beams of Light, to the Conviction of all Infidels who may happen to peruse this Book.*

For I am perswaded that, after the perusal of my Observations in it, an ordinary attention in the

reading of the Gospel will be sufficient to convince any Man, that Jesus Christ is the true Messiah, which is all I intend to prove, as the Conclusion of this Treatise.

Now as the examination of the Patriarchs Religion according to the account Moses *hath given us of it in his Book of* Genesis, *hath taken up the first part of it; so I design to examine in this second part the* Israelites *Religion, and to follow in my search the account which* Moses *gives of it in his other four Books.*

And as to effect this, it is very important to establish beforehand the Authority of those four Books: so I intend to shew first of all, that Moses *is the true Author of them, and that they have Intrinsick Characters of undeniable certainty.*

Then Secondly, It will be natural for me, to shew, that Moses *in the writing of them, had the Promise of the Messiah in view, as particularly promised of God to the* Patriarchs *of his own Nation, and as being consequently the principal, if not the sole Object of their hope.*

Thirdly, I intend to shew, that if we seriously examine Moses's *Laws, we shall find in them such a Method observed, as is both very agreeable to the manifestation of God's design in* Genesis, *and very worthy of his Wisdom, especially if we consider what he was pleased to reveal unto us of his Intentions, by the Prophets who followed* Moses.

REFLE-

REFLEXIONS
Upon the Four Last
BOOKS
OF
MOSES,
To Establish the Truth
OF THE
CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

CHAPTER I.

That it cannot reasonably be doubted, but that Moses *is the Author of* Exodus, *and of the three other following Books.*

THis is a Truth which may be grounded upon several solid Arguments.

I might observe, That *Moses* hath always been acknowledged, by the very Heathens themselves, not only to be the most Ancient Historian, but also the most Ancient Legislator in the World.

I might likewiſe obſerve, That there is a particular connexion betwixt the Book of *Geneſis* and the other Books of *Moſes*, as well in regard of the general Deſign of their Author, as of the Matters treated of in them. For Example, We ſee that the greateſt part of the Laws and Tranſactions which we find written and recorded there, derive their Original from thoſe Tranſactions and Paſſages that we read of in *Geneſis*. Thus we may plainly diſcern that the pretenſion of the *Iſraelites* upon the Land of *Canaan*, was grounded upon the Promiſe that God made to *Abraham* to give it to his Poſterity, in the fourth Generation. Thus we may ſee, That the *Amalekites* could have no other reaſon to make War againſt the *Iſraelites*, than the old Alliance that was formerly made betwixt *Amalek* and the *Canaanites*, which without doubt engaged his Poſterity to be the firſt Oppoſers of the eſtabliſhment of the *Iſraelites* in the Land of *Canaan*. Thus we ſee that the Seditions of the *Iſraelites* againſt *Moſes* under *Corah*, *Dathan*, and *Abiram*, did proceed from the Order of the Birth of the Children of *Iſrael*, as it is ſet down in *Geneſis*, becauſe the eldeſt thinking themſelves wrong'd of their Birthright, thought they might juſtly Rebel againſt *Moſes* in order to recover it.

But I haſte to things more material than theſe. And firſt it is here obſervable, That thoſe Books were not only religiouſly kept in every Family of *Iſrael*; but that they were alſo once ſolemnly depoſited in the Tabernacle as a publick Record, and that by *Moſes* himſelf a little before his death, that they might be a Teſtimony againſt that People,

People, as we read it *Deuteronomy* XXXI. 26.

Secondly, It cannot be denied that *Moſes* did ſtraightly charge both *Joſhuah*, and the Heads of the People, to read them frequently and careſully, for it is expreſly ſaid ſo, *Joſhua* I. 8. Nay, we ſee about 500 years after, the holy Man *David*, who had made, during his life, the ſupream felicity of a man to conſiſt in the reading the Law of God day and night: We ſee, I ſay, that holy Man give in his Death-bed the ſame Charge to *Solomon*, I *Kings*. Pſal. I.

Thirdly, Moreover it is certain that there were many Laws and Sanctions contained in thoſe Books, which are the Foundation of the Hiſtory of ſucceeding Times. And this is the reaſon why we read nothing in the Book of *Joſhua* concerning the ſeveral Bleſſings and Curſes which were to be pronounced upon the Mounts *Ebal* and *Gerizim*, becauſe the form of them was to be borrowed from the Books of *Moſes* which were Publick and Authentick. The ſame Reflexion may be made upon the Law of the Firſt-fruits, and upon the Prayer which was to be made upon the Tithes of the third year; as likewiſe upon many other Laws.

Fourthly, It is certain that thoſe Books were read over every ſeventh Year, according to the Injunction of that Law, which we find *Deuteronomy* XXXI. 10, 11. which was commanded to be done for the inſtruction of Poſterity, as it is intimated in the Thirteenth *Verſe* of the ſame *Chapter*. Whereupon it may not be prepoſterous to conſider here God's Methods, to prevent all Forgery and Impoſture in this Matter.

We

We see that it was, during the Longævity of Human Life, a constant and universal Custom amongst all the Patriarch's to *Moses*'s time, to put (when they lay on their Death-beds) their Posterity in mind of the most important Truths, and of the Fundamental Articles of Religion, because as all Admonitions and Exhortations made at such a time, are always look'd upon as sincere, so they seldom fail of being favourably construed and better entertained, than they would be at any other time. We have as instances of this ancient Custom, the Examples of *Abraham*, of *Isaac*, of *Jacob*, of *Joseph*, *&c.* who in that, I make no doubt, follow'd the Custom of their pious Ancestors, who in all likelyhood derived it from *Adam* himself. That Custom we see was of an admirable use to perpetuate the memory of illustrious Transactions: What was then spoken by those pious venerable men, was a kind of a publick Sermon, because it was delivered before those numerous Families, which met then altogether about the Bed of their common Head and Father; and that upon such an Occasion as did extraordinarily excite their attention.

To this Custom succeeded another, which was, that when the greatest Captains and Judges of the People of *Israel*, were sensible of their approaching Death, then they usually called the People together, to give them such Exhortations, Reproofs, and Admonitions, as they judged most proper, either for their encouragement, or for their Reformation; nay, and that even in some occasions many of them have affected to have

have their Speeches made publick, and deposited in the Tabernacle: Thus did *Moses* and *Joshuah*, and the greatest number of the Judges, and *Samuel*, and *Solomon*, &c.

We know that the Books of *Moses* were formerly read every Sabbath day; as St. *James* does attest it in *Acts* XV. And tho there be no express command about it in *Moses*'s Writings, yet we find there, something equivalent to it, in the strict charge given by him to all the People, to be continually conversant in his Books, and to instruct their Families at all times in the Laws and Doctrines delivered in them; for it is plain, that if the *Israelites* were bound by that command of *Moses* to read his Books every day, they were more particularly obliged, by the same command, to read them on the Sabbath day, which was made a day of rest by God; particularly on purpose, that all Men might the better attend on that day to the reading and meditating God's Laws, and the performing all other Religious Duties.

We know besides that those Books were continually explained both by the Doctors of the Law, and the *Levites*, who were on purpose dispersed through the whole Land of *Canaan*, that they might the better attend and perform the Duties of their Ministry.

We see that *Moses* in his Writings hath exactly kept a kind of Journal, which cannot easily receive any alteration. If we read hereupon what relates to the sojourning of the *Israelites*, and the several removals of their Tents in the Desert, we shall be easily convinc'd by the very form and stile of those Books, as we have them now, that they were

were formerly publickly received, and were exactly transcribed out of the Original, and that if in Process of time they suffered any alteration, it was only as to some Appendices or Postscripts inserted by *Esrah*, or some other Prophet, by way of Explication.

We see in those Books a History written without disguise or partiality, exact in relating all Circumstances, of Places, Times, and Persons, even in the Narration of things of small importance for the main drift of the Author; there are besides, some Passages recorded in them, which any Author, who lived after *Moses*'s time, would certainly have left out, if for no other reason, yet at least to abolish the memory of some actions dishonourable to some great Families, and whole Tribes of *Israel*.

Again, we read in them the Songs, and other Publick Monuments which were made upon extraordinary occasions, to preserve the memory of them the better.

I have but three Observations more to make here, and then I have done with this Chapter.

The First is, That those Books have been constantly quoted by all the Authors amongst that People who followed *Moses*, and that their Quotations do exactly agree with the Text of those Books, as we have them now, which is a certain sign, as well of the Sincerity, as of the Antiquity of that Author. They were as much esteemed in *Israel* as in *Juda*, both People did observe them as their Law: The Prophets that arose from time to time, did always, and upon all Occasions acknowledge,

knowledge, and maintain their Authority.

Thus we find in the Book of *Joshua*, quoted out of them, what relates to the Curses and Blessings, to the Prophecies, and Divisions of the Land of *Canaan*, amongst the Tribes of *Israel*. The whole History of the thirteen Judges, whom God raised up amongst the People, is nothing in general, but an account of the accomplishment of that Promise, which God had made formerly by *Moses*, to raise up from among that People such Men in the time of their Afflictions and Captivities, as would be the Assertors of their Liberty.

We see there in particular, the Execution of *Moses*'s order, concerning *Caleb*, and of that Law in *Deuteronomy*, which prescribes the manner of dismissing from the Army those that are fearful and faint-hearted; and of that other concerning the *Nazarites*, &c. Judg I. 20. Judg. VII. 3. Judg. XIII. 3.

Thus we see, that the Rules and Laws prescribed in those Books, continued in force in the time of *Ruth*, *David*'s Great Grand-Mother, that appears plainly, by their Observation of those Laws, which enjoyn'd the next Kinsman to take to Wife the Widow of his Deceased Relation, and to redeem his Inheritance. As for *David* and *Solomon*, they are continually alluding to something or other delivered in those Books: *Nehemiah* quotes them in Chap. XIII. of his Book, and that was in the year of the World 3563, and so does *Malachy* in the IV. and V. Chapters of his Prophesie, in the year 3580.

The Second Observation, which is very material, is, that the Author of those Books, hath inserted in them an express prohibition of adding any thing

thing to them, as we ſee it *Deuteronomy* IV. 2.

It is then impoſſible, ſeeing that the whole people of the *Jews* have always acknowledged the Divine Authority of thoſe Books, that they ſhould ever have attempted the alteration of any thing in them.

Nay, we ſee, not without wonder, that after the greateſt part of the ten Tribes of *Iſrael* were tranſported into *Aſſyria*, thoſe that were ſent from *Aſſyria* to inhabit their Countrey, did receive that Law, and that their Poſterity have kept it all along to this day, as uncorrupted as the *Jews*, altho' they continue their Mortal Enemies, and have been expoſed to all the Changes, and Revolutions, that can befal a Nation, during the long interval of 2400 years.

The Third Obſervation, which deſerves a ſingular Attention is, That notwithſtanding the great and many Corruptions, which the Common-Wealth of *Iſrael* fell into, yet theſe Books have ſtill been kept up in the ſame form that we have them now: It appears out of the Hiſtory of *Joſiah* related, 2 *Kings* XXIII. 21. That after the Book of the Law, of *Moſes* own writing, was found in the Temple, the King commanded all the People to keep the Paſſover unto the Lord, *as it is written in the Book of this Covenant*: Now we have the Inſtitution of the Paſſover, *Exod.* XII. which ſhews, that *Joſiah* by the Book of this Covenant, meant the Books of *Moſes*, ſuch as we have them now adays, and ſuch as they were when *Moſes* depoſited them into the Sanctuary.

It is important to conſider well, all that is related in the forementioned Chapter of II *Kings*, for we

we may gather out of it, that it was according to the Directions of this Law, that they began to reform all the Superſtitions and Idolatries which had been introduced in their Religion, and countenanced by the Royal Authority, from *Solomon*'s time to *Joſiah*; this Chapter relates and commends the proceeding of *Joſiah*, only in oppoſition to the ill government of his Predeceſſors, and to the publick Monuments of their Superſtitions, which he aboliſhed in obedience to God's Laws, contained in the Books of *Moſes*.

However, it is certain, that it was no eaſie matter, to impoſe herein upon Poſterity.

For Firſt, The Tranſactions recorded in the Books of *Moſes*, did not only relate to the People of *Iſrael*, but alſo to moſt of the Neighbouring Nations.

Secondly, The Memory of them continued ſo lively and univerſal, that almoſt 1500 years after *Moſes*, the Names of thoſe Magicians ſpoken of, *Exod.* VII. 11. were, as yet known, not only amongſt the *Jews*, as we ſee it by an expreſs Paſſage of S. *Paul*, who ſpeaks of them, and mentioneth their Names, 2 *Tim.* III. 8. but alſo among the Heathens, as both *Pliny* and *Numenius* do atteſt it. *Hiſt. Nat.* l. 30. c. 1.

I point only at thoſe general Proofs at preſent, becauſe I have already made uſe of them, and ſhew'd their force in my Obſervations upon *Geneſis*, and becauſe I intend to repeat, and improve ſome of them hereafter in this Treatiſe. But now, in order to follow my preſent deſign, I muſt come to the more particular Conſideration of the things contained in theſe Books, which will

much conduce to the Confirmation of the ſame Truth.

CHAP. II.

That both the Character of Moſes's *Perſon, and the nature of the things he relates has always made men read his Books with attention.*

THe Subject of ſome Books is ſuch, as that alone would recommend them to the attention of any Reader, tho' their Author had no reputation in the World; but when beſides the importance of their Subject, the Author of them is famous and of great repute, then to be ſure, they never fail to be read with ſerious attention, and preſerved with as great a care. The Books of *Moſes* have both theſe advantages, ſo that they cannot reaſonably be ſuſpected of the leaſt alteration or Forgery.

The firſt Character that we diſcover in theſe Books at the firſt viewing of them, is the great ſingularity, and admirable diverſity of their Stile, and of the Matters they treat of.

We do not ſee that other Legiſlators did ever affect to act the parts of Hiſtorians; no, they content themſelves with their abſolute power, to make Laws, without giving any reaſon for the Sanction of them: Therefore we ſee, that there is commonly nothing more dry and ſapleſs than all their Regulations, about both Civil, and Religious Matters.

But *Moſes* we ſee hath followed a more reaſonable, and more ſatisfactory method, all his Regulations are grounded upon the great Tranſactions which he relates; he enacts no Law of any conſequence, but he intimates to the *Jews*, at the ſame time, the Reaſons which challenge their Obedience, and makes them by that means reflect both upon the ſeveral Mercies of God beſtowed upon them, and call to mind the great Miracles they had been eye witneſſes of.

I confeſs indeed, that the uſe and ſcope of ſome of his Regulations, is very abſtruſe, eſpecially now, that we are ignorant of the ſeveral Heathen Cuſtoms, which God deſign'd to aboliſh from among that People newly come out of *Egypt*, where during their Captivity they had complied, and accuſtomed themſelves in a great meaſure to the Rites, and Religion of their Maſters the *Egyptians*. But yet how abſtruſe ſoever the deſign of ſome of thoſe Laws may now appear to be: We have good ground to affirm, that the general ſcope of them all was, to keep that People from Idolatry in diſtinguiſhing them from all other Nations, as alſo to quicken their Deſires and Expectations of the *Meſſiah*, the Promiſe of whoſe coming had been made by God in the very beginning of the World, and renewed ſeveral times to the Heads of their Nation.

However we ſee in the Books of thoſe Laws, Religion, and Policy ſo interwoven together, that the latter ſeems to ſubſiſt only by the ſupport and aſſiſtance of the former, which is contrary to the

cuſtom of Humane Legiſlators, who do not ſo much regard the eſtabliſhment of Religion, as the preſervation and welfare of the State and Common-wealth.

If any *Jew* had a mind to be informed about the Tradition of his Anceſtors, and the tranſactions of old, *Moſes* hath preſerved it with ſuch care, with ſo many marks of Fidelity, and ſo clear and plain, that there is no other Hiſtory beſides his, that can give any ſatisfactory Information about the Original of things: All the Fables of the Heathens, which yet make up the moſt ancient Tradition they have, being nothing elſe but a corruption and depravation of the ſeveral Truths that *Moſes* relates in his Hiſtory.

If any *Jew* deſired to ſee the beginnings of that Common-wealth of which he was a Member; *Moſes* gives an accurate account of them.

If any *Jew* deſired to know the Original of Mankind, or what was the true happineſs of Man, and what he ought to do, in order to be a partaker of that happineſs, *Moſes* teaches all that with great evidence and exactneſs.

If any *Jew* had a mind to know the occaſion of thoſe Songs that were ſo much in faſhion amongſt thoſe of his Nation; he might eaſily ſatisfie his Curioſity, by reading *Moſes*'s Hiſtory.

If any *Jew* deſired to know what ſort of Exhortations they were, which the Founder, both of their Religion and Common-wealth, had formerly made to their Fore-fathers; *Moſes* relates a great many of them in his Books.

If any *Jew* had a mind to receive inſtruction about the Original, and cauſe of thoſe Temporal Bleſſings,

Bleſſings, he enjoyed in the Land of *Canaan*, which God had poſſeſs'd his Nation of, after the Expulſion of thoſe People that had been the Inhabitants of it for many Ages, *Moſes* gives as good account of all that, as can be deſired.

If any *Jew* had a mind to know the Original of the ſeveral Calamities that befel his Nation on ſeveral occaſions; *Moſes* acquainted them both with the Cauſe and Remedy of all their Afflictions.

Laſtly, If the *Jews* deſired to be informed of the future condition of their Common-wealth in after Ages; *Moſes* foretells it in ſo particular and clear a manner, that they might look upon his Propheſies, not as certain Propheſies only, but as a plain Hiſtory of future Events, begun and traced out, before their Accompliſhment.

All this is ſo much the more conſiderable, to oblige us to read the Books of *Moſes* with care, that we may juſtly obſerve three things in his perſon, which as they raiſe him above all common Authors, ſo they cannot but ſtrengthen the belief, and increaſe the Eſteem and Veneration, which we ought to have for his Hiſtory.

The firſt is, That whereas all Men are careful to conceal their own Infirmities, and whatever is diſhonourable to their Families: *Moſes* on the contrary ſeems to have affected to record all the things that could blemiſh the memory of his Anceſtors, and derogate to his own Reputation. He blemiſhes *Jacob*'s memory by his relating, how he preferr'd *Joſeph* the Son of his Beloved Wife, to *Reuben* his Eldeſt, whom he unjuſtly deprived of his Birthright, in favour of the other, which injuſtice

ſtice is expreſly forbidden by one of *Moſes*'s Laws.

Thus he lays an eternal blot and reproach upon the memory of *Levi*, the Head of his own Family, when he mentions his Cruelty and Violence againſt the *Sichemites*, and the diſperſion of his Poſterity amongſt the other Tribes of *Iſrael*.

Nay, what is more, he vilifies his own Birth, by forbidding any Marriage betwixt an Aunt and her Nephew, ſeeing he relates that he himſelf was born of *Jocabed* both Aunt and Wife to his Father *Amram*; he deſcribes his own Incredulity with all the Ingenuity imaginable, when he repreſents the ſeveral Miracles which God wrought by him, he ſeems to ſpeak of himſelf only to lay open his own failings and ſins; ſuch a ſincerity and Impartiality we know confirms and increaſes mightily the Authority of any Author.

The Second thing is, That *Moſes* not regarding the advantage and honour of his own Family, left the Government of *Iſrael* to *Joſhuah*, one of the Tribe of *Ephraim*, and ſo reduced his own Children, and their Poſterity to the low condition of the reſt of the *Levites*, who were of an inferiour Rank to that of Prieſts; for we do not ſee that they ever after renew'd the pretenſions which they might otherwiſe have had to ſucceed *Moſes*; now ſuch neglect of his Family ſhews, that *Moſes*'s Principles were raiſed much above the ordinary pitch of the generality of Law-givers, who were abſolute and ſupream over their People.

The Third thing obſervable here is, that *Moſes* had no ſhare in the Conqueſt of the Land of *Canaan*; it all was ſubdued after his Death: Nay, it was that

that Conqueſt, that fixed, and ſetled the Common-wealth of *Iſrael*, which was before unſetled, and as it were ambulatory in the Deſart. Now how could ſuch a ſingular deſign, as *Moſes* deſcribes in his Law, be put in execution by any other than by him that formed it. It was *Joſhua* that made this Conqueſt of the Land of *Canaan*, and poſſeſt the *Jews* of it; now, to be ſure if that People had not been then fully perſwaded of the Divine Authority of *Moſes*'s Law, they would never have failed after ſo great an alteration to make uſe of their Power and Liberty in throwing off the troubleſom yoak of his Laws; nor yet would *Joſhua* and all his Succeſſors in the Government, ever have maintain'd the Authority of thoſe Laws, if they had not lookt upon *Moſes*, not only as an extraordinary Man, but alſo as one particularly Commiſſionated by God to make that Body of Laws, for the regulating of his People.

We read in thoſe Books of *Moſes*'s dying in the Mountains of *Moab*; now that being ſuppoſed, how is it poſſible, that if the People of *Iſrael* had not been fully convinced that God himſelf gave their Law to *Moſes* with all the Circumſtances mentioned by him, they would have continued to keep up ſuch a ridiculous and ill grounded Conceit. If he had really by his Tyrannical Authority forced the *Iſraelites* into a compliance to his Laws during his Life, why did they not aſſoon as he was dead, with the fear of his Authority ſhake off the yoak of his Laws, and all reſpect for his memory.

One thing we may remark as very ſurprizing in the Relation of that Legiſlator's Death; which is

that his Body was not found after his Death.

For we do not see that that People, which otherwise kept up and carried about with so much care, the Bones of *Joseph* and his Brethren, in order to Bury, and Deposite them in the Sepulchres of their Ancestors (for both *Joseph* and his Brethren were interred in *Judæa*) did ever build a Tomb to their Law-giver, or so much as pretend to shew his Sepulchre.

Josephus was of Opinion, that *Moses* wrote himself, the account of his own Death, for fear the *Jews* should ever imagine, and so give out that God had taken him up into Heaven. I see, I confess, no solidity in that Conjecture of his, but yet it may give us occasion to make a Reflection hereupon, I think, more natural and easie, which is, that God had a mind, as *Joshua* intimates it, to confirm the many Characters of Divinity that appeared in the Law of *Moses*, by taking away from before the eyes of the *Jews* his Corps, which they would certainly, if they had not been so prevented, have kept with more care than those of all their Patriarchs and Kings. The Description of the manner of *Moses*'s Death, shews evidently, that he was not only in great esteem during his Life, but that even his Death did much conduce to the increase of it, and to make Men look upon him, as one gloriously raised up above the common condition of Men, and in a manner not obnoxious to the Infirmities and Miseries incident to human nature. But after these general Reflexions, I must come to those that are more particular.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

That the truth of the Miracles related by Moses, *cannot reasonably be doubted of.*

WHoever will examine with attention, the four last Books of *Moses*, shall find in them several Passages recorded, which deserve a particular Consideration.

As First of all, the Miraculous Birth, the extraordinary Education, the Heroical Courage, and the Divine Call and Commission of *Moses*, and the several Miracles which he wrought in *Egypt*, to bring the *Israelites* out of it, and lead them to the Borders of *Canaan*.

Then Secondly, All the Moral, Ceremonial, and Political Laws which *Moses* gave to that People, from God.

And Lastly, *Moses* his Prophecies concerning their future Condition, their Victories, their Captivities, their Transportations, concerning the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, the coming of the *Messiah*, and the dispersion of their whole Nation.

All which Passages have as evident and authentick proofs of their certainty, as things of that nature are capable of.

Let us first begin with the Narration of the Miracles recorded in the beginning of *Exodus*.

Wherein we see, that after *Moses* had represented the Death of *Joseph*, and of all the generation,

ration that came down with *Jacob* into *Egypt*, he writes his own History, and represents himself as another *Noah*, saved out of the Waters, to save and deliver that Holy Family.

The whole Relation which he makes of all those particulars, is very strange, and extraordinary; but yet his Circumcision, and the instruction of his Mother, to whom he was given, by the Daughter of *Pharaoh* to be nurst up, and the Conversation of that Princess who had adopted him, and made her self a Proselyte as the *Jews* endeavour to prove, from 1 *Chron.* IV. 18. And his Education in the Court of *Egypt*, and his acquaintance with all the Grandees of that Court, did concur together to acquaint him with that remarkable preservation of his person, and perswade him of the certainty of it.

Talk. in h. l. *ex Vajikra Rab.*

For how could either *Moses* impose, or be imposed upon in that matter? Was not that Barbarous cruelty of the *Egyptians* by which they compell'd the *Jews* about the time of *Moses*'s Birth, to throw their Children into the River *Nilus*, notoriously known of all Men? Were not the Publick Buildings, and strong Cities, *viz. Pythom*, and *Rameses*, so call'd from the Name of King *Rameses Miamum*, standing in the sight of all Men? And was it not publickly known by all the World, that the poor *Israelites* were the Slaves and Drudges who were made use of to erect those Buildings.

Neither could the manner of his Education be unknown to him, nor yet to any of the *Hebrews*, for we do not join here to *Moses*'s Narration, what *Josephus* relates of his Person, of his Feats in *Meroe*, and of his Marrying an *Æthiopian* Princess, *&c.* As

As *Moses*'s Miracles were done in the presence of the *Egyptians* and *Jews*, so they testifie, that he had really received his Calling, and Commission from God in the Desert, and that just in the manner as he describes it himself.

Now, no Man can dispute the truth of those Miracles, if he but minds the following Considerations.

First, It cannot be denied, that the People of *Israel* was brought out of *Egypt* by *Moses*. Their Law, which the present *Jews* do still observe, speaks every where of that famous Action of his; there was never any Man disputed the certainty of that Atchievement. All ancient Authors make mention of it, *Manethon* gives an account of the time, of the manner, and of many other principal Circumstances of that Exploit.

Joseph. contra App. l. 1.

Trogus Pompeius, *Justinus*, and *Tacitus*, do also speak of it, only *Tacitus* does groundlesly, I suppose, of his own head, relate, that the *Jews* were expell'd out of *Egypt*, because of their Leprosie: I say groundlesly, for it is known, that on the contrary, Leprosie was a common Distemper amongst the *Egyptians*, and that they infected the *Israelites* with it, so that there is no likelihood they should be expelled by the *Egyptians* for a Distemper that they got from them.

We know besides, that the Law of *Moses* which calls the Leprosie the Distemper of *Egypt*, did banish the Lepers out of the Congregation of the People; and then the nature of *David*'s Curses against *Joab*, because of his murdering *Abner*, shews sufficiently, that the Leprosie was lookt upon by the *Jews*, as a Distemper most commonly sent imme-

immediately from God. Nay, *Trogus Pompeius* *Justin.l.36.* himself, obſerves that the Magicians cauſed *Moſes* with the People of *Iſrael* to be expell'd, becauſe they themſelves were ſtruck with a kind of Scab and Itch; and that they were afraid, leaſt the contagion of it ſhould infect the whole Kingdom of *Egypt*.

Euſeb. præp. Evang. l.9. c.8. And here I muſt not forget the mentioning the Teſtimony of *Numenius* a *Pythagorean* Philoſopher, who relates, that both *Jannes* and *Jambres* were choſen by the *Egyptians*, to oppoſe *Moſes*, and hinder the effects of his Miracles and Prayers, which had brought down many grievous Plagues upon *Egypt*, juſt about the time of the *Jews* Baniſhment out of that Country.

But Secondly, If the Leproſie, which the *Iſraelites* brought from *Egypt*, be a indiſputable proof of their ſojourning there; it is as certain, that the going out of that mixed multitude of *Egyptians*, who ſo far eſpous'd the *Iſraelites* Intereſt, as to leave and forſake *Egypt* their own Countrey to accompany them, could have no other cauſe or pretence than the Miracles of *Moſes*, whereof they had been Eye-witneſſes; ſo that the Poſterity of thoſe *Egyptians* that were thus incorporated into the Body of the People of *Iſrael*, were in after Ages, as ſo many Witneſſes of the truth of thoſe Miracles, which formerly perſwaded their Fathers to joyn with *Moſes*, and ſo to ſhare Fortune with the *Hebrews*.

Thirdly, It is certain, that the *Jews* could not ſo much as mention any of the Miracles, which they pretended were done formerly for the deliverance of their Fathers, without expoſing themſelves

ſelves to the ſcorn of all the World, if all thoſe Miracles, and their Deliverance, had not been certainly and generally known to the *Egyptians*, and to all the Neighbouring Nations, by whom they were often ſubdued and brought into ſubjection after the Deceaſe of *Moſes*, and *Joſhuah*.

To all theſe Reflexions we may add, that the Commemoration of the *Iſraelites* going out of *Egypt*, with all the Miracles wrought by *Moſes*, was renew'd yearly, not only by the ſolemnizing the Feaſt of the Paſſover, which the *Iſraelites* did conſtantly keep to the time of their diſperſion, and which they do ſtill keep in all parts of the World, but alſo by two other very ſenſible ways.

The firſt whereof, was the Separation which God made of the Tribe of *Levi*, in order to Conſecrate it to his Service, inſtead of the firſt-born of the People of *Iſrael*, whom he had ſpared, and preſerved in *Egypt*, with great Solemnity, in regard both of Men and Beaſts, as we read, *Numb.* III. ſo that every *Levite* was as a living Memorial of that great Miracle, wrought at the *Iſraelites* going forth out of *Egypt*.

And the Second was the Law concerning the Redemption of every Firſt-born, both of Men, and Unclean Beaſts; which is obſerved to this hour amongſt the *Jews*: It is clear, and evident, that there is in all thoſe Laws, a deep impreſſion of thoſe ſeveral great Miracles which compell'd *Pharaoh* to let the *Iſraelites* go. *Numb.* XVIII. 16.

Laſtly, It is very obſervable here, that the Memory of the deliverance of *Iſrael* out of *Egypt*, wrought, as by many Miracles, ſo eſpecially by the death of all the Firſt-born of *Egypt*, which

was

was the occasion of the Institution of the Passover continued amongst the *Egyptians* till after Jesus Christ: For till then they used to mark with red their Sheep, their Trees, their Houses, and Lands, the day before the Passover, as one may see in *Epiphanius*; which Custom could proceed from no other cause, than from the *Egyptians* fear of the like Plague and Mortality, that was once inflicted upon their Forefathers; and from their hope of preventing it by such a kind of Talisman, whereby they thought *Moses* had formerly saved the *Israelites* harmless from that great Plague, only by sprinkling the Blood of the Lamb of the Passover, on the upper Door post of their Houses.

CHAP. IV.

A Continuation of the Proofs of the truth of the Miracles wrought by Moses.

THese Arguments might be thought sufficient for the evincing the truth of these Miracles which *Moses* relates; but yet something more may be added.

As those Stupendious Miracles, by which the famous deliverance of the *Israelites* was effected, could not be doubted of, by those who had been eye-witnesses of them; so they were afterwards confirmed by several other Miracles, which being as great,

great, and almost of the same kind, continued for many years in the sight of the whole People of *Israel*.

God made a Pillar of Fire, and of a Cloud, attend upon the *Israelites*, to guide them, the one by Day, and the other by Night. He divided the Red Sea to open a passage through it for his People, the Memory whereof (saith *Eusebius*) was preserved to his time, by those of *Memphis*: The *Israelites* took the Spoils of the *Egyptians* drown'd in the Red Sea, as they were pursuing them: They made a Song upon the occasion of that wonderful Deliverance; they were fed with *Manna*, a kind of heavenly, and miraculous Food; they drunk of that Brook of Water, that was following them wherever they went: All those Miracles, with many others, continued for forty years together without any Interruption, and do therefore firmly establish the truth of those other Miracles which *Moses* relates, because there were none of them wherein the people could be imposed upon by any trick or illusion, and of the truth whereof every one could not satisfie himself, by his own experience. L. 9. *præp. Ev. cap. ult.*

I do not speak now of several publick Monuments of those Miracles; as for Example, the Rod of *Aaron* which blossom'd in a Night; the Manna which was kept in the Tabernacle. The Brazen Serpent, which having continued to *Hezekiah*'s time, was broken down by him, only because the People offered Incense to it.

From all which it must be acknowledged, that there was in the whole Series of the *Jewish* History both many pregnant Evidences of the truth of the

the first Miracles, and a constant Series of Miracles which having been foretold by *Moses*, did the better confirm the truth of those which he relates as done by him on purpose to vindicate, and defend the Liberty, and Honour of the people of *Israel*.

Because I did just now intimate, that the Memory of the *Jewish* Deliverance, did continue for many Ages after amongst the *Egyptians*: I think my self obliged to add here, some Arguments to prove, that neither such a Transaction as that was, nor yet any of the like nature and importance, could ever be forgotten in the Land of *Canaan*.

There is nothing that in outward appearance seems more ridiculous, than what is related concerning the *Gibeonites* coming to *Joshuah*'s Camp; their Equipage shew'd that they had a mind to perswade the *Israelites* that they came from a far Countrey. The Treaty which they extorted from *Joshuah* by fraud, is very singular.

And there can be nothing more remarkable, than their subsistence amongst the people of *Israel*, notwithstanding that they were of the number of those Nations, which God had commanded to be destroy'd; and their being destined by *Joshuah*'s appointment, to carry the Wood and the Water, necessary for the service of the Tabernacle, from whence they were denominated *Nethinims*, and thereby for ever after distinguish'd from the *Israelites*.

But after all, there could be nothing more agreeable to God's Wisdom, than the preservation of that people amongst the *Israelites*. Their Fathers

thers were the Witnesses of *Moses* and *Joshuah*'s Miracles. Those Miracles obliged them to seek the alliance of the *Hebrews*, and to cheat them into it by a fraudulent Treaty, because they despaired of compassing their design by any other means. Therefore their subsisting amongst the *Jews*, and their Servile Office which exposed them to the eyes of the whole Nation, could not chuse but be of an extraordinary use, to make that people preserve, and cherish up the Memory of those Glorious Actions, which every *Gibeonite* had perpetually before his Eyes.

The same Remark may be made upon the continuing of *Rahab*'s Family amongst the *Israelites*, after the Destruction of *Jericho*.

It is certain, that the *Jews* have always believed, that besides those first Miracles related by *Moses*, many others have been done since for their sakes, both to possess them of the Land of *Canaan*, and to keep or restore them to the possession of it; nay, of those latter Miracles many are very like unto the former: As for Example, the Death of 185000 Men in the Army of *Sennacherib*; the returning of the Shadow backwards ten degrees upon the Sundial of *Ahaz*; the wonderful preservation of the whole Nation, by the means of *Esther*, which was the occasion of the Institution of the Feast of *Purim* amongst them, and several other Miraculous Transactions related in the *Jewish* Authors, of which I will only name three, which did preserve the Memory of the greatest, and most important Miracles related by *Moses*.

The first is the continual Miracle of the *Urim*

and *Thummim* of the High-Priest, which by its frequency, did confirm the truth of *Moses*'s Relation, concerning the several Apparitions of God, in order to lead his people, and to give them Laws.

Levit. XXV. The Second is the Miracle of every seventh year, during which, though the People of *Israel* did neither Sow nor Reap, God, according to his Promise, did supply them with plenty of Provisions, by making every sixth year extraordinarily plentiful. Now this Miracle was a kind of a Memorial of that other great Miracle, whereby God did feed his People with Manna, for forty years together in the Desart, still doubling the proportion of Manna every sixth day.

In effect, as that Law which commanded a Sabbath of rest unto the Land every seventh year, was constantly observed, which would never have been done long, if that people had not always been fully convinced by their own experience of its Divinity.

And again, as that Miracle was so publickly known, that God by his Prophets did often threaten the *Jews* to deprive them of the fertility of the sixth year, because of their transgressing the Sabbath.

So it is plain, that no Man can reasonably doubt, or dispute the truth of that continual Miracle, which that Law both supposeth and promiseth.

The Third is the Miracle of a continual protection during the time of those three great solemn Feasts, in which the people were obliged by God's Command to attend his Service in the Tabernacle, or

or at *Jerusalem*. For this Law requiring attendance from all the *Jews* of the Age of Twenty and upwards, it engaged them to leave the Frontiers of their Countrey naked, and destitute of Men, and so exposed to the Inroads of their Enemies; but at the same time it gave them occasion to experience the same Divine Protection, which, as they read in *Moses*'s Writings, their Fathers had formerly so often experienced against all their Enemies.

It is certain, that there was never any Common-wealth in the World, which had any such Fundamental Law; the danger to which a Countrey is exposed by the Observation of it is too visible not to be avoided. Therefore the *Jews* to be sure, would never have acknowledged that Law to be Divine, nor yet submitted to it, if they had not been secure of God's Protection to prevent all the Mischiefs, and Inconveniences that might arise from their Observation of that Law; so that suppose they had been at first so stupid and unwary as to receive it from *Moses*, yet they would never have observed it so constantly and so long, if they had not had a constant Trial of God's Protection on all occasions; and if they had not lookt upon it as a necessary Consequence, and Accomplishment of those Promises, which he had made both to them and their Fathers.

However, it is certain, that it was the Will of God, that the *Jews* should altogether rely upon that Miraculous Protection of his: Nay, the distrusting of it, was so offensive to him, that he inflicted an Exemplary Punishment upon *David*, for an Action, which though innocent of it self in a

Prince, did yet directly contradict that Truſt which the *Iſraelites* were bound to ſet upon God's Protection. For when *David* cauſed the People to be numbred, God ſent a Peſtilence amongſt his people, which abated his pride, and thus taught him effectually to rely more upon God for the future, than upon the Multitude of his people.

CHAP. V.

That Moſes's *Deſcription of the manner of God's giving him his Laws, is evidently true.*

IT is alſo equally eaſie to ſhew the truth of *Moſes*'s Deſcription of the manner of the promulgation of God's Law in the Deſert, and of the ſeveral parts of it, Moral, Political, Ceremonial.

I ſhall not ſtand to conſider here the Admirable Equity, and moſt abſolute perfection of the Moral Law, and ſhew that it could have no other Author but God alone: Neither will I urge in this place, the extraordinary care God had to regulate the moſt Minute Ceremonies, that there might be nothing left undetermined in all the Acts of Religion; as alſo the great, and Divine Wiſdom that is diſcernible in all thoſe Ceremonial Laws, which beſides their uſeful oppoſition, to the then *Pagan* Cuſtoms, do moſt of them, either mind Men of their Duty, or repreſent and typifie the things that were to come to paſs under the Goſpel.

In

In ſhort, I will not aggravate any farther the Conſideration of the Admirable Wiſdom that appears every where in the whole Body of the Political Laws which God gave to the *Jews* to ſettle them into a firm and ſolid Form of Government; that Wiſdom is ſuch, and ſo viſible, that it plainly demonſtrates the Divinity of them to any Man that will but compare the whole Body of them, and their abſolute perfection, with the Defects of all Human Laws, and the ſeveral Changes and Alterations they have received from time to time.

But I ſhall lay aſide theſe Remarks, and chuſe to come to thoſe that do not require ſo much Learning, nor ſo great an intention of thought.

The Firſt of which is, That the Moral Law was given in the ſight and hearing of all the people of *Iſrael*, and that the promulgation of it upon Mount *Sinai*, was accompanied with extraordinary marks of Glory, and made only after many previous Purifications preſcribed to the whole Congregation in order to receive it.

It is true indeed, the Ceremonial Laws which were annexed to it, were not delivered to the people with ſo much Pomp and Majeſty; but as they were alſo given in the ſame Deſert, and in the preſence of the Elders of the people aſſembled together near the Tabernacle, after they had earneſtly intreated *Moſes*, that God would no more ſpeak to them himſelf, it is evident, that they are no leſs authentick than the Moral Law, therefore we ſee that they were accordingly received by that people, notwithſtanding the Troubles, Expences, Avocations, Straights, and Hardſhips, which

they might meet with by it.

Now is it in the leaſt probable, that if this people had not been convinced, that *Moſes* did really familiarly converſe with God for forty days and forty Nights upon Mount *Sinai*, they would fooliſhly without any cauſe, of a ſuddain, have ſubmitted to ſuch a troubleſom yoke of Laws, many whereof were oppoſite both to their Opinions and Ancient Cuſtoms.

It is well known for Example, what Jealouſie there was all along amongſt the Tribes of *Iſrael*, even from the time of their Anceſtors, yet we do not ſee that in thoſe Laws there is any notice taken of it, or regard had to it, but that on the contrary they ſeem to foment that Spirit of Diviſion, when they deprive *Reuben* of his Birthright, in favour of *Joſeph*'s Poſterity, and of the Prieſthood in favour of *Levi*, and of the Kingdom, in favour of *Juda*.

Nay, we ſee, that even after *Moſes* had compoſed the difference that was once betwixt the Tribe of *Levi*, and the followers of *Corah*, *Dathan*, and *Abiram*, they were hardly brought to acquieſce to his Deciſion; and how could he then poſſibly have raiſed his own Tribe, the Tribe of *Levi*, to ſuch prerogatives, and to ſuch a plentiful Condition above all the other Tribes, as he did by aſſigning the firſt Fruits and Offerings to the Levites and Prieſts. How could he, I ſay, have done that without meeting with ſome oppoſition from the reſt of the People, except they had all been convinced by the Miracle that God wrought to decide that Queſtion, when it was diſputed, that he himſelf was the Author of that Conſtitution.

Thus

Thus we read, that long after, when King *Uzziah* boldly preſumed, to act againſt *Moſes*'s Law, *Numb.* XXV. and to aſſume to himſelf the Dignity of Prieſthood, and to do the Functions of it; he preſently received the puniſhment due to his preſumption: So that being ſtruck with a ſuddain Leproſie, he was confined to his Dying Day. Is it any ways probable that a Prince, eſpecially of his Temper, would have ſubmitted to ſuch a Confinement, and meekly reſign'd his Crown to his Son, if that puniſhment inflicted upon him, had not fully convinced him of the Divinity of that Law, which he had tranſgreſſed and violated by his Temerity and Preſumption.

The Third Reflexion is, that the greateſt part of thoſe Laws being intended by God to inſpire his people with an Irreconcileable Averſion againſt all thoſe Nations, amongſt whom they were going to ſettle; they were ſo framed, as not only to be oppoſite to the Laws and Cuſtoms of *Egypt*, from whence they came, but alſo to thoſe received amongſt the *Hivites*, *Amorites*, and other Nations, of whoſe Countries they were going to poſſeſs themſelves.

Thus we find in the XVIII. of *Leviticus*, Laws againſt all Inceſtuous Marriages, which without doubt, were ordinary amongſt the *Canaanites*, and *Egyptians*, who therein follow'd the Examples of the Ancient Patriarchs, who Married within thoſe forbidden Degrees; there we find alſo the Sacrifices to *Moloch* forbidden, the practice whereof, thoſe Nations, in all likelihood, defended by the Example of *Abraham*'s Sacrifice.

Now it cannot reaſonably be thought, that a

whole Nation would of a ſuddain receive ſuch Laws as deprived them of a Liberty and Freedom they had always hitherto enjoyed, and condemn of their own accord, thoſe Sacrifices that had the faireſt pretence of Religion imaginable, and to uſe many Ceremonies contrary to thoſe received amongſt them, if they had not had a ſtrong, and extraordinary Motive for ſo doing.

There is another thing beſides, that challenges our Conſideration, *viz.* the exact Deſcription which God gave to *Moſes* of the Tabernacle, of the ſeveral parts of the Ceremonial Worſhip, which was to be performed in that Sacred place, and of the manner how this Tabernacle with all its Appurtenances, Utenſils, and Ornaments, was finiſhed.

For as this Tabernacle was then the Centre of the whole *Jewiſh* Religion, (as the Temple was afterwards by ſucceeding to it) ſo it was a ſolemn proof of the Divinity of *Moſes*'s Laws, and of the Worſhip that was performed there.

Is it conceivable, that a whole Nation ſhould contribute to the building of it, ſhould ſee it Conſecrated, and taken to pieces, and ſet together again every day, and ſhould read all the particulars relating to its Conſtruction, and not diſcern whether there was any truth and reality in all that was told them concerning the Religion which their Governour fixed in that place wherein he pretended many Revelations were made.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

Some other Proofs that confirm Moſes's *Deſcription of the manner how the Law was given and Promulgated,*

BUt if it is ſo eaſie to eſtabliſh the Divinity of the Law of *Moſes*, by ſhewing the truth of the Matter of Fact, according to the manner of God's Promulgation, as *Moſes* relates it, we may further collect the truth of it, by joyning theſe following Reflexions to thoſe already made in the foregoing Chapters.

Certainly if *Moſes* had been the firſt Founder of a Kingdom, and had been ſucceeded in it by his own Children and Poſterity for many Generations one after another; we might perhaps, have had ſome ground to ſuſpect, that his Succeſſors, conſulting their own Intereſt and Honour, would have been very glad to perſwade their Subjects, that the firſt Founder of their Kingdom, had ſome Communication with God, and that it was from him he received the Laws and Conſtitutions which he gave them concerning Civil and Religious Matters.

But it is obſervable, that *Moſes* was ſo far from inveſting his own Children with the Supream Authority after himſelf, that he Tranſlated it into another Tribe, and Conſtituted *Joſhuah* of the Tribe of *Ephraim* for his Succeſſor in the Government; as for his Poſterity he took little care of it,

but

but reduced it to a Rank inferiour to that of *Aaron*'s Family, which he preferr'd to the moſt honourable Functions of the Prieſthood; leaving to his own the meaneſt, and moſt inconſiderable Employments; all which ſhews evidently that none of thoſe who came after *Moſes* were moved by any private Intereſt of their own, to defend the Truth and Authority of his Laws and Writings, but only by the certain knowledge they had, that they were all Divine.

Neither ought we to omit to conſider here the manner how *Moſes* decides beforehand ſuch Queſtions, and determines ſuch Controverſies, as could not be raiſed, but after the Conqueſt of *Canaan*, which was made by his Succeſſor only after his Death. And how thoſe Laws were conſtantly obſerved in all the ſucceeding Generations of that people, and ſubmitted unto by the very Judges and Kings themſelves; tho there be nothing more common than for a Conqueror, ſuch as *Joſhua* was, to admit of no other Fundamental Laws in that State he is the Founder of, than thoſe which he is the Author of; nothing is more uſual, than for Stateſmen to affect the expoſing the Conduct of their Predeceſſors, eſpecially when the form of Government is altered, and from Democratical, or Ariſtocratical, is changed into Monarchical, as it happened amongſt the *Iſraelites*. How then could *Moſes*'s Laws ſtill keep up their Authority in all Changes and Revolutions? How comes it to paſs, that in all the Succeſſions of Judges and Kings, there was never any of them attempted to ſuſpend, or annul *Moſes*'s Laws, much leſs to enact and give any others contrary to them?

Again,

Again, how came it to paſs, that in all the Diviſions and Factions that Nation fell into, there was never any *Jew*, endeavour'd with any ſucceſs, to undeceive the reſt of his own people, ſo as to make them ſhake off the troubleſom Yoke of *Moſes*'s Laws. No doubt only, becauſe the generality of that Nation never diſputed the Divine Origin and Authority of them.

It were an eaſie thing to demonſtrate by the whole Series, of the *Jewiſh* Hiſtory, that all thoſe Laws which in *Moſes*'s Writings are inlay'd one within another, and repreſented as occaſion'd by ſeveral Tranſactions related there, have all been equally received of the *Jews*, and have all been put together in a Body by themſelves before *Moſes*'s Death, as it may be proved out of the XXXI. of *Deuteronomy*.

It appears, that thoſe Laws were publick, and in great eſteem amongſt that People, to whom God gave them, upon whom he laid an indiſpenſable Obligation to read them every day, and to conſult them upon every emergent buſineſs.

It appears, that they were known equally of all degrees of Men, Sexes, and Ages, which were all obliged to pay Obedience to them upon pain of Death.

It appears, that thoſe Laws were not only publickly kept in the Tabernacle, but alſo privately read in every Family.

We ſee, that a whole Tribe, *viz.* the Tribe of *Levi* was appointed by God to explain them, and in order to that they were diſperſed throughout the whole Land of *Canaan*, and exempted from the Cares and Troubles that neceſſarily attend

tend Husbandry, by the plentiful Proviſion of Tithes and Offerings that was allotted to them.

We ſee that God obliged all *Jews* to read and meditate upon them continually, eſpecially every Sabbath day.

Nay, and we ſee moreover, that God every Seventh Year would have them read publickly in a more ſolemn manner, before the whole Congregation of that people, who during that Year, were obliged to reſt from all their ordinary Labours and Employments, and ſo had nothing elſe to do all that while, but to read the Law, to examine it, and to meditate upon it.

Laſtly, It appears, that thoſe Laws were yet the more Solemn and Authentick, becauſe they obliged the *Jews* to celebrate three ſuch Feaſts as were to be publickly kept by the whole Nation, and conſequently apt to refreſh their Memories, and put them in mind, thrice a year, not only of the ſurprizing Miracles that God had done for them; but alſo of the manner how he gave and promulgated his Laws; the Miracles giving riſe to the Laws, and thoſe Laws being themſelves a means of preſerving the Memory of thoſe Miracles, becauſe of the frequent Commemoration of them which was therein enjoyned.

Now theſe things being ſo, let every one judge, whether the truth of *Moſes*'s Account of God's giving, and promulgating by his means that Body of Laws which he hath inſerted in *Exodus*, and the following Books, can poſſibly, or at leaſt, reaſonably be diſputed, or doubted of. But I come now to conſider the Oracles recorded in *Moſes*'s Writings in order to demonſtrate the Truth and Divinity of them.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

That there is no juſt Exception can be made againſt Moſes's *Hiſtory, in what relates to the Oracles, which he hath recorded in his Books.*

THere are ſeveral ſorts of Oracles in *Exodus*, and the other three following Books.

Firſt, There are ſome whereof the accompliſhment did ſoon follow the Prediction.

The Deliverance of the *Jews* out of the *Egyptian* Bondage is of that number; *Moſes* does promiſe and foretel it; nay, and he executed it himſelf: And all the people to whom it was promiſed and foretold, were themſelves Witneſſes of the accompliſhment of that Propheſie; and it was that accompliſhment which eſtabliſhed the Divinity of his Commiſſion.

So is the other Propheſie concerning the Conqueſt of the Land of *Canaan*, and the ſeveral Diviſions that were to be made of it amongſt all the Tribes of *Iſrael*, *Moſes* foretelling exactly what Lot every one ſhould have, and giving beſides, a Deſcription of the Countrey that every Tribe was to inhabit.

Thoſe that were Born in the Deſert, were Witneſſes both of the Prediction, and the Execution of it, altho it was by the caſting of Lots, that all the Tribes got their ſeveral Partitions.

But Secondly, There are ſome other Oracles in

Moſes's

Moſes's Books, the accompliſhment whereof was not to follow the Prediction till after a long interval of time.

Such are the Propheſies that foretel the future Subjection of the *Iſraelites* to the *Canaanites*, and the ſeveral Deliverances out of that Subjection, which God was to effect by the hands of *Judges*, whom he was to raiſe up for that purpoſe.

Such again are the Propheſies which relate to the future change of their Common wealth into a Kingly Government.

Thirdly and Laſtly, We ſee that *Moſes* foretells all the Accidents, Changes, and Revolutions that were to befal the *Jews* as long as their State ſhould ſtand: At leaſt, we ſee that his Predictions are very plain, concerning their ſeveral Captivities, and Removals, and their return into the Holy Land; as alſo the Sieges of *Samaria* and *Jeruſalem*; and the irrecoverable diſperſion of the whole Nation, which we ſee at preſent.

But whatever difference there may otherwiſe be, betwixt all theſe Predictions, we may ſay, that every one of them, hath as pregnant Proofs of its certainty and truth, as any thing of that nature is capable of.

For Firſt, As to the firſt ſort of Predictions, the accompliſhment whereof, *Moſes* relates himſelf,

It plainly appears, that his account, cannot in the leaſt be ſuſpected of Impoſture; becauſe he wrote it amongſt a whole Nation, which could not poſſibly be impoſed upon in that caſe, ſeeing he ſuppoſes, and takes it for granted, all along in his Relation, that thoſe Predictions were beforehand

hand publickly and generally known of all the people.

As for the accompliſhment of the ſecond ſort of Propheſies, we have the Relation of it in ſuch other Books as were written after *Moſes*'s Death, as in the Books of *Joſhua*, of *Judges*, and ſeveral others, which relate the accompliſhment of them, as of Propheſies written many years, and even ſome Ages before, by *Moſes*.

Beſides, to this we may add, that the account which we find in thoſe Books, concerning the accompliſhment of *Moſes*'s Propheſies, is interwoven with ſuch Hiſtories, as ſuppoſe, without any Affectation, that his Propheſies, as well as his Writings, were in the hands of all the World, and diſtinctly known by every *Jew*.

And what is further obſervable, is, That the *Jews* have always had *Moſes*'s Books in ſuch an Eſteem, becauſe of theſe ſeveral Illuſtrious Propheſies that are contained in them, that they have always lookt upon him as the moſt excellent of all their Prophets. They aſſert at this very day, that the other Prophets had commonly no other knowledge of future Events, than that which was communicated to them by Dreams and Viſions; whereas *Moſes* had it by an immediate Revelation of God himſelf, who uſed to ſpeak to him Face to Face, without any Enthuſiaſm when he was perfectly awake.

Now, how could ever the *Jews* have been ſo ſtrongly prepoſſeſt of that high Opinion both of *Moſes*, and his Predictions, if we ſuppoſe, that they never ſaw the accompliſhment of any of them?

That

That would certainly be as ſtrange an Illuſion as ever was: For it is beſides obſervable, that thoſe Propheſies of his, were not written by themſelves and kept ſecret from the generality of the people; but that they were inſerted into the ſeveral Speeches which he made to all the people ſome time before his Death; and which are written, and kept together in the ſame Volume, to be a ſtanding Monument, both of his Prophecies, and of his Miniſtry among the *Jews*.

Now there is a vaſt Difference betwixt a Book that is all made up of Propheſies, and ſo kept ſecret, and ſeldom read, as the Books of the Sybils were; and a Book wherein the Propheſies it contains, are interwoven with a Hiſtory, wherein there is ſo great a variety of Matters, as draws to it, and fixes the attention of every Reader; and wherein they are mingled with a whole Body of Political and Ceremonial Laws; and intermixed with the accounts which *Moſes* gives of all the great Tranſactions which gave the occaſion to ſo many ſeveral Revelations and Propheſies recorded in his Books.

I am perſwaded, that it is impoſſible for any Man to make thoſe Reflexions upon the Opinion which the *Jews* entertained of *Moſes*'s Prerogative, and upon the manner that his Propheſies, ſo much reverenced amongſt them, were exactly accompliſhed, and not be convinced of their Divine Authority.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

That the Teſtimony of the Jews, *is a conſtant proof of the truth of the Oracles related by* Moſes.

BUt leaſt any Body ſhould think it ſtrange, that I ſhould build the truth of *Moſes*'s Propheſies, upon the Teſtimony of the *Jews*, I will reſtrain its authority of it within juſt, and certain Bounds.

Firſt, Although the *Jews* bear Witneſs in their Sacred Books, that the greateſt part of *Moſes*'s Propheſies are already fulfill'd, yet they ſay ſome are not: As for inſtance thoſe which relate to the Meſſiah's coming. But their obſtinate blindneſs, is not a juſt prejudice againſt ſuch an important truth, to be convinced of which, we need only to compare *Moſes*'s Words, with the Actions of Jeſus Chriſt.

Thus for what relates to the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, we need only compare *Moſes*'s Propheſie of it, with the Deſcription *Joſephus* their own Hiſtorian, hath made of the ſame in his Hiſtory of the Siege and ruine of that City, and of the diſſipation of all the Nations of the *Jews*.

But without the *Jews* Teſtimony, in what regards the accompliſhment of thoſe Propheſies, whereof the execution was deferred for a very long time, it is eaſie to convince any the moſt Incredulous Man of their Truth and Divinity, if

he pleaſe but to make this one Reflexion, which is, that when *Moſes* relates amongſt the Oracles of the Patriarch *Jacob*, a particular Propheſie concerning the Meſſiah's coming, and when he mentions that of *Balaam* concerning the riſing of that Divine Star, he ſubjoins alſo at the ſame time that concerning the Vocation of the Gentiles to the Faith, and brings it in as a certain ſign and conſequence of the Meſſiah's being come into the World.

Now if we examine the meaning of *Moſes*'s Predictions, about the Vocation of the Gentiles, which the Prophets that came after him did better explain and illuſtrate, we ſhall be apt from thence to conclude, that he in effect foretold, that God in the days of the Meſſiah would follow quite another Method, than that which he had uſed before until the time of *Moſes*, *viz.*

That whereas God might ſeem to reſtrain then the Priviledge of his Covenant, to one people alone; which was in effect to reſtrain the honour of the Meſſiah's Birth, to one ſole Nation of the World, to one ſole Tribe of that Nation, to one ſole Family of that Tribe, to one ſole Branch of that Family, and ſo to one ſole perſon of that Branch: He would (after the Meſſiah's coming) take a contrary Method, and call all men to Salvation in him.

Now that being ſuppoſed, the truth of all *Moſes*'s Propheſies cannot be queſtion'd. And whatever the *Jews* Opinion be concerning the accompliſhment of ſome of them: It is ſufficient for us, that they have carefully and faithfully preſerved the Books, wherein thoſe Prophecies, which we ſee ſo exactly fulfilled, are contained. For

For, we cannot reaſonably ſuſpect *Moſes*, or any other *Jew* of forging the Propheſies which foretold the calling of the Gentiles, not *Moſes*, ſeeing all his Laws do tend (as I ſhall ſhew hereafter more at large) to eſtabliſh that reſtriction, I was juſt now ſpeaking of, which was to continue to the Meſſiah's coming. Not the *Jews*, ſeeing that none of them can ſtill endure to hear of the removal of that Reſtriction, by the calling of the Gentiles; and that they are all poſſeſt with ſuch a Spirit of Envy and Jealouſie againſt all other Nations, that they perfectly hate and abominate them. But beſides, we cannot deſire a better, nor a more authentick accompliſhment of thoſe Oracles, which are ſo oppoſite to the *Jewiſh* Principles and Prejudices, than that which we our ſelves are Witneſſes of.

The ſame Reflexion belongs to the other Propheſies of *Moſes* concerning the total Diſſipation of the *Jewiſh* State; as alſo to the dreadful accompliſhment of them in our days. The moſt reſolved Obſtinacy can ſuggeſt but one Objection in this matter, which is, that either the Chriſtians, or the Jews have falſified *Moſes*'s Writings, and inſerted thoſe Propheſies, which we now find there, concerning the Vocation of the Gentiles, and the diſperſion of the *Jews*, after thoſe things were come to paſs.

But Firſt, The Books of *Moſes*, which both Chriſtians and Jews have, are Written in Hebrew, and penn'd in ſuch a Stile as evidences their Antiquity, and as would be inimitable now.

Secondly, That theſe Books have been all Tranſlated

ſlated into Greek, almoſt 300 years before Jeſus Chriſt, and about 350 years before the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*. Neither the *Jews*, nor yet the Chriſtians were any longer ſole Maſters of them, when the Heathens had them alſo in their hands.

Beſides, thoſe who were Converted to Chriſtianity from Judaiſm and Heatheniſm, did not only find theſe Propheſies of *Moſes* in the hands of *Jews* and Heathens, long before the Converſion of the Gentiles, and the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, but did alſo make uſe of them to evince againſt the *Jews*, that the Meſſiah was already come.

Thus, I think, I have ſufficiently demonſtrated the Truth and Divinity of all *Moſes*'s Propheſies which we find in *Exodus* and the following Books.

CHAP. IX.

That it appears by the nature of his Relations, that Moſes *had the Meſſias in view when he wrote the Book of* Geneſis.

I Have ſhew'd in my former Reflexions upon *Geneſis*, that thoſe who lived before *Moſes*'s time, had a diſtinct knowledge that God would certainly raiſe up a Deliverer amongſt them, although they were not certain of the manner of his appearance. And I have beſides, I think, ſufficiently proved, that the various Idea's which the Ancients entertained of him upon the firſt Promiſe made by God of his coming, were the occaſion of ſeveral Criminal Actions committed by the Patriarchs, and by thoſe of other Nations, who had the ſame pretenſions with them.

I am now to prove that *Moſes* himſelf had the ſame knowledge, and lived in the ſame expectation with the Ancients that preceded him. It is of more importance to be ſhewn, and that henceforth no Body may wonder, if I pretend that the greateſt part of the Laws he gave to the *Jews*, both in reference to Civil and Religious Matters, and the greateſt part of his Propheſies, as alſo thoſe others mentioned by Prophets that lived after him in that *Jewiſh* Common-wealth, do all ſuppoſe a diſtinct relation to the promiſed Meſſiah.

And to make this evident, I beg leave to offer to the Reader's Conſideration ſome general Reflexions upon *Moſes*'s Hiſtory in *Geneſis*.

Firſt, It cannot be denied that *Moſes* was one of the greateſt and wiſeſt Hiſtorians that ever was: There cannot be a greater deſign, nor a more difficult Task than his was to write the Hiſtory of 2400 years: He gives an account of the Creation of the World in general; and in particular, of that of Man, of his ſin, of the Promiſe God made him after the Fall, of the Flood, of the Original of all the Nations that were in his time.

His way and manner of Writing is alſo very extraordinary: The Majeſty of his Stile is tempered with an admirable plainneſs; he deſcribes all ſorts of Paſſions to the Life; he is admirable in his Characters of the Men he ſpeaks of, and of God him-

himſelf. To be convinced of this, let any Man read his Deſcription of *Abraham*'s Sacrifice, and of the ſeveral Paſſions *Joſeph* and his Brethren were moved and affected with, when he made himſelf known to them. Beſides all that we may obſerve two very ſurprizing things in the Book of *Geneſis*.

The Firſt is, That *Moſes* recites there ſuch things as ſeem to be unworthy to be taken notice of, by ſo Grave and Wiſe a Hiſtorian as he was: He gives for inſtance, an exact and particular account of all the Circumſtances of *Abraham*'s Purchaſe of the Cave of *Machpela*, for a Burying place for his Wife: He ſets down all the particulars of the Inceſt of *Judah* with *Thamar*; and he relates the manner how *Leah* with her Sons Mandrakes obtained leave of *Rachel* to enjoy her Husband for one Night, with a ſurprizing exactneſs.

The other is, that *Moſes* records a whole Series of horrible Crimes, which ſeem to be as ſo many blemiſhes and odious Reflexions upon the Memory of thoſe whoſe Hiſtory he writes.

Now it is not reaſonable to ſuppoſe that *Moſes* being ſo prudent, as he is confeſſed to be, could have been ſo injudicious, as to chuſe and pick out ſuch Paſſages and Actions as are in themſelves either trivial and of no moment, or horrible and odious, to fill up with them a Book wherein he gives a Deſcription of the Creation of the World, where he ſets down the Oracles of God at every turn.

It is natural therefore to judge, that he had ſome particular proſpect in his Eyes, which could be no other than that of the *Promiſe*, which alone juſti-

juſtifies his recital of trivial things, and of Crimes in ſuch a ſerious Hiſtory as his is.

I ſhall not repeat here what I have already obſerved upon the Crimes which he relates in *Geneſis*; I add only, that he had the ſame deſign and proſpect in his Narration of ſuch ſmall and inconſiderable Tranſactions.

Thus by his account of the purchaſe of the Cave of *Machpelah*, his intention was to ſhew how God intended by this Sepulchre, to affix *Abraham* and his Poſterity after him to the Land of *Cannaan*: his Scope and Proſpect was the ſame when he records the Burial of *Rachel* at *Ephrathah*.

As for the Crimes *Moſes* relates, I have before proved, that he deſign'd thereby to ſhew, how all the Faithful before his time, had their minds altogether taken up with the thoughts and hopes of the accompliſhment of the Promiſe: And herein we may ſay, the Wiſdom of *Moſes* is very conſpicuous and diſcernable in the choice he made of thoſe Actions to perpetuate the Memory of the exceſſive deſire which the Ancients had to accompliſh the Promiſe.

And let no Man object here, that it is very ſtrange to ſee, that during ſo many Ages, the Promiſe of the Meſſiah occaſioned no other than wicked actions. For as it appears by all Circumſtances, that thoſe Crimes related by *Moſes*, were committed in different times, and long after one another, ſo it is plain, that he hath recorded thoſe Actions on purpoſe, to ſhew what impreſſion the true knowledge of the Promiſe of the Meſſiah made upon the mind of thoſe that had it in its perfection and integrity.

If *Moſes* had inſerted in this Book of *Geneſis*, any long Diſcourſe as made by *Adam* about that matter upon a Sabbath day, or if he had given us a Relation of what ſuch an one as *Seth*, or *Enoch*, or *Sem* uſed to teach concerning that Promiſe in their Religious Aſſemblies.

It is certain, That beſides the inconvenience of a tedious Repetition which he muſt have made of the ſame things in every particular account he gives of the ſeveral Generations that preceded him, he could never have perſwaded his Readers ſo well as he may do now.

Firſt, Men would have been apt to ſuſpect, that thoſe Speeches upon the Promiſe of the Meſſiah, were of his own making, and like thoſe Set Harangues we find in *Xenophon*, or *Livy*.

Secondly, The Crimes that were committed, to get thereby ſome advantage: As for Inſtance, The Murder of a King committed by his Heir, and Succeſſor to the Crown, ſhews in the Murder a much greater Ambition, and Affectation of the Throne; and ſuppoſes in him a diſtinct and clear knowledge of his Rights and Pretenſions to the Empire.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

That the ſame Perſwaſion appears throughout the whole Conduct of Moſes, *until his Death.*

BUt it is not only by thoſe and the like Reflexions which may be made upon the choice, *Moſes* hath made of the things which he recites, that we may gather that he had always the Promiſe of the Meſſiah in view; for he being deſcended from *Abraham*, there is no doubt, but that from his Youth up, he was brought up in the Religion, and conſequently in the hopes of that Patriarch.

But moreover we have reaſon to think, that the Idea of this Promiſe of the Meſſiah, was much more lively and ſtrong in that Family, ever ſince *Jacob* on his Death-Bed had foretold, and promiſed to *Judah*, that it was out of his Tribe he was to be Born: As for *Joſeph*, to whom that Promiſe might have been applied by the Children of *Iſrael*, becauſe of his Power and Glory in *Egypt*; the *Egyptian* Perſecution that followed ſometime after his Deceaſe, reſolved all Scruples and Miſtakes that might otherwiſe have been entertained in that matter, and ſo convinced all thoſe poor Sufferers, that their Meſſiah was as yet to come.

To

To all these strong Presumptions whereby we may guess, what the thoughts of *Moses* might be, concerning the Promise of the Messiah, we may add the Consideration both of his Words and Actions, which do very plainly establish the same Truth.

Heb. XI. St. *Paul* in his Epistle to the *Hebrews*, mentions two particular Actions of *Moses*, which, as they challenge our Admiration, so they deserve our serious Consideration, because they clearly, I think, evidence, That *Moses* was fully perswaded of the future accomplishment of that Promise.

The First is, That 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, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater Riches than the Treasures in *Egypt*, for he had respect unto the recompense of the Reward. From whence could a Resolution so opposite to the ordinary prudence, and natural inclinations of other Men proceed in him, if it was not, as St. *Paul* observes it, from a very extraordinary Source, *viz.* from that strong Perswasion which he had, that how calamitous soever the then present condition of the people of God might be, yet God had chosen it therein to accompliish that great promise which was the Joy of all their Ancestors from *Adam* down to them, the remembrance whereof he renewed, by illustrating those Oracles which *Jacob* pronounced upon his Death-Bed.

The other is, That *Moses* always adhered to that Miserable people, and stood by them in all their Calamities and Pressures. 'Tis true, he left them,

them, and retired once into *Midian* to save his Life, and avoid the King's Indignation, but he returned to them into *Egypt* as soon as he had received his Commission from God, to deliver them out of their Misery and Bondage: Now he shew'd again, by so doing, that he had a certain knowledge of that great Promise of God made to that people, and a full assurance and perswasion of its future accompliishment.

Moses informs us indeed, how he refused at first the Commission God gave him to deliver his people from the *Egyptian* Slavery, and how he excused himself upon his own incapacity, and being unfit for so great an undertaking: But yet he makes at the same time so visible an Allusion to the Prophesie concerning the *Shiloh* (*i. e.* sent) *O my Lord*, (said he, to God) *send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send*, that he could hardly express and declare his mind about it more plainly.

But we shall be the better convinced of his allusion to the sending of the *Shiloh*; if we reflect upon *Moses*'s being of the Tribe of *Levi*, of which God had pronounced nothing concerning the future accompliishment of the Promise, he could not be ignorant of his being himself Excluded of that Priviledge, and that after all, what glory soever the Miraculous preservation, and Illustrious beginnings of his Life, might seem to pretend and promise to him, yet he could not expect to rise much higher than *Joseph* had done before him, altho he would reassume the former Post, to which his Adoption by *Pharaoh*'s Daughter had once raised him.

We

We see that *Moses* continued always of the same mind, and entertained still the same Notion, and hopes of the Promise of the Messiah, even after God had revealed to him, that the time of his appearing into the World, was not yet come: This, I say, we see by his Speech to the people of *Israel*, related in the XVIII. Chapter of *Deuteronomy*, *The Lord thy God* (saith he to them) *will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy Brethren, like unto me, unto him ye shall hearken*; he does not say a Priest, or a King, though the Messiah was to be both; but he saith, a Prophet to teach them not to mistake any of their Priests or Kings for the Messiah, but to expect and regard less in his person, the external honour of *Aaron*'s Family, and the worldly Grandeur of Kings, than the priviledge of Divine Inspiration, which was absolutely necessary to him as the Founder of the True Religion.

CHAP. XI.

That Balaam's *Prophesie, which* Moses *relates, is a further Argument of the same perswasion in him.*

AS we ought to shew that *Moses* had a very clear and distinct knowledge of this Promise; so I think it will not be amiss to make here a particular Reflexion upon what he relates *Numb.* XXIII.

The *Moabites* being descended from *Lot*'s eldest Daughter, it is very natural to conceive, that *Balac* their King was so desirous to have the *Israelites* cursed from God, and by one of his Prophets only because he design'd thereby to secure himself of the Divine Blessing; or which is the same thing, of the priviledge of the accomplishment of the Promise, to which he thought he had a just claim and pretension by his being one of *Lot*'s Posterity.

And this Observation upon *Balac*'s pretension and action, is the more just, and well grounded because the Notion of the Curse which he intended to have had pronounced against the *Israelites*, is directly opposite to the terms of the Promise which God made to *Abraham*, *in thy Seed shall all the Nations of the Earth be blessed*, which words, as I observed before, do import a direct opposition, to *Lot*'s pretension.

Now all this being supposed, one needs only consider the terms of the Propheſie spoken by *Balaam* in favour of *Jacob*, to see that *Moses* hath related it, only to shew,

First, That altho those Neighbouring Nations to *Judea* had degenerated, and corrupted themselves much by their Communication with *Ham*'s Posterity, yet they preserved a strong, though confused Notion of their Ancestors pretensions, and acted according to that prejudice of theirs in all Matters and Occurrences of great moment.

Secondly, That it might be an Authentick Determination of all the several Contests and pretensions,

sions, which had divided the Posterity of *Terah* until that time.

It is like a Definitive Sentence; first in favour of *Abraham* against the *Moabites*, and *Ammonites*, who were descended from *Lot:* Secondly, in favour of *Isaac*, against the pretension of the *Ismaelites*, descended from *Ismael*: Thirdly, In favour of *Jacob*, against the pretension of the *Edomites*, descended from *Esau*.

For when he foretels, that there shall come a Star out of *Jacob*; he decides the three forementioned Controversies. *Jacob* having been preferred to *Esau*, *Isaac* to *Ismael*, and *Abraham* to *Lot*. Now *Jacob* could not be preferr'd to the *Moabites*, but he must be so too to the *Ammonites*, *Ismaelites*, and *Edomites*.

This Propheſie, as any one may see, is absolutely necessary, because it resolves all the Questions and Controversies, which did excite so many Jealousies amongst all those Neighbouring Nations.

This Oracle of *Balaam* is yet the more remarkable, because, that notwithstanding it was pronounced at the entry into *Canaan*, the possessing and inhabiting of which Countrey was one of the chiefest Characters of the *Israelites* distinction from all other Nations, yet in it *Balaam* makes a very distinct mention of the future calling of the Gentiles to the Faith; he calls them the Children of *Seth*, to intimate that in the time of the Messiah, the restriction made and observed by God before that time, was then to cease, and that there should be no more distinction betwixt the *Jews* and Gentiles, who were all the Children of *Noah*, and all

all equally descended from *Seth* by him, because then all Nations were to be call'd to the Communion of the *Messiah*.

I know that some by the Children of *Seth* understand the Inhabitants of a certain Town in the Countrey of *Moab*, mentioned in the XV. of *Isaiah*, according to the Septuagint.

But the *Arabian* Interpreter of the *Samaritans*, brings very good Arguments to prove, that that place of Scripture is to be understood of the Messiah, and shews that he is call'd the head of the Children of *Seth*, because *Seth* was the head, and common Father of all Men since the Flood, and at the same time of all the faithful before the Flood; and that those words of *Genesis* IV. 26. *Then began Men to call upon the Name of the Lord*, relate to *Seth*, and not to *Enos*, as it is commonly believed. *Abu said. M.S.* in the *French* King's Library, Note 4. upon Gen. IV. 26.

Besides, this Propheſie by these words, *I shall see him, but not now. I shall behold him, but not nigh*, determines, that the Birth of the *Messiah* was not near, but was reserved for a further time.

Lastly, It is a very singular thing, that this Oracle should be represented to us, as coming out of the Mouth of a Prophet, who was chosen by God out of the Family of *Abraham*; because the Author of it decides these Important Questions and Differences, without any visible partiality, and without being byassed by the pretensions of his Birth.

Now there are three things in it which clearly prove, that it could not be unknown to *Moses*.

The First is, That immediately after this Propheſie, which was as publick and well known amongst

mongſt the *Moabites*, as any Propheſie could be; after the tedious preparation, and the many difficulties which *Balaam* made to come to *Balac*: After the many Ceremonies and Myſteries which he uſed upon that occaſion; and notwithſtanding the great and panick terror of the *Moabites*, at the approach of the *Iſraelites*: Nay, and notwithſtanding the expreſs Threats, and Ominous Propheſies of *Balaam* againſt that people; notwithſtanding all this, I ſay, we ſee the Daughters of *Moab* imitating the carnal prudence of *Lot*'s Daughters, and courting the alliance of the *Iſraelites*, as if they had had a mind to make themſelves amends that way, for the loſs and wrong they had ſuffered by the Sentence which *Balaam* pronounced in favour of *Iſrael*.

We ſee, I ſay, that *Moſes* immediately after he had related the Prophecies of *Balaam*, tells us, that the Daughters of *Moab* invited the People of *Iſrael* to the Sacrifices of their Gods, and that the People of *Iſrael* accepted of the invitation, and accordingly feaſted, and began then to defile themſelves with the Daughters of *Moab*.

Now, that ſuch a thing ſhould happen preſently after *Balaam* had uttered his Propheſie, ſhews evidently, that there was ſome Relation betwixt thoſe two Tranſactions. And this may be further made out, from the manner and nature of the puniſhment which God inflicted upon the *Iſraelites* for their Criminal Commerce with the *Moabites*, although the pretence of it might be grounded upon the deſign which the Daughters of *Moab* had formed according to the Principles of their Education, to ſhare in the accompliſhment of the Pro-

Promiſe, by their conceiving and getting Children by thoſe whom *Balaam*'s Propheſie had inveſted with the right and privilèdge of accompliſhing that Promiſe.

The Second is, That accordingly about two hundred years after *Moſes*, we ſee that *Ruth* the *Moabiteſs* left her own Country to ſettle and live at *Bethlehem*, and affected beſides to marry there again, one of the Tribe of *Judah*; no doubt becauſe ſhe had got in her own Country a certain knowledge of that famous Oracle, which afterwards made her eaſily yield to the Counſels, and receive Inſtructions both of her Mother in Law, and of her own Husband, who was of the Tribe of *Judah*, and no doubt, had the Books of *Moſes*, wherein were inſerted, both the Propheſie of *Jacob* in favour of *Judah*, and that of *Balaam*, in favour of the *Iſraelites* againſt the *Moabites*.

The Third is, That the *Jews* have now for ſeveral Ages conſtantly maintained, that *Simei*'s Curſes againſt *David*, which afterwards he called *Maledictionem peſſimam*, קללה נמרצת contained an upbraiding Reflexion as well upon the meanneſs of his Birth, as being deſcended from a *Moabiteſs*, as upon his Adultery, *&c.* This is related by St. *Jerome*, or ſome other ancient Author, who writ that Diſcourſe, *de Traditionibus Hebræorum*, upon the ſecond Chapter of the third Book of *Kings*. This *Jewiſh* Interpretation would be very probable, if that was but true what *Rabbi Salomon* ſaith upon the II. Chap. of the firſt Book of *Kings*, *v.* 19. that when we read there, that *Solomon* cauſed a ſeat to be ſet for the King's Mother, we ought to underſtand it of *Ruth* the *Moabiteſs*, and not of *Bathſheba*; I Kings II. 8.

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Bathsheba; we know the *Jews* ascribe a much longer Life to *Zarah* the Daughter of *Asher*, one of *Jacob*'s Sons, for they are still of the same Opinion as they were in St. *Hierome*'s time, that she was yet alive in *David*'s time.

No Body can condemn this Reflexion upon *Ruth*, if he will but consider, that her Faith having been so rewarded, that the *Messiah* came out of her Posterity; she is particularly made mention of in his Genealogy; and that on the other hand her History hath been preserved amongst the other Books of the Old Testament, as a kind of prescription, not only against the *Moabites* pretensions, long before condemned by *Balaam*'s Prophesie, but also against those of the *Ismaelites*, and *Edomites* who had no better claim to the Promise than the *Moabites*, having no other than that of a general Call, and of their Birthright before *Jacob*'s Posterity.

CHAP. XII.

That one may see also in Moses's *Law, plain Footsteps of God's Design, in distinguishing these from whom he would have the Messiah to be Born.*

IT was altogether necessary for the execution of my design, to establish well, the Authority of *Moses*'s

Moses's Books, upon which I intend to make some Reflexions: It was likewise necessary to shew, as I think I have done sufficiently, that *Moses* was perfectly acquainted with God's Promise concerning the Messiah. Therefore, I believe, I may now come to shew, that both *Moses*, and those that came after him, had all an Eye upon the Messiah in their chiefest Regulations.

But to give a greater insight, and understanding into the things that I am to say, I think it may not be amiss, to remind the Reader, and to lay before him once more, the several Characters of God's Conduct in that matter, that he may be the better able to judge of the whole Series of his design.

I have heretofore shew'd, that *Moses*'s intention was to establish two things in the Book of *Genesis*.

The one, that all Men have derived their Original from *Adam*, whom God Created.

The other, That Man having sinned, God promised to reinstate him by one of his own Posterity,

The First of these, was then solidly proved by a plain matter of Fact, when I shew'd, that such a Tradition as *Moses* relates about the Creation of the World, cannot reasonably be doubted of.

As for what concerns the other, *viz.* The Promise of the Messiah, which was the chiefest Object of Man's hope and comfort: I have also shew'd, I think, that the Notion, and Expectation of it was very strong and lively, and the original cause of all the extraordinary Actions recorded by *Moses*.

But as this promise was not to be fulfilled for many Ages; so God made it only in very general terms, and had still reserved to himself the Revelation for after Ages, as he thought fit, both as to the manner and time of its accomplishment. It is therefore absolutely necessary that we should consider also how God preserved all along the distinct knowledge of it amongst men.

Now in reading my Reflexions upon *Genesis*, one must needs have observed that God, even in those early times of the World, did restrain the priviledge of accomplishing that promise by little and little to some particular Men; till at last he openly declared, that he had setled it in the Tribe of *Judah*; as we read it *Gen.* XLIX.

Thus we see, that God in the very beginning of the World restrained that Prerogative to *Seth*'s Family, and excluded *Cain*'s from it; then afterwards of all *Seth*'s Family he restrained it to *Noah* alone and his Family; then of *Noah*'s Family to *Shem* alone; then afterwards of all *Shem*'s Posterity, to *Abraham* alone; then of *Abraham*'s Sons, to *Isaac* alone; and of *Isaac*'s, to *Jacob* alone; whose Son *Judah* was alone invested with that priviledge, and all his Brethren excluded.

It is moreover observable, that in those seven forementioned Restrictions which God made, he seems to have affected, to prefer the youngest to the eldest; as it is evident in his choice, if not of *Noah* and *Shem*, who was elder than the other Sons; yet certainly in that of *Seth*, who was younger than *Cain*; of *Abraham*, who was the youngest of *Terah*'s Sons; of *Isaac* who was younger than *Ismael*; of *Jacob* who was younger than *Esau*;

Esau; and of *Judah* who was one of the youngest of *Leah*'s Sons.

So likewise if the Reader would judge of God's design, by the event alone, he might justly conclude, that God by this affected choice intended to raise continual Jealousies betwixt the Eldest (who pretended that the priviledge of accomplishing the promise, did belong to them because of their Birthright) against their youngest Brethers, whom they saw preferred by God's immediate choice.

One may also further add, That God seems to have strengthen'd these Jealousies, by introducing sometimes a sort of Conformity amongst the pretenders to the execution of this promise: Thus, for instance, as *Abraham* had two Children, so *Lot* had two; as *Jacob* had twelve Sons, so *Esau* also had twelve; and sometimes one may find, that those particular persons who are preferred, are charged with very severe Accusations.

Now after all these general Reflexions, it is natural for us to consider, what care God hath upon all occasions particularly taken, to distinguish and protect, those whom he had invested with the right of accomplishing the Promise, that their state and succession might never be uncertain.

'Twas this design, no doubt, which obliged God to make *Seth* the Depositary of his Service and Worship, that he might thereby save *Noah* from the Flood, and so procure to *Shem* his Father's Blessing.

'Twas for this Reason that he call'd *Abraham* out of his own Countrey, and made him Travel

from place to place to make him thereby famous in the World, and to invite Men by that means to inquire after his Profession, his Hopes, and his Religion.

Again, it was for this, that he obliged this Patriarch to the practice of Circumcision, which was a real distinction, and an indelible Character, and that he likewise confined him to a certain place, by fixing him in some sort to the Cave of *Machpela*, which he had purchased of the Children of *Hamor*.

Lastly, It was for that reason, that God would have the Posterity of *Jacob* distinguished from all other Nations of the World, and that he prohibited all alliance with them, as also all Imitations of the Customs, and Religious Ceremonies practised amongst them.

Now all this being supposed, I say, that whether we consider the end and principal design of *Moses*'s Laws, or whether we examine his several Prophesies, which do particularly characterize the Messiah; we shall find that God did all along continue in his first design of distinction; and consequently of keeping up the Jealousies of those that had any pretensions to the priviledge of accomplishing the Promise; or which is all one, that he hath prosecuted the same design to Jesus Christ's time, in whom Christians do maintain, that the first Promise was accomplished, God having then, and not till then, both put an end to all those Differences and Distinctions, which were only intended to make the Messiah the better known, and the more certainly discerned at his coming, and then to cease; just as Scaffolds are

are taken away as soon as the Building is finished: And having also on the other hand rectified the Principles from which flowed that Spirit of Jealousie, amongst those who had the same pretension.

We see, that accordingly God excluded all other Nations from the right of accomplishing this Promise.

We see, that even in the Family of *Judah*, who was himself the youngest of the first Set of *Leah*'s Children, he restrained the execution of it to the youngest Brothers.

We see, that he raised occasions of Jealousies, even amongst the Tribes of *Israel*.

In a word, we see, that of all those means which can distinguish any one people from all other Nations of the World, or one Tribe from twelve, one Family from all other Families of the same Tribe; and one particular person, from all the rest of his Family, none were omitted, but (on the contrary) all made use of by God, to follow this his first design.

This I intend firmly to establish, by examining the thing gradually from *Moses*'s time, (by whose Ministry God enacted, and published those Laws, by the means whereof, he intended the Messiah might certainly be known) to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, in whom we believe, that the Promise was accomplished.

CHAP. XIII.

That the manner of God's Promulgating his Law amongst the Israelites, *did much conduce to the distinguishing them from all other Nations.*

I Do not barely design here at first to observe the several Resemblances, which are observable betwixt the things related by *Moses* in *Genesis*, and those which one finds in the following Books.

Neither will I meerly establish here that, as *Jacob*'s going down into *Egypt* with all his Children, and the protection that they all received there, from *Joseph*, did serve to fulfil the Prediction which God made of that Event by *Joseph*'s Dream; so we may say in general, that the sending of *Moses*, his Miracles, and his whole Ministry to the time of his Death, when he entrusted *Joshuah* with the Conduct of the *Jews*, were a litteral accomplishment of the first part of the Promise, which God had formerly made to *Abraham*, to deliver the fourth Generation of his Posterity out of the Captivity, which it was to fall into, and then to bring it into the Land of *Canaan* to possess it.

Moses indeed represents that people according to the Tenour of the Prophesie, as groaning under the hard pressure of a cruel Captivity in *Egypt*, when

when *Joseph* and his eminent Services were both forgotten.

Afterwards he tells us, how they were miraculously delivered out of that Captivity.

And then Lastly he informs us, that after he had carried them through many difficulties in the Wilderness he brought them at last to the very Borders of *Canaan*, and so left them ready to conquer and possess it, according to God's Promises, and their pretensions grounded upon those promises which had been so often repeated to them ever since *Abraham*'s time.

Joshua, *Moses* Successour, and in all likelihood, the Author of the Description of his Death, is he that accomplished the other part of God's promise to *Abraham*, by introducing the *Israelites* into *Canaan*, and actually possessing them of it: So there is nothing can be imagined more precise in this whole matter.

But it is not all this only that renders both the person and Ministry of *Moses* so glorious: There are several other things in *Exodus*, and his other following Books, which do much better deserve our Consideration.

Those Books contain, as I have already observed an exact History, of all that God did in order to give a certain form to the Common-wealth of *Israel*, a fixed place, and a particular Service, that is in order to follow his great design of having the Messiah known without mistake, whenever he should be Born amongst the *Jews*; and this is my chiefest aim in the Reflexions upon *Exodus* and the other Books of *Moses*.

First, we might say in general, That the observance

vance of the Sabbath, and the use of Circumcision, did distinguish the *Jews*; but yet, I have shew'd, that the Sabbath was a Law common to all Nations in the World, and that Circumcision on the other hand was common both to the *Ismaelites* and *Edomites*: And this will oblige us to make some particular Observations upon that matter; and we must consider how God took care to distinguish that people, by giving them his Law.

It is in general evident, that the care which God took to give the Moral Law to that whole people, did eminently distinguish them from all other Nations, whom he permitted to walk in their own ways, as St. *Paul* expresses it; to be sure it shews them that he resolved to fix them to himself, and to hinder them from following, both the Idolatries of other Nations, and those Inundations of Vice, which ruine all Societies.

And without doubt, the surprizing pomp which accompanied the promulgation of God's Law, and which was recorded by his order, before those that had been the Eye-witnesses of it, did much contribute to perswade them that God had a particular regard and kindness for their Nation, and that he honoured them with his particular Guidance.

We may make the same Observation upon God's giving them a Political Law, and upon the care that he was also pleased to take of regulating their Civil Government, and preventing the difficulties which are commonly occasioned by such Accidents as cannot be foreseen by any Human Legislators, which cause great Revolutions and Changes in all Governments, all which shew sufficiently

ently, that his design was to raise them up to, and to maintain them in as great prosperity and welfare, as possibly could be procured to a Nation by perfect Laws, and a well Constituted Government; even the many Ceremonies which God gave them, are a further Demonstration of God's design to distinguish them from other Nations.

It seems not to have been God's intention at first to lay upon them such numbers of Ceremonies: For it was only after the Commission of the sin of the Golden Calf, that God laid upon them that heavy and troublesome yoak, on purpose to imploy all their time, and so keep them from falling into Idolatry again. But however *Tanchuma*, a famous *Jewish* Author observes, that there was nothing left in the World, but what God took care to give the *Israelites* some Laws about; as for Instance, If any *Jew* went out to Plow, he was forbidden to do it with an Ox and an Ass: If to Sow, he was forbidden to Sow his Field with several kinds of Seed: If to Reap, he was forbidden to Reap the whole Crop: If any one went about to Bake Bread, he was commanded to take of out his Dough, so much as to make a Cake thereof to Consecrate it: If any one did Sacrifice any Animal, he was charged to give away to the Priest, the right Shoulder of it, with both the Cheeks and Inwards: When any one found out a Nest of Birds, he was obliged to let the Old one fly away: If any one went a Hunting, he was to shed the Blood of his Game, and then to cover it with Dust: When any one had planted any Fruit-Trees, he was to count the first thereof as Uncircumcised for the three first years: When any one found

Jalkut. in *Pent.* fol. 228. Col. 3.

found a Sepulchre, even there certain Cautions are preſcribed: If any one Shaved himſelf, he was forbidden to *Mar the corners of his Beard*: When any one built a Houſe, he was to take care there ſhould be Rails, and *Mezouzoth* made to prevent all danger: They were obliged to put particular Threads in their Garments, and there are many other things, which were apparently commanded to diſtinguiſh the *Jews*, by obliging them to the practice of theſe and ſuch other Laws as took up all their time. But if we may ſay in general, that the whole ſcope of the Ceremonial Law was to employ the *Jews*: We may yet more juſtly ſay, that it was in particular intended by God to inſpire into his people a horrour againſt all Idolatrous practiſes, and an Averſion againſt all Commerce with Idolaters: And this may be further diſcerned, if we examine thoſe Laws in particular.

One ſee's this perfectly by the manner of God's pronouncing ſome Meats unclean, and his forbidding to eat the fleſh of ſome Animals. For we may find, that the greateſt part of theſe Animals were Worſhipped amongſt the Heathens. Thus the more Learned amongſt the *Jews* prove, that the Goat and the Ram were of that number, but ſo no doubt were all the Animals which were uſually offered in Sacrifice to God, as particularly the Bull: Now there is nothing which alienates two Nations from one another more, than when one of them Eats, or Sacrifices, that which the other makes the Object of its Religion.

One of the moſt Learned Authors that ever the *Jews* had, hath diligently obſerved, that God

God gave many Ceremonial Laws directly contrary to thoſe Rites which the *Zabij* uſed in their Superſtitions, and a learned *Engliſh* Doctor hath lately proved it very largely; as to the Ceremonies which God commanded to be uſed in the Sacrifice of the Paſchal-Lamb, and in the manner of their building of the Altar, and of their going up to it, in the prohibition of ſeething a Kid in his Mothers Milk, and of offering Honey in their Sacrifices, in the prohibition of their forcing their Children to paſs through the Fire to *Moloch*, in the Law which prohibited their eating Blood, and rounding the Corners of their Heads; and making any Marks in their Fleſh, and in I do not know how many other Laws of that Nature, the deſign of whoſe inſtitution is not ſo evident now ſince the Rites of all thoſe Ancient Idolaters are utterly aboliſhed, and but imperfectly recorded in ſome Ancient Authors.

Spencer de Leg. Moſ. Lib. 2.

Thus we ſee, that we need only make a very little Reflexion upon God's Conduct, in giving all his Laws to the *Iſraelites*, thereby to judge, that the main ſcope of thoſe Laws, was to put a bar betwixt the people of *Iſrael*, and all other Idolatrous Nations, which ſhould be a viſible, and a conſtant diſtinction, till the Meſſiah ſhould be born, who was to make all thoſe Marks of Diſcrimination to ceaſe entirely.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIV.

That God ſeems to have deſigned to keep up a Spirit of Jealouſie in the very Boſom of the Jewiſh *Nation.*

WE have ſeen in general, that God by giving his Law to the *Iſraelites*, intended to diſcriminate them from all other Nations of the World, and in particular from thoſe Nations which had ſhewed themſelves to be jealous of that diſtinction; I mean from the *Moabites*, the *Ammonites*, the *Iſmaelites*, and the *Edomites*, as I ſhall hereafter ſhew. I have likewiſe obſerved, that God by his Conduct, and his Oracles, did alſo excite a Spirit of Jealouſie amongſt the ſeveral pretenders to the Promiſe. I come now to ſhew that God hath follow'd the ſame deſign in his Law, and that he hath made uſe of that Jealouſie as of another means, to make that People, which he had ſeparated from all other Nations, keep up always amongſt themſelves a lively Notion, and Expectation of the Meſſiah.

Perhaps the Reader may think, that theſe Reflections may interrupt the Series of the Obſervations I have undertaken to make upon *Moſes*'s Law: But beſides that I ſhall reſume them preſently, ſo one may eaſily diſcern, that theſe two Remarks concerning the Spirit of Diſtinction, and the Spirit of Jealouſie, kept up in the Boſom of this people,

people, ought to be well conſidered by thoſe that deſire to know the Genius of God's Laws, and the original Cauſes of all the Tranſactions related by *Moſes*, and by the other ſacred Authors, who acted in purſuance of that Deſign which appears in thoſe Laws which *Moſes* gave to the People of *Iſrael*.

I begin with two general Reflexions, which, I think are very uſeful in the explication of God's Conduct upon this Occaſion.

Two things, as I have already obſerved, have conduced to keep up that Jealouſie, whereof *Moſes* has given ſo many inſtances in the Book of *Geneſis*.

The firſt is, The Preference which God hath commonly given to the younger Brothers before the elder.

The ſecond is, The choice which God hath made of ſuch particular perſons as appeared abſolutely unworthy of God's choice.

So that here one ſee's a continual Series in the Jewiſh Hiſtory written by *Moſes*, and by the Prophets, who made the ſame Obſervations upon that *Model* which *Moſes* had given them.

Firſt of all, The Tribe of *Judah* is preferred before all the other Tribes of *Iſrael*, and particularly before the Tribe of *Reuben*, which afterwards occaſioned the Inſurrection of ſome *Reubenites* in their Sedition againſt *Moſes*, wherein *Corah*, *Dathan*, and *Abiram* periſhed: Juſt as God's preferring *Abel* offended *Cain*, and as *Joſeph*'s Brethren conſpired together to put him to death, becauſe of his Dreams, which foretold his greatneſs and their fall.

Se-

Secondly, One ſee's that *Phares*, *Judah*'s youngeſt Son, is preferred not only before all the other Children of *Judah*, but even before *Zerah* the eldeſt of the Twins which *Judah* had by *Thamar*; juſt as *Jacob* was preferred before his Brother *Eſau*, tho' they were Twins, and *Eſau* born the firſt of the two.

One ſee's afterwards, That God having choſen *Jeſſe* of all the Poſterity of *Phares*, *David* the youngeſt of all his Sons, was preferred before his Brethren, when God was pleaſed to tranſlate the Kingdom to the Tribe of *Judah*, and to the Family of *Jeſſe*. Juſt as we ſaw before, that, in the Election of the firſt King, whom the *Iſraelites* deſired to be ſet over them, that he was choſen by Lot by an extraordinary effect of Providence out of the Tribe of *Benjamin*, tho' the youngeſt of all *Jacob*'s Children.

Thus one ſee's that *Solomon* the youngeſt of *David*'s Children, was preferred before his Brothers, and that the ſame *Solomon* built the Temple of God in the Tribe of *Benjamin*, tho' he himſelf was of the Tribe of *Judah*.

We ſhall afterwards ſee, That the Meſſiah was deſcended from *David* by *Nathan*, Son to one of *David*'s younger Children, and by *Reſah Zorobabel*'s youngeſt Son, from whom the Bleſſed Virgin drew her Original.

The ſecond Remark is about the care God hath taken by his choice of ſome particular perſons to accompliſh the promiſe, to furniſh thoſe with pretences and objections, who might be intereſſed, to oppoſe the Reſtrictions which God had made in favour of their equals; for as they ſerved to keep

keep up a Jealouſie amongſt all the pretenders to the Promiſe, ſo they alſo ſerved to preſerve a diſtinct knowledge of it, and to make them inquire more diligently after it.

In ſhort, as we ſee that the *Iſmaelites* might upbraid *Sarah* both with her frequent Rapes, and with her Cruelty to *Agar* and *Iſmael*: As the *Edomites* might upbraid *Jacob*'s Poſterity with *Rebecca*'s ſupplanting their Father *Eſau*, and cheating him of his Bleſſing; ſo likewiſe we may obſerve, that God not only choſe *Thamar* to have the Meſſiah deſcend from her; but alſo would have her Inceſt with her Father-in-Law recorded. What might all the other Tribes of *Iſrael* ſay, were there then no honeſt Women in *Iſrael*, that the Meſſiah's Anceſtors muſt deſcend from thoſe that were born of an Inceſtuous Commerce? What probability is there, that God ſhould chooſe the Tribe of *Judah*? Had not all the other Children of *Judah* a fairer pretenſion to this priviledge, than *Phares* could have? And might not their Poſterity revive againſt the Poſterity of *Phares*, that ſevere Law againſt Baſtard Children which we read of *Deut.* XXIII.

God choſe in the like manner *Ruth* the *Moabiteſs*, and had her Hiſtory written, and his choice recorded, as if he had intended to prepare an excuſe for thoſe of the *Iſraelites* who afterwards would refuſe to ſubmit to *David*. What probability is there might they ſay, that God would have the Meſſiah to be born of a *Moabiteſs*, ſeeing it was by his order, that *Moſes* cauſed all thoſe *Iſraelites* to be put to death, who after the pronunciation of *Balaam*'s Propheſie, held any commerce with the

Daughters of *Moab*? Was there any likelihood that ſuch a thing could be poſſible, eſpecially ſeeing there was a Law which God would have to be inſerted in *Deuteronomy*, which excludeth the *Moabites* from the poſſibility of ever being admitted into the people of God. But at leaſt, was not this choice of *Ruth* the *Moabiteſs*, a fair cauſe of Jealouſie to all the other Families of *Judah*?

God cauſed the Adultery of *Bathſheba*, the Mother of *Solomon*, to be carefully recorded, as it were on purpoſe to excuſe the Rebellion of thoſe who afterwards ſided with *Jeroboam*, againſt *Reboboam* and his Authority.

Is it probable, (might theſe Rebels ſay) that God would have choſen that Bloody Cruel Man *David*, that Adulterer, that he and *Bathſhebah* ſhould beget the Meſſiah together?

Had *Jeſſe* no other Children beſides *David*? And if *David* muſt needs have been the Man, why ſhould *Solomon* born of *Bathſhebah*, be preferred before all his Brothers?

There are three things conſiderable in this Matter.

The Firſt is, That God having given to *Joſhuah*, the conduct of the *Iſraelites*, after he had formerly raiſed *Joſeph* ſo much above his Brethren by his advancement in *Egypt*, and given to his Tribe two portions of the Land of *Canaan*; he permitted, that *Jeroboam* ſhould riſe up againſt *Rehoboam*, *Solomon*'s Son, and not only ſo, but ſhould likewiſe, according to the Propheſie related, *Gen.* XXVIII. 17. build a Temple at *Bethel*, as being jealous againſt *Solomon*, who built one upon Mount *Moriah*, according to the Propheſie we find in *Geneſis* XXII. 14.

The Second is, That this ſeparation, gave a fair pretence to raiſe the Reputation of the Propheſies which *Jacob* uttered upon his Death-Bed in favour of *Joſeph*; which Propheſies ran in terms ſo very high, that they not only gave colour to *Jeroboam*'s pretenſions to the Kingdom, but did alſo lead the Ten Tribes into an expectation, that the Meſſiah ſhould be born, not in the Tribe of *Judah*, as *Jacob* had expreſly foretold *Geneſis* XLIX. but in the Tribe of *Ephraim*, according to the conſtant Cuſtom of God's preferring the younger Sons of a Family before the Elder, in the matter of this Promiſe.

The Third is, That even the greateſt part of the two Loyal Tribes received at laſt the interpretation which the other ten made of that Propheſie. At leaſt, it appears, that many of the *Jews* have endeavoured to prove, that the Meſſiah ſhould come from the Tribe of *Ephraim*, by interpreting ſeveral Propheſies that way, which according to their account and their prejudices, were expreſſed in ſuch terms, as could not be underſtood of him, that was to be born in the Tribe of *Judah*, and out of the Royal Family of *David*.

CHAP. XV.

That Circumcision was a means of distinguishing the Israelites *from other Nations.*

BUt I must now resume my Observations upon *Moses*'s Laws. Circumcision was, without question, one of the first, and most sensible means whereby God did distinguish *Jacob*'s Posterity from all other people. I will therefore begin with it,

First, The very signification of the Word Circumcision, implies a real, and corporeal distinction: Even *Tacitus* understood it so when he saith, *Circumcidere genitalia instituêre Judæi ut diversitate noscantur.* But besides, by it God's Covenant was, as it were, Printed, and Ingraved in the very Flesh of all *Abraham*'s Posterity. Hist. l. 1.

God has explained it thus himself in several places; and one may affirm, that this was very agreeable to God's design, which was, as we have intimated before, to hinder that people, from which the Messiah was to be born, from mingling with the other Nations of the World, which would have made the Pedigree of the Messiah suspected, or at least much more difficult to be traced.

I will not relate here, the several Notions of Divines about the use of that Ceremony, but only content my self to make two very natural Reflexions upon it.

The

The First of which is, That it was particularly in respect of the Messiah, that God would have that Mark made upon that part of Man's Body which is inservient to Generation. As the Messiah was to come into the World by Generation, according to the words of the first Prophesie concerning him, and also according to the further Revelations of God to *Abraham*, about that promise, so God could do nothing more agreeable to the Idea the *Israelites* had of the Messiah, and of his Birth, than to distinguish them, by a Relation to that Blessed Seed, which he promised them; as God designed, without all question, by that means to oblige the *Jews* to remember the first promise made to Mankind; so no doubt, he intended by it to fix their minds upon the consideration of that favour he had shew'd to them, as well as to *Abraham*, to distinguish them from all the people of the Earth, that the Deliverer of the World might be born in their Common-wealth, and from one of their Posterity.

The Second Reflexion is, That it was the same prospect of the Messiah, which made God condemn those to death, who should either remain Uncircumcised themselves, or leave their Children so.

Is it not a very surprizing thing, that so much rigour and severity should be used in exacting the Observation of a Ceremony, which was merely indifferent in its nature, and had no Moral goodness in it self? But hereby it appears the more evidently, that God design'd, that the use of Circumcision, by which he distinguished *Abraham*'s Posterity from all other Nations of the World,

ſhould be a kind of immoveable Bar, to hinder the *Jews* from mingling with all Strangers.

Indeed there are three things which may be objected againſt theſe Reflexions.

The Firſt is, That it does not appear, that this Ceremony was counted ſuch a proper ſign of diſtinction, ſeeing the uſe of it hath been ſometimes intermitted: As for inſtance, when the whole Nation of the *Jews* left it off for forty years in the Wilderneſs.

The Second is, That if the chiefeſt end of Circumciſion was to diſtinguiſh that people, with deſign to make the Meſſiah known: There was no need that that yoak ſhould be laid upon all the *Jews*, but only upon the Family from which he was to deſcend, or at the moſt upon the Tribe wherein that Family was comprized.

The Third is, That Circumciſion was common both to *Eſau*'s and *Jacob*'s Poſterity; and even uſed amongſt the *Egyptians*, and the Inhabitants of *Colchis*; as we may learn from *Herodotus*, and ſome other Heathen Authors.

But after all, it is an eaſie thing to ſatisfie a Man's mind in all theſe appearing difficulties. I confeſs, that one is ſurprized to ſee that God ſhould not oblige the *Jews* to be Circumciſed in the Wilderneſs, for which ſeveral Reaſons are given.

Firſt, That God being diſpleaſed with that Generation, would not allow, that they ſhould be honoured with this Token of his Covenant; others ſay, that their journying in the Wilderneſs gave them a Diſpenſation from the obſervance of that Ceremony. But we may give a better, I think, and more natural account of that matter, if we do

do but follow the Idea which occaſioned my ſecond Reflexion.

The going forth of ſome *Egyptians* with the *Iſraelites* out of *Egypt*, was a Type of the calling of the Gentiles, as I will ſhew ſomewhere elſe: It was then neceſſary, that as all Ceremonies, and Circumciſion in particular, were then to be aboliſhed, to take away all diſtinction from among *Seth*'s Poſterity, ſo the uſe of Circumciſion ſhould at that time be ſuſpended.

However, God would not have the Suſpenſion of that Ceremony, to continue till they were entered into the Land of *Canaan*.

Firſt, To prevent the intruding of ſome *Canaanites* into the Body of the *Hebrews*.

Secondly, To the end that theſe *Iſraelites* who were to enter into *Canaan*, being as well Uncircumciſed as the *Egyptians* Children, and being all made afterwards equal by Circumciſion, ſhould have no occaſion to upbraid them with their *different original*.

The Second Objection may as eaſily be anſwered: One might think at firſt, that indeed the Meſſiah had been more eaſily known at his coming, if the uſe of Circumciſion had been injoyned only to the Family, or at moſt, to the Tribe from which he was to deſcend: But beſides that, it had expoſed that Family, or that Tribe to great Perſecutions, it had certainly much diminiſhed that Spirit of Jealouſie which was kept up by the Conformity of the ſeveral pretenders, which on the other hand was of mighty uſe to preſerve a diſtinct Idea of the Meſſiah, and a deſire of his coming.

As for the Third Objection, there is no difficulty in it: 'Tis true, ſome *Jewiſh* Interpreters

imagine, that *Joseph* took occasion to prescribe the use of Circumcision to the *Egyptians*, after *Pharaoh* had commanded his people to do whatsoever *Joseph* should bid them to do: But that Conjecture is groundless: For it appears, that the *Egyptians* who went out of *Egypt* with *Moses*, were not Circumcised. 'Tis true, that Nation did some Ages after *Moses*, take up the Ceremony of Circumcision; and it is very likely, that it was some *Egyptian* Colony which introduced the use of it into *Colchis*: But the observance of that sole Ceremony amongst those Nations could cause no confusion, because none of them pretended to derive their Original from *Abraham*, but had as Historians observe, quite different Reasons from those which the *Jews* had for their practice of Circumcision.

As for the *Ismaelites* and *Edomites*, the greatest part of the *Jews* are of opinion, that God did discriminate their Circumcision from the Circumcision which was practised by those Nations, by his Institution of what they call the *Perigna* after the Circumcision; which they endeavour to prove by a passage in *Joshua*, wherein it is said, that God ordered *Joshua* to Circumcise again the Children of *Israel* the second time. But others of them laugh at that Criticism, because it appears that those words do relate to the second solemn Circumcision which that People did observe after their deliverance out of *Egypt*: Therefore, without running to this answer, one needs only follow the Idea we have already made use of, which is drawn from God's design of keeping up a Spirit of Jealousie, by some Conformity betwixt the Circumcision practised

practised by the *Jews*, and the Ceremonies used amongst those Rival Nations.

Why then were some of the Neighbouring Nations of *Canaan*, descended from *Abraham* Circumcised? As for Example, the *Ismaelites* in *Arabia*, who were Circumcised at thirteen years of age; the Posterity of *Abraham* by *Keturah*, *viz.* the *Midianites* who were in the Countrey of *Moab*, and the *Edomites* descended from *Esau*, who did all practise Circumcision?

Certainly, It is evident, that as God set the *Israelites* in the midst of all those Nations, who by virtue of their Ancestors Birthright, or some other pretensions, put in their claim with the *Jews* to the execution of the Promise, on purpose to excite the attention of this people who were surrounded with these Rivals. So he did for the same reason permit, that the *Ismaelites*, the *Midianites*, and *Edomites* should practise the Ceremony of Circumcision, almost in the same manner that the *Israelites* did.

But that we may the better apprehend the force of this Reflexion, we need only consider the Jealousie, which is caused amongst the several Sects of Christians, by the Conformity of Sacraments, which is so far from uniting them with one another, as it might justly be expected; that on the contrary, one may say, that this Conformity in some things alienates them from one another, and breeds Reciprocal Jealousies amongst their several Parties, especially when they come, to reflect upon the other Controverted Articles, that cause the Separation.

Moreover, it is reasonable to consider that God had

had provided a sufficient distinction, betwixt that people, and other Nations, by giving them many other Laws, which had no other visible use than that of *Discrimination*; as for Instance, the three great Feasts which the *Jews* were obliged to keep.

The Feast of the Passover, was the memorial of the accomplishment of God's Promise to *Abraham* to deliver his Posterity out of the Countrey wherein they were to be in Bondage after 430 years; and consequently could not be observed by the *Ismaelites*, nor by the *Edomites* who had never been Captives in, nor delivered out of *Egypt* in the fourth Generation.

The *Pentecost* was a publick Monument of the Promulgation of the Law, and all its parts, amongst the Children of *Israel*, and consequently peculiar to that Nation.

Thus the Feast of Tabernacles preserved the memory of that solemn action of the *Israelites* continuance for forty years in the Desert.

It were needless, after such remarkable distinctions, to observe here, (which yet was certainly designed for that end) that God took care to distinguish that people by some Injunctions, which they were to observe, in the fashion of their Cloaths, of their Beard, of their Philacteries, of their Mezouzoth, of their Thaleth, of their Zizith, and many the like things, the observance of all which served to hinder any confusion of the people of *Israel*, with their Neighbours.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVI.

That the Law of Moses *engaged the* Jews *to the study of their Genealogies, that they might certainly know that of the Messiah.*

BUt if God took care to distinguish his people from all other Nations by such an indelible Mark, in the practice whereof there was no fear of any trick; seeing no Man would Circumcise himself without thinking upon it more than once, as the History of the *Sichemites* assures us; so one sees, that he took as great a care to divide them into Tribes, and the Tribes into Families, that they might subsist and continue in a kind of a Separation from one another, altho they were at first but one single Family, and one single Nation.

Now to what purpose, I pray, were all those Distinctions, if they had not been designed, to manifest the Messiah at his coming.

We see then, that they could have no other use, for as God had decreed, that the Messiah should be born out of the Tribe of *Judah*, so it was necessary, that the several Genealogies of that Tribe should be very publickly known.

And therefore one sees that God secured this, not only with all necessary care, but even with a Caution greater than could have been reasonably desired.

He

He engages all the Tribes of *Israel* to preserve with a kind of affectation, their several Genealogical Tables; he neglects none of the means that might be useful to distinguish the Tribe of *Judah* from other Tribes, and the Family from which the Messiah was to be descended from all the other Families of the same Tribe.

Indeed I am not ignorant that anciently one might see some other Nations using the Distinctions of Tribes amongst themselves, much after the same manner as the *Jews* did, and that they were careful to preserve their Genealogies in order to derive their Original from the same common Father: Thus we ought to understand what we read in History of the Tribes amongst the *Athenians*. Thus *Hippocrates* runs up his own Pedigree to the twentieth Man of his Ancestors, and *Herodotus* mentions several Instances of the same care.

But one sees that this affectation was infinitely greater among the *Jews*.

For we see, that they did not only rank themselves every one under the Standard of their own Tribe, at their going forth out of *Egypt*, but that God did also engage every Man to know his Tribe exactly; nay, he compelled them all in a manner, to study their own Pedigrees, that every one might claim, and reap the benefit of the Law of *Jubilee*, which had the force of an Entail in respect of every Family, as I am now going to shew.

There are three things observable in that Matter.

The First is, That it was by a superabundant precaution, that God would engage the Tribes to continue distinguish'd from one another, and to

to preserve and study their several Pedigrees; namely, he intended by that means to prevent the Objection which might otherwise have been made, that it was impossible for a Tribe, and a Family in that Tribe to continue distinguished from the rest of the Nation, for so many Ages; for certainly, if all the Tribes in that Nation, and all the Families in every Tribe, did continue, by God's Providence, so long distinguished from one another, there is no doubt to be made, but he could preserve the single Tribe of *Judah*, and the Family of the Messiah distinguished from all other Tribes, and Families of the people of *Israel*.

The Second Remark is, That it was for this distinction sake, that the Books of the Old Testament were fill'd with Genealogical Tables; to what purpose else had Books of that importance, and which treated of such great Subjects been filled with Genealogies? *Moses*'s Books are full of them: The first Book of Chronicles resumes those Genealogies with all possible exactness: There is nothing more considerable in the Book of *Ruth*, than the Genealogy of *David* and his Family.

The Third Remark is, That if the Genealogy of the Priests seem to have been better known, than that of other Families, by reason of their being the Publick Ministers of Religion, which seems to give the advantage of certainty of distinction to the Tribe of *Levi* above that of *Judah*, in that particular; yet we find, that all the Families of the whole Nation took much the same care to preserve their own Genealogies; so that if after the *Babylonian* Captivity, some particular persons were

were excluded from the Prieſtly order, to which they pretended, becauſe they could not make out their Pedigree: So likewiſe all were thrown out from the other Tribes, that could not juſtifie their Lineal Deſcent.

Nay, there is ſomething further, deſerves to be taken notice of, as being very ſingular in that of *Judah*: and one ought here to conſider a Miſtery of God's Providence, and admire the Wiſdom of his Conduct, in purſuing the deſign which *Moſes* firſt ſets down, and upon which one ſees, that the whole *Jewiſh* State was formed; for when God reſolved, that the Meſſiah ſhould deſcend from the Tribe of *Juda*, and the Houſe of *David*, he made it more particularly known and diſtinguiſh'd, than any other Family in the whole Nation, and for that reaſon he ſets *David* upon the Throne.

Every one knows, that in every Kingdom the Genealogy of a King, and of the Royal Family, is of all others the moſt publickly known.

Now if the Blood Royal alone is always diſtinguiſhed how much more muſt it be ſo, when that Supream Dignity is conferred upon ſuch a Family, as God had particularly choſen, to have the Meſſiah, who is ſet forth as the deſire of all Nations, to be born out of it.

From hence I will boldly conclude, that the only end for which God raiſed *David*'s Family to the Throne, was becauſe the Meſſiah was really to be born out of that Family, reduc'd to a low, and private Condition, which *Iſaiah* foretold, ſaying, That *a Rod ſhould come forth out of the Stem of* Iſa. XI: Jeſſe, *and a Branch grow out of his Roots*; and in another place, That *he ſhould grow up as a Root out* LIII. *of*

of a dry ground, which was very agreeable to the Character of a Prophet, and to the low ſtate of Humiliation, in which our Saviour was to appear in the World.

CHAP. XVII.

A Solution of ſome Difficulties in theſe Genealogies.

INdeed the diſperſion of the Ten Tribes ſeems to be a very Natural Objection to thoſe who would diſpute the Reflexions which I have already made upon theſe Genealogies.

But after all, there is nothing in it but what confirms the more the ſaid Reflexions.

And we may ſay, that the intire diſperſion of the whole Tribe of *Ephraim*, and of the others which adhered to it in *Jeroboam*'s Rebellion, is a Miſtery of Providence which challenges our admiration, as much as the raiſing up that Family to the Throne, out of which the Meſſiah was to be born.

To apprehend this the better, we need only call to mind the pretenſions of the Tribe of *Ephraim*: This *Ephraim* was the younger Brother of *Manaſſeh*; but *Jacob* had given him the Birthright, juſt as *Iſaac* before had given it to *Jacob*, tho it did of right belong to the elder Brother.

Jacob had particularly bleſſed *Ephraim*, and even

ven made it a Form of Bleſſing for after Ages, as we read in the Book of *Ruth*, that there was one made for *Pharez*. *Jacob* had given to *Joſeph* two Portions in the Land of *Canaan*, and *Ephraim* had the Birthright before *Manaſſeh*, by God's order; it was then very natural for the Tribe of *Ephraim*, as all Tribes did apply to themſelves the ſeveral priviledges promiſed to their reſpective heads, to look upon themſelves, as having a particular right to God's Bleſſing.

And they thought this right of theirs was plainly made out, as by *Joſeph*'s Dreams, ſo eſpecially by the Words of that Prediction which *Jacob* gave in favour of *Ephraim*, the words of which run ſo very high, that after ſuch a prejudice, there might very well be a fair pretence for the hope which the Tribe of *Ephraim* had once to ſee a Meſſiah come out of their Tribe, as thoſe of *Judah* expected one out of theirs.

If to all this we add, That *Jeroboam*'s Rebellion was authoriz'd by a Prophetical Inſpiration, and by a ſpecial ſign of God's Approbation; and that on the other hand he deſired to propoſe to his people the two Calves which he ſet up in *Dan* and *Bethel*, as Symbols of the Deity, only to purſue the Idea's of *Pharaoh*'s Dreams, which *Joſeph* interpreted, the repreſentation whereof, did clearly ſhew both the greatneſs of *Joſeph*, and the particular care of God's Providence over him. It was then natural, to the Men of *Ephraim*, to feed themſelves with ſuch hopes, as the *Jews* teach us they did, when even to this very day, they ſpeak of a Meſſiah of the Tribe of *Ephraim*.

Talm. in Succa c. 5. in Gem.

What did God then do, to obviate theſe pretenſions

tenſions of the Tribe of *Ephraim*? He diſperſed them, together with the other nine Tribes that ſubmitted to the Authority of its Kings, and ſo confounded them with all thoſe Tribes which followed their fortune, that tho there ſhould be ſtill ſome *Ephraimites* in the World, yet it would be impoſſible for any of them to juſtifie his Pedigree ſo clearly, as that any Meſſiah really deſcended from that very Tribe, could by eſtabliſhing his Genealogy, put his being of the Tribe of *Ephraim* beyond all conteſt.

Now according to this Notion of things it is viſible (if we may be allowed to enter into the Counſels of God,) that he did particularly preſerve the Tribes of *Levi*, and *Benjamin*, with the Tribe of *Judah*, which was the only Tribe that was to be preſerved of neceſſity.

Firſt, Becauſe as St. *Paul* to the *Hebrews* obſerves, there was nothing ever ſaid as to the Meſſiah, of the Tribe of *Levi*.

Secondly, Becauſe God would by that means confound the more effectually all the claims of the Tribe of *Ephraim*.

For in ſhort, If the Tribe of *Ephraim* was inveſted by God with the Kingdom over nine Tribes of the people of *Iſrael*, ſo had the Tribe of *Benjamin* been raiſed up before to the Soveraignty over all *Iſrael*, over the Tribe of *Judah*, and even that of *Ephraim* it ſelf.

If the Tribe of *Ephraim* was deſcended from a younger Brother, to whom *Jacob* had given his Bleſſing in prejudice of *Manaſſeh* his elder Brother, (which is conſiderable becauſe God hath almoſt conſtantly preferr'd the younger before the elder)

ſo the Tribe of *Benjamin* was deſcended from him that was both the younger Brother of *Joſeph* himſelf, and the youngeſt of all *Jacob*'s Children, notwithſtanding which, the Tribe of *Benjamin* did freely yield to the Tribe of *Judah*, and granted that the glory of giving Birth to the Meſſiah, was wholly due to them.

Be it as it will, there are two Reflexions more which muſt be made concerning theſe Genealogies which appear very natural in this place.

The Firſt is, That both St. *Matthew*, and St. *Luke* do begin their Goſpel with the Genealogy of the Meſſiah.

The other is, That ſome time after St. *Paul* condemns the ſtudy of Genealogies, which was ſtill much in uſe amongſt the *Jews*, as vain; Why therefore is there ſuch a different conduct amongſt the Diſciples of the ſame Maſter?

Certainly, whoever ſhall conſider with attention the grounds which I have laid down before muſt acknowledge, that both St. *Matthew*, and St. *Luke*, ought to have begun their Books, as they have done, with the Genealogy of the Meſſiah.

For Firſt of all, It was neceſſary that the deſcent of the Meſſiah from *Abraham* by *David*, ſhould be clearly made out: it was requiſite therefore that they ſhould ſet down ſuch a Genealogy as was known by the whole *Jewiſh* Nation: Now this they have done with very great care, and the thing was ſo eaſie, and ſo well known, that even a Blind-Man of the Neighbourhood of *Samaria*, the chief City of the Kings of *Ephraim*, did publickly call *Jeſus* the Son of *David*.

But

But on the other ſide, St. *Paul*'s forbidding the ſtudy of Genealogies, does not at all contradict the method of thoſe two Evangeliſts.

In ſhort, he purſues the very ſame Notions: He ſaw, that the Converted *Jews* apply'd themſelves to the ſtudy of Genealogies, which was then ſo great a part of the ſtudy of their Nation: It is ſtill practiſed among the *Jews*, to that degree, that ſince their diſperſion they gave an exact Relation of all the Doctors and Rabbies amongſt them who have preſerved the Tradition, and who were Proſelytes of Juſtice: What therefore was to be done in this caſe? He took it for granted, that God had engaged every *Jew* to ſtudy his own Pedigree with care, for no other end but only to have that of the Meſſiah diſtinctly known whenever he ſhould come. *Maimon. Præf. ad Jad. Chazaka.*

But the uſe of theſe Genealogies being once over, by the Meſſiah's coming into the World, he obſerves with reaſon, that it was no longer neceſſary to keep up the vain ſtudy of all thoſe Genealogies.

So that we ſee he ſpeaks againſt the ſtudy of Pedigrees, much upon the ſame grounds as in other places he inveighs againſt Circumciſion; for ſince the chiefeſt uſe of Genealogies, as well as of Circumciſion, was to diſtinguiſh *Abraham*'s Poſterity from the reſt of Mankind, till the Meſſiah was come; the uſe of theſe two Obſervations was naturally to ceaſe after he was once come.

It is, no doubt, for the ſame reaſon, that whereas the *Jews* in the Apoſtle's time took great care upon all occaſions, to take notice of the Tribe from which they were deſcended, as well as to

ſet down the Names of their Fathers, yet one ſees that the Apoſtles did not all affect it. And if St. *Paul* mentions his being a *Benjamite*: It was for a particular reaſon, for otherwiſe as he preached down the diſtinction betwixt *Jews* and *Gentiles*, ſo he declared himſelf with the ſame Earneſtneſs againſt the diſtinctions which were obſerved amongſt their Tribes.

CHAP. XVIII.

That the manner whereby the Law of Moſes *fixed the People of* Iſrael *to the Land of* Canaan, *was to keep them ſeparated from other Nations.*

ONe of the chiefeſt means, which God made uſe of, to diſtinguiſh his people of *Iſrael* from the reſt of Mankind, was ſo to fix their Affections upon the Land of *Canaan*, that they ſhould look upon it, as a Countrey which belonged to them by a particular conceſſion from God, which derogated from the *Canaanites* right, to whom that Countrey fell in the Diviſion of the Earth that was made amongſt the Children of *Noah*, or which reeſtabliſhed the Poſterity of *Shem* in their juſt Rights, to whom, if we may credit the ancient Tradition, related by St. *Epiphanius*, this Countrey did really belong by virtue of that Diviſion amongſt the three Sons of *Noah*, tho afterwards they

Hæreſ. LXVI. n. 84.

they were driven out of it by the Poſterity of *Ham*.

Moſes ſeems to have expreſſed this truth, when he ſaith *Gen.* XII. that when *Abraham* came to *Canaan*, the *Canaanite* was already in the Land; that is, he had already invaded it, neither can we refer what he relates in the XIV. Chapter, concerning the War which the Kings from the Eaſt came to make againſt the Kings of *Sodom* and *Gomorrha* to any thing elſe.

'Twas then for this reaſon, that long before *Moſes*'s time, God took *Abraham* out of *Chaldea*, from amongſt *Shem*'s Poſterity to bring him into *Canaan* amongſt the *Hivites*, the *Amorites*, and other Nations all equally deſcended from *Ham*, whom God had curſed.

God could have placed *Abraham* any where elſe; but he choſe to bring him into a Countrey, which the Poſterity of *Ham* had ſeized upon already, rather than into a place poſſeſſed by the Poſterity of *Japhet*, on purpoſe that the Jealouſie might be the greater betwixt *Abraham* and the Inhabitants of the Countrey into which God had brought him.

Nevertheleſs God did not give him at firſt an entire poſſeſſion, but only promiſed him that his Poſterity ſhould enjoy it, and in the mean while inveſted him beforehand, with a Right to it, by the purchaſe of a Field for a Burying place, wherein his Wife, himſelf, and his Children were Buried; by which means he ſtrongly fixed his own mind, and the hopes of his Poſterity.

In ſhort, it is evident, that all the glory which *Jacob* found in *Egypt* when he was invited thither

by *Joseph*, did not make him forget the Right which he claimed upon that Land, by virtue of the Sepulchre both of his Father and Grandfather that was there. For *Moses* informs us, that he desired to be carried thither after his Death, and that he did expresly require this Duty from *Joseph* and his other Children, who paid it in so very solemn a manner, and with a Mourning so very great and famous, that the Name of *Abel-Mizraim* continued to that very place, where the *Canaanites* saw the Solemnization of that Funeral by the Sons of *Jacob*, who were attended by great numbers of *Egyptians*.

One see's that *Jacob*'s Children still entertained the same hope: *Joseph* solemnly engaged his Children to carry his Bones into the Land of *Canaan*: And one may judge, that the other Patriarchs were not less solicitous to require the same Office at the hands of their Children, as St. *Stephen* supposes it *Acts* VII. agreably to the common opinion of the *Jews*: All which shews, that *Abraham*'s Posterity had their Hearts set upon his Sepulchre, as upon the Pledge and security of God's Promise, that they should be once possest of that Land where he was Buried.

Jalkut. ex Siphre. fol. 311. col. 2.

And as the carrying the Body of *Jacob* into *Canaan*, sufficiently shew'd what were the claims of the *Israelites*; so the same was very evident by their care in keeping themselves unmixt with the *Egyptians*, all the time they sojourn'd in *Egypt*. The Splendor of *Joseph* was a natural engagement for them to settle themselves there for ever; besides, their vast encrease forced them in a manner to it. For a long time the Miseries which they endured, envited

invited them to seek the Alliances of the *Egyptians* by Marriages, and to mix themselves with a people who were their Masters, and so to renounce hopes which appeared to be so very groundless. They seemed to have been warranted by *Joseph*'s Example, who had Married an *Egyptian*. However, one never finds that they tried that method. One see's on the contrary, that there was little correspondence between the *Hebrews* and *Egyptians* in their Sacred things: For the *Hebrews* sacrificed to God the abomination of the *Egyptians*, that is, those very things which the *Egyptians* worshipped.

One see's afterwards, by the great number of *Flocks* which they drove along with them at their going out of *Egypt*, that they had continued to follow the profession of their Ancestors, who were Shepherds, a very odious Employment to the *Egyptians*.

One see's at last, that after the many Miracles which *Moses* wrought in the *Egyptian* Court, that this people followed God's Conduct, and went out of that Countrey, to possess the Land of *Canaan*, which none of them had ever seen, and yet they lookt upon the obtaining it as a Blessing they could not miss of.

There are several things very remarkable upon that Subject.

The First is, That some *Egyptians* went out with the *Israelites* to dwell with them in the Land of *Canaan*, which was done, not only that there might be some indisputable Witnesses from among the Enemies of God, of the truth, and greatness of the Miracles which *Moses* had wrought amongst

them, which also was a presage of the calling of the *Gentiles* to the Faith, by their insertion into the Body of the *Jews*: but also that there might be some Witnesses of the extraordinary affection which the people of *Israel* had for the Land of *Canaan*, and of their claims to it by virtue of God's promise, that he would put them into possession of it. For otherwise it is not a common thing that a Colony of Slaves should be suffer'd to run away, much less that they should perswade their Masters to forsake their own Countrey, and their settlements at home, to go and conquer another for them.

The Second Remark is, That God made the *Jews* travel for forty years in the Deserts of *Arabia*, not only to make them forget any Tyes they might have had to return again into *Egypt*, and to accustom them to depend wholly upon Divine Providence; but also to redouble their desires after the possession of this Land of Promise.

It was for the same reason that God forbad them so straitly either the mingling with, or the setling themselves amongst the *Midianites*, tho *Moses* had given an Example by Marrying *Sephora*; or the *Edomites*, or the *Ismaelites*, or the *Moabites*, or the *Ammonites*, tho all those Nations were descended from *Therah*, their common Father, or from the Patriarchs.

In execution of which severe prohibition, God commanded the *Jews* to put all those to the Sword who should make any alliance with those Nations, as we have instance of it, *Numb.* XXIII. after the description of *Balaam*'s Prophesies.

And it could be for no other end, that he so straitly

ly charged the *Israelites* to cut off the *Hivites*, *Ammorites*, and other Nations of *Canaan* even to the Women and little Children; but in pursuance of his first design to prevent all mixture, of his People with those Nations, which without that extream rigour would infallibly and insensibly have come to pass.

I know very well that God preserved the *Gibeonites*, by ratifying that Alliance, which gave leave to those People tho of the Posterity of *Ham*, to continue amongst his own people in the Land of *Canaan*; but tho God did in effect preserve the *Gibeonites* amongst the *Jews*, yet he forced them to undergo the Drudgery, and Servile Offices of the Tabernacle, and that they might be kept, as unquestionable Witnesses of the *Hebrews* pretensions, and of their miraculous Conquest of the Land of *Canaan*; for the continuance of that Nation in the heart of the Countrey, and their submitting to the drudgery of carrying Wood, and Water for the use of the Tabernacle, tho they were at first of another Religion, was, as I have observed already, a continual Subject of admiration to the Posterity both of the *Jews* and of the *Gibeonites* themselves.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIX.

That the Law tied the People of Israel *to the Land of* Canaan, *and by several other means established the distinction betwixt Tribes and Families amongst them.*

ONe may say, that one of the most effectual means which God used to fix his people to the Land of *Canaan*, was the Law which he gave them to meet thrice a year, and Celebrate three Solemn Feasts together, which hardly gave them leave to travel far into other Countreys, and engaged them every time they met, to renewin the publick Acts of their Religion the memory and the Idea's of their hopes: And they conduced to this Design of God in this manner.

Those Feasts were Celebrated at three times which were the most commodious Seasons of the year for Travelling, betwixt the Months of *March* and *October*: The Celebration of the Passover was upon the fourteenth day after the appearance of the Moon in *March*: The Pentecost was fifty days after, and the Feast of the Tabernacles lasted from the first to the tenth day of *September*.

In short, the Law which obliged the *Jews* to assist at the Celebration of those Feasts, required the appearance of all the Males of Twenty years of age and upwards, so very rigorously, that there was

was no Dispensation; for all (without exception) were then obliged to appear. So that even during the Dispersions of their Nation, the *Jews*, who lived out of *Judea*, assisted always at the Celebration of those three Feasts with great care.

This was a visible way of keeping the Tribes of *Israel* distinct, by giving each of them a separate portion in the Land of *Canaan*, and by fixing them inseparably to it; as the whole Nation was in like manner distinguished, by its being placed in a Countrey entirely by it self.

We see accordingly, that God hath observed that Method, by giving a Law which injoyns the Division of the Land of *Canaan*, to be made into as many Portions as there were Tribes, only excepting the Tribe of *Levi*, because the *Levites*, as being the publick Ministers of their Religion, were dispersed amongst the other Tribes, that they might more conveniently attend to the Instruction of the people.

I shall not here take notice of the Miracle which was evident in that Division, which was an exact accomplishment of the Oracle which *Jacob* and *Moses* uttered a little before their Deaths.

But I shall observe, First, That as the design of God was to divide that people into Tribes, that the Tribe of *Judah*, from which the Messiah was to be born, might be the better distinguish'd and known, so he would, for the same reason, allot the Cave of *Machpelah*, the Sepulchre of the Patriarchs, to the share of the Tribe of *Judah*, as also *Ephratah*, the place where *Rachel* was Buried, which was afterwards call'd *Bethlehem*, the Town where *David* had his Birth, and which was foretold

told by the Prophet *Micha* under the Name of *Ephratah*, as the place where the Meſſiah ſhould be born in the fulneſs of time.

We muſt beſides, take notice of two particular Regulations, by which God fixed his people in the Land of *Canaan*, and preſerved a diſtinct Idea of this firſt diviſion of that Countrey.

The Firſt is the Law of *Jubilee*.

The Second is the Law of Lineal Retreats.

In ſhort, by the Law of the Jubilee which returned every fifty years, and by which every one that could juſtifie his Pedigree, was reinſtated in the poſſeſſions of his Anceſtors: God obliged that people to keep up a diſtinct knowledge of the firſt diviſion made under *Joſhua*, and which is deſcribed in that Book which contains his Hiſtory, much more effectually than if he had made a Law for that very purpoſe: So that tho the Field of *Ephratah* had been never ſo often alienated, yet it always returned to the Tribe of *Judah*, and ſo afterwards into *David*'s Family, becauſe it was at firſt the Lot of his Anceſtors.

Joſhua XIV, *&c.*

This Law of Jubilee preſerved a diſtinct knowledge of the ſeveral Tribes, and Families, and it alſo kept up a diſtinct Idea of their Genealogies, which muſt be preſerved entire of neceſſity, that they might maintain their right to the inheritance of their Anceſtors.

It would be to no purpoſe to object againſt this Obſervation, that it was impoſſible to know certainly which Tribe, and much leſs which Family every Eſtate did belong to, becauſe one ſee's that the firſt Proſelytes who went out with the *Iſraelites*, ſhared the Land of *Canaan* together with them; for

for one ſee's on the contrary,

Firſt, That God would not allow any of the *Moabites*, and *Ammonites* to become Proſelytes before the tenth Generation.

And Secondly, That he debarred the *Edomites* from being admitted to make profeſſion of Judaiſm before the third Generation, which excluded them for ever from any poſſeſſions in the Land of *Canaan*.

And Thirdly, one ought to obſerve the difference betwixt an *Egyptian* Proſelyte, and a Native *Jew*: The Quality of a Proſelyte, gave permiſſion to an *Egyptian* to live amongſt the *Jews*, and to profeſs their Religion, but it gave him no right to poſſeſs any of their Land.

And then beſides that, thoſe *Egyptian* Proſelites had a particular way of praying by themſelves, different from that of the *Jews*, as the *Jews* ſtill teſtifie. They could not poſſeſs any Eſtate in Land amongſt them: This is ſo true, that it was once found neceſſary to make a particular regulation for the Daughters of *Zelophehad*, that they might have their diviſion, which was granted only under certain Conditions, becauſe the Land was not to be divided, but amongſt the Males of the people of *Iſrael*.

Maſſa Bicour. c. 1. S. 4

Numb. XXVII.

But this is very conſiderable, that by this Law of the Jubilee, God fixed the *Jews* to the Land of *Canaan*, by giving the Children a power to look upon themſelves, not only as the preſumptive Heirs of their Parents, but to conſider their Parents only as *Uſu-fructuary*'s, ſince all their Poſſeſſions in Land were ſo Entailed, that the Children, or right Heirs of any Man could not miſs of

of the Reverſion, becauſe whatever alienation was made, it could laſt but for a time to the year of Jubilee which reſtored all the alienated poſſeſſions, abſolutely and entirely to the right Heirs.

Leviticus XXV. 23. 1 Kings XXI.

Now that this Law was always lookt upon as a fundamental Law amongſt the *Jews*, appears clearly from the words in *Leviticus*, and from the Hiſtory of *Naboth*, which holy Man rather choſe to die than to comply with the injuſt deſire of *Ahab*, who would have forced *Naboth* to ſell his Eſtate abſolutely notwithſtanding God's expreſs prohibition.

The exemplary vengeance which God took upon *Naboth*'s Murder, and the relation of it recorded in Scripture is a further confirmation of this ſame truth: If a King of *Iſrael* durſt not at firſt infringe that Law, if it was not violated by any other than *Jeſabel*, who was a Forreign Princeſs: If the Tranſgreſſion of that Law was puniſh'd in ſuch an exemplary manner, who can doubt but that it was particularly obſerved in the Tribe of *Judah*, as a Fundamental Law by which God tied up his People inſeparably to this very Countrey.

One needs only make ſome few Reflexions upon thoſe words which God makes uſe of *Ezek.* XLVI. to agree to what I ſay, if thoſe Reflexions which I have made already upon *Naboth*'s Murther be alſo added to them.

One may obſerve upon the ſame Subject, that tho God had ſeveral times ſubjected the *Jews* to a Foreign power, yet he never ſuffered the whole Nation to be all carried away out of *Canaan* at one time; nor yet to continue in Captivity

vity for the time of two whole Jubilees; they were but ſeventy years in *Babylon*, which was the furtheſt place that they were ever carried into.

From whence we may naturally conclude, that their Genealogies could not be confounded in ſo ſhort a time, becauſe many that were at the Conſecration of the ſecond Temple had ſeen the firſt, nor could the diſtinct knowledge of the ſeveral diviſions of their Eſtates be obliterated; becauſe thoſe of every Tribe who continued ſtill in the Land, might viſibly keep them up.

And we here of neceſſity ought to obſerve in the firſt place, what we may read in the XXXII. Chapter of *Jeremiah*, concerning the ſale of a Field which *Jeremiah* bought.

Jerem. XXXII.

And Secondly, what we read *Nehem.* the Vth where he is troubled to ſee the alienation of their Fields, which was a conſequence of their miſery.

And Thirdly, The manner how that people were reſtored to their Eſtates, according to the Fundamental Laws of their State.

Another very effectual means to fix that people to the Land of *Canaan*, and to preſerve their Families there certainly without confuſion, was the Law of Lineal Retreats, which God inſtituted for this very purpoſe.

For in ſhort, when this Rule was once laid down, that upon the failure of an Heir in any Family, that the next Kinſman was the Heir at Law, it appears plainly, that every one was obliged for his own intereſt, to inquire with diligence into the Genealogical Lives of his own Tribe, that he might inſtruct himſelf in the ſtate of the ſeveral Fami-

Families of his kindred, and of the ſeveral degrees of Proximity of Blood, whereby they might be related, becauſe the exact knowledge of theſe Liſts, and of thoſe ſeveral degrees of Kindred were abſolutely neceſſary to make uſe of this Right of Lineal Retreats.

There were two other Laws which contributed alſo to this; one whereof regulated all that was to be done, when there were none but Daughters left in a Family: A famous inſtance of which, we have in the Hiſtory of the Daughters of *Zelophehad* ſet down twice by *Moſes* on purpoſe no doubt, that it ſhould be the more taken notice of, as I intend to ſhew particularly in another place.

The other Law regulated all that the next Kinſman of any one that died Childleſs, was obliged to do in reſpect of the Relict, and of the Eſtate of the Deceaſed, if he intended to redeem it. One finds in the Book of *Ruth*, an illuſtrious Example of the Execution of this Law, which may be found *Deuter.* XXV.

Now after all this, let any one judge, whether there could be any ſtronger Ties than theſe to oblige the people of *Iſrael* to continue in the Land of *Canaan*, and whither the diviſion which God made of it, betwixt their ſeveral Tribes and Families, was not an infallible means to diſtinguiſh them certainly one from another.

CHAP.

CHAP. XX.

That the Laws which Moſes *made concerning the ſtate of Virginity, did principally relate alſo to the* Meſſiah, *which holds alſo as to ſeveral other Laws.*

HItherto I have ſhew'd the care which God took to diſtinguiſh his people of *Iſrael* from all other Nations of the World, and I afterwards ſhew'd what care he took to keep the diſtinctions which he firſt ſet up amongſt the Tribes. And I afterwards explained thoſe Laws which he gave to oblige every Family in each Tribe to remain diſtinct. And I afterwards made it manifeſt, that the diviſion of the Land of *Canaan* was a very proper means to execute this deſign of God.

All which ſhews, that God intended to make it eaſie for every Man to diſtinguiſh the Meſſiah, when it ſhould be once known that he was to be born out of the Family of *Jeſſe*, as it was afterwards foretold by ſeveral expreſs Oracles.

But as there ought to be ſomething ſupernatural in the Birth of the Meſſiah, who was to be born of a Virgin, ſo we ought to ſee what care God took in his Laws, that the Birth of the Meſſiah, even in this very Article, might not be a Fact too difficult to be acknowledged and eſtabliſhed.

In the Firſt Promiſe which God made to Man in theſe words, *That the Seed of the Woman, ſhould bruiſe the Serpent's Head,* being joyned with *Iſaiah's*

Propheſie, *Behold, a Virgin ſhall Conceive*, &c. *Iſ.* VII. It is viſible, that for the accompliſhment of theſe Oracles, one ought to ſuppoſe, that the Meſſiah muſt be born of a Virgin, as the Chriſtians profeſs to believe: Why ſhould God otherwiſe have taken care, to inſinuate from the very beginning of the World, that the Meſſiah was to be born of the ſeed of a Woman, without mentioning any thing of a Man, if he had not ſuppoſed, that he ſhould be born, without the Operation of a Man? And why ſhould *Iſaiah* propoſe the Conceiving of a Virgin, as an Effect wholly Supernatural?

In ſhort, God did therefore by his Laws not only ſecure the State of Virginity, that this thing might not be ambiguous when it ſhould be accompliſhed, but (as we ſhall ſee here) he has by theſe Laws made it extreamly Illuſtrious.

Firſt, Beſides that, God would have the puniſhment of Death inflicted upon them that were at any time found guilty of ſins againſt nature, as alſo upon them, that ſhould be proved to have had any inceſtuous Commerce with thoſe that were nearly related to them, and to whom either the nearneſs of Blood, or of Affinity, gave them a more free, and familiar acceſs. He moreover, ſtraitly commanded, that all Proſtitutes ſhould be put to death without any mercy.

Exod. XXII. Deut. XXII. Levit. XVIII. Levit. XX. Deut. XXIII. 17.

Secondly, He is not only contented to forbid Fornication and Adultery in general, by condemning to death, thoſe that expreſly ſhould be convicted of it, and by awarding the ſame Sentence againſt him that ſhould happen to corrupt a Contracted Virgin, and the Virgin her ſelf. But he alſo hinders

Exod. XXII. Levit. XX. Deut. XXII.

ders Men by two ways from falling into ſins of impurity, he permitted, on the one hand, a Divorce where the Wife did not pleaſe her Husband, and on the other hand he allowed of Polygamy. This Toleration made that Virgins on the one ſide, not remaining too long Unmarried were not apt to be eaſily corrupted, and on the other ſide Men were not very forward to debauch thoſe Women whom they did not intend to Marry, or to keep when Married, for he that was compelled to Marry a Virgin whom he had ſeduced, was expreſly forbidden to put her away for ever after. Deut. XXII.

It is natural to obſerve the deſign of thoſe Laws amongſt the people of the *Jews*. In ſhort, the deſire of Iſſue made them Marry very young; moſt of the Men were Married at eighteen years of Age. *Maſſec. Avoth.* c. 5.

Therefore all Virgins thought it a ſhame to be unmarried; therefore God makes them ſpeak in the third of *Iſaiah*, in that manner, when ſeven Women would marry one Man, without asking any thing for Diet, or Cloaths, provided only that he would take away that reproach of living without having Children. 'Twas this deſire of Poſterity, which made the Women look upon barrenneſs as a Curſe.

Again, this vehement deſire of Children made Eunuchs to be regarded, as Men particularly abhorred of God, not only by the *Jews*, but alſo by the Heathens themſelves: Altho afterwards they paſſed for Holy Men, becauſe they deſigned to imitate what (as they were told) had happened to *Noah*, by his Son *Ham*, which introduced the Cuſtom amongſt the *Aſſyrians* of Caſtrating *Lucian de Eunuch*, p. 537. *Lucian de Dea Syrid.* p. 1069.

themſelves, that they might be Prieſts.

Deut. XXII. Thirdly, God commanded, that any Virgin which was Betrothed to a Husband, and was corrupted in her Father's Houſe, or that was Raviſhed without calling for help, ſhould be puniſhed with Death; ſo that all the Virgins were indiſpenſably engaged for fear of loſing both Life and Honour together, to preſerve their Virginity with all poſſible care.

But here is a fourth Law concerning this matter, whereby God obliged the Parents of all contracted Virgins to take a more than ordinary care of them, when he commands *Deut.* XXII. 21. *That a Virgin for whom the Tokens of Virginity were not found, ſhould be brought out to the door of her Father's Houſe, and there be ſtoned to death, by the Men of the City,* for ſo her Parents were by that means made partakers of the puniſhment of her Crime, and their negligence, was ſeverely puniſh'd by ſuch a ſhameful Execution as diſhonoured their whole Family.

Fifthly, God ſubmitted Women to the Examination of their Husbands to whom they were Married: Nay, one would think that he intended to raiſe the Jealouſie of Husbands, when he gives them leave to bring their Wives to a publick Tryal, and to puniſh them with Death, when they did not preſerve the Tokens of their Virginity.

Deut. XXII. It was for that reaſon that he commanded, that the Parents or near Relations of the young Married Women thus complained of, ſhould produce upon all ſuch occaſions the Tokens of the Virginity of thoſe Daughters which they diſpoſed in Marriage, which was uſually done with many Solemn

olemn Circumſtances and Formalities.

And here are three things, which deſerve to be attentively conſidered.

The Firſt is the Cuſtom that was amongſt the *Jews* for Parents never to let their Virgin Daughters go out of their Houſes, which Cuſtom made them be called *Concealed,* in oppoſition to thoſe that went abroad; that is, that were Proſtitutes.

The Second is another Cuſtom which the juſt deſire of preſerving the Virginity of their Daughters againſt all Accidents, had introduced amongſt that People, which was, that all their Virgins did wear a ſort of Fetters, which are called in the *Talmud, Cevalim,* which are diſcribed by the famous *Moſes,* the Son of *Maimon,* in this manner: *Cevalim ſunt compedes in forma periſcelidis, inter quos interpoſuerunt catenulas, illis compedibus ornabant ſe Virgines, ut non incederent paſſu magno, ne contigeret ipſis damnum in Virginitate ſua.* This Deſcription may be thought to be one of the fooliſh phancies of the modern *Jews,* if we did not meet with proofs of the practice of that Cuſtom in more ancient times. In ſhort, one ſee's in the third of *Iſaiah,* that Chains are reckon'd up amongſt other Ornaments of the Daughters of *Iſrael,* which God threatneth to take away from them, when he would force them to go Captives into *Babylon.* *Ad Maſſec. Sabbath. c.6. J 4.*

The Third is an ancient Tradition mentioned in the *Pirke Eliezer* in the XVI. Chapter, *Solent Iſraelitæ digito educere Virginitatem, ne incidant in dubitationem vel ſuſpicionem, juxta illud,* Sumat Pater, & Mater puellæ, *&c.*

In a word, it ſeems, that for fear leaſt theſe Tokens

kens of Virginity should be thought to be obscure and ambiguous by their Husbands, that God has provided for the securing of the Virginity of their young Women before Marriage by a Miracle, the experience whereof was ordinary and common amongst so jealous a people. I mean, the Waters of Jealousie, which all Women whose Carriage was suspected by their Husbands, were obliged to drink, by which God did either miraculously justifie them, or else he began to inflict a punishment upon them, which was so much the more dreadful and exemplary, as it proceeded from the hand of God himself. This Miracle lasted to the destruction of the second Temple, as the *Jews* themselves tells us in that Title of their *Talmud*, which concerns Women suspected of Adultery.

Numb. V. *Joseph.* l. 3. *Antiq.* p. 95.

Sota c. 9.

However, as God works no Miracles without great reasons, so he here made a Law, the observance whereof was very rigorous, which was, that he would not suffer any Women to be Married when there was the least probability, that they had their Courses, but that they should be separated at that time, as unclean.

The Reason of this Law was, because it was then almost impossible, but that the lewd Women might have imposed upon their Husbands, in the Marks of their Virginity, which at that time are very uncertain; not to say, that as a politick Lawgiver, he might prescribe the observation of this Law, least the Common-wealth of the *Jews* should have been overstocked with weak, and sickly people.

Lastly, one see's that God himself has fastned a

a Blot upon Leprous persons, because they were supposed to have been Conceived when their Mothers had their Courses: And hereupon was that Law of God founded, which debarred Lepers for ever from the Right of coming into the Congregations of his people.

Isidor. Pelus l. 5 Ep. 117. *Joseph. Antiq* l. 3 p. 94.

One ought to make the same Observation upon those that were unlawfully begotten, for they were deprived of the Right of entring into the Congregation, and how innocent soever they were, as to the lewdness of those who gave them their Lives; yet they were thus with them made partakers of the punishment of their sin.

If one considers all these several Laws attentively, one shall find on the one hand, that several of them were of very little moment, except we suppose, that God intended to secure the state of Virginity by them beyond all danger: And on the other hand, one shall find that some of them are very severe about things, which do not seem to deserve so terrible a rigour.

But if we consider them according to God's design, as he hath afterwards particularly explained it. They will appear, I am confident, to be all very worthy of the Wisdom of such a Lawgiver.

One needs only reflect upon that method of God, that I have now explained to see, that nothing can be conceived to be better managed, than this Model according to the design which God himself had drawn.

One may make the same Observations, and examine the same stroaks of the Wisdom of God, in several other precautions, which he made use of

to make the Meſſiah be perfectly diſtinguiſh'd according to the ſeveral Characters under which he was to be propoſed afterwards by the Miniſtry of the Prophets.

One ſees, that the Meſſiah being to be born of a Virgin, was to be a firſt-born, and for that reaſon, we find many Laws which diſtinguiſh in general, the priviledges of the firſt-born.

So it appears by the XVIII of *Deuteronomy*, that the Meſſiah was to be a Prophet; and therefore, God afterwards gave notice by the Prophets of all thoſe Lights which ſhould particularly appear in him. In proſpect of this, God gave by the Miniſtry of *Moſes*, ſuch Characters as would diſtinguiſh the true Prophets from thoſe who endeavoured to uſurp that Name.

It appears alſo, that becauſe God was to Communicate to the Meſſiah, a power of working Miracles (which *Moſes* intimates, by ſaying, that he was to be a Prophet like unto him.) Therefore *Iſaiah* ſpecifies the Character of thoſe Miracles in XXXV. Chapter of his Propheſie, and God explains in particular, the Laws concerning the Blind and the Lame, and for the ſame Reaſon, he gives an account of all ſorts of Leproſie, that it might be diſtinctly known which was incurable.

It is eaſie to thoſe who will attend to the Laws of *Moſes*, to ſee that they were ſubſervient to this deſign of God, in purſuance of thoſe Proſpects which we have already ſet down.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXI.

That it was the deſign of God by all theſe Ceremonies, and particularly by that Veneration which he inſpired the Jews *with, for the Tabernacle, to preſerve the Ideas of the Meſſiah, whom he had promiſed, in their minds, by diſtinguiſhing them from all other Nations.*

AFter all thoſe Obſervations which I have made upon the ſeveral Laws that God made uſe of to execute his deſign of fixing his people to a certain place, and there to keep them ſeparate; it is natural to judge, that the Ceremonial Laws which he gave them for the regulating their outward Worſhip, were alſo intended for the ſame end. This I muſt ſhew in reſpect of the Holineſs which God aſcribes to the Land of *Canaan*, and in reſpect of the whole Service of the Tabernacle, of its Miſterious Conſtruction in all its parts: And in reſpect alſo of the raiſing of the Material Temple afterwards, to be as it were the Center of their whole Religion.

It was certainly for this purpoſe, that he particularly Conſecrated ſeveral things to himſelf, as the firſt fruits, and the firſt-born, and that he ſet apart certain times, as the firſt day of the Month, and certain Solemn Feaſts, beſides the Sabbath-day, which was Celebrated long before. And he alſo Conſecrated ſeveral places, as the Towns of refuge;

refuge; and yet more particularly, the Tabernacle and the Temple: But it was especially for that reason, that he had Consecrated certain Rites and Ceremonies, certain Sacrifices, both of Animate and Inanimate things, and certain Offerings of Gold, and Silver, Perfumes, *&c.*

One see's, that he rejected any first fruits that did not grow in the Land of *Canaan*: One see's, that tho some Sacrifices were common to the *Jews* and their Neighbours, yet he distinguish'd them by so many Circumstances, that they were much different from the others: Thus he forbids them to make use of Statues before which other Nations used to Sacrifice at that time, and he commanded them not to Sacrifice upon high places, where the Heathens used to make their Offerings very early in the Morning, at Sun-rise, which gave rise to their Worship of the Rising Sun.

But there is nothing more discovers the design of God, than the Laws by which he fixed their Worship, first to the Tabernacle, and afterwards to the Temple, at the places where God did particularly reside. One may say, that it was for that reason, God commanded the representations of Angels, and of his Law, and of the Manna to be preserved there, all which besides, that they were Memorials of the Ancient Apparitions, and favours of God to that people, they were express figures of God's Glory, of his Will, and of his miraculous power; he added also a Candlestick with seven Branches, a Table covered with Loaves, and an Altar of Incense, which were figures of the Seven Planets of this visible World, of the Blessings which we enjoy by Nature, and of those acknowledgments which we owe unto God for all these: He commanded also, that none should offer Sacrifices, in any other place except the Temple.

He would not permit that any but those who were purified according to the Law should enter into it, he excluded all Uncircumcised persons for ever, as *Moses* had formerly been commanded to pull off his Shooes in the Desert, at his approaching to the burning Bush, so every one that entered into the Temple was to enter barefoot, as a mark of that respect which had formerly been exacted of *Moses*.

And what other reason but that, could oblige him to give both at the Consecration of the Temple, and afterwards so many sensible Marks of his presence; that Cloud which was called his Glory rested there. The *Urim* and *Thummim* which was an Oracle for that whole Nation, was there; there was a daily Sacrifice offered up for the whole People, there were celebrated the three Solemn Feasts of the Passover, of Pentecost, and of Tabernacles, he forbid them to Sacrifice any where else, and he gave frequent, and illustrious Oracles at that place.

One ought also to observe, that after his Temple (to which all the glory of the Tabernacle was transmitted) was fixed at *Jerusalem*, he ordered it to be such a sensible mark of his presence, that when we read the History of *Israel*'s March in the Desart, we find, that the Tabernacle was the Image of the Temple, and built after its Model; so that as the Tabernacle stood always in the midst of the Tents of the *Levites*, and the *Levites* in the midst of the whole Camp of all the Tribes of *Israel*,

Iſrael, who were all liſted under their proper Standards: So one ſee's afterwards, that the Temple, the *Levites*, and the people of *Jeruſalem* were placed, according to their different degrees of Holineſs, as they were to approach to the moſt Holy place, which was the Habitation of his Holineſs.

Certainly, one may ſay, that the building up of a Tabernacle, or of a Temple, ſeems to be directly contrary to the nature of Religion, according to which, God who is a Spirit, will be Worſhipped in Spirit, and in Truth: So that this ſeems to have been quitted for a time, when he commanded the building of a Tabernacle.

But really there was nothing more agreeable to the deſign which God had formed at firſt, as to that people; he intended to make it viſible, and it appears, that nothing could be more effectual to make it ſo, than the double neceſſity to which that whole People was reduced to, to meet in a Body ſeveral times every year in the ſame place, and to offer all their Sacrifices in the Tabernacle, and to be there perpetually employed in the Ceremonial Service, which did inſeparably draw them thither, and fix them there.

The end of all thoſe viſible Aſſemblies, was to perpetuate the knowledge of the principal Verities of their Religion, and eſpecially to renew perpetually, the hopes of that people, as to the Meſſiah, who was promiſed to them from God.

For God having ſhortned the long Lifes which Men commonly enjoy'd in the beginning, before they went out of *Egypt*, ſo that five or ſix perſons could no longer preſerve the Tradition of 2000 years,

years, as they had done till *Moſes*'s time, God was of neceſſity obliged to make uſe of ſome other means to ſupply that defect.

He had already made uſe of ſeveral before, amongſt which, was that which we find preſcribed *Deut.* XXVII. where he ordered the building of an Altar with rough ſtones, whereupon the Names of the twelve Tribes, and the whole Law were to be ingraved.

He afterwards follow'd other Methods, and thus we ſee, that *Samuel* following *Moſes* and *Joſhuah*'s Example, repeats before a Solemn Aſſembly of the people met at *Gilgal*, for the Conſecration of *Saul*, the things that came to paſs during the Government of *Bedan* or *Sampſon*, of *Jepthah* and his own.

But yet the beſt way was to fix this people to one Tabernacle, wherein we ſee that beſides the Monuments which preſerved the Memory of the great Miracles that God had wrought at the Foundation of the *Jewiſh* Common-wealth, as the Pot of Manna, *Aaron*'s Rod that bloſſom'd, the Plates of the Altar that had been made out of the Cenſers of *Corah*, *Dathan*, and their Confederates.

One ſee's, that the Law, and the Books of the Covenant were depoſited there by God's order, and the principal Tranſactions and Deliverances that were wrought by God in the behalf of that people, were continually Celebrated with Hymns and other Tokens of publick Thankfulneſs.

It was, no doubt, upon this account, that he cauſed the Book of the Law to be laid up there, with many Ceremonies and Expiations; and that he enjoyned it to be read publickly in the preſence of

of the whole Congregation every ſeven years: One ſee's, that he commanded, that every Family ſhould read this Book continually, and that all ſhould entertain their Wives and Children from their tendereſt years, with the deſign of the Law, Night, and Day, in the Countrey, and in the Town, at all times, and in all places.

One ſee's, that God engaged them to it not only by an expreſs command, but alſo by an indiſpenſible neceſſity, becauſe he made it death for any Man to violate any of thoſe Ceremonial Laws, from a principle of obſtinacy, no pardon could be obtained for the Tranſgreſſions committed through ignorance, before they were expiated by certain Sacrifices, the Forms whereof were ſcrupulouſly preſcribed in the Law, and which could be violated upon no account whatever.

If one conſiders thoſe things, he may ſay, that the *Jews* had ſcarce one moment free in their Lives, ſo preſſing was the neceſſity which lay upon them to conſult the Law of God, the regulations of which were ſo very exact and particular, that there, no actions publick, or private, could happen, but what were regulated, and determined by thoſe Conſtitutions.

If a Beaſt was born, the Owner was to examine whether it was the firſt-born, or no, whither it was clean, or unclean, and whither it was to be Redeemed, with ſeveral other things of this nature.

If a Woman was big with Child, there were many queſtions to be asked: When ſhe came to Lie-in, ſeveral very different Ceremonies were practis'd, according as the Child was a firſt-born, or

or not. The Law enjoyned various Purifications according as the Woman brought forth, a Son or a Daughter.

God had preſcribed a great number of Laws for all the Accidents of Life, for Marriages, for Succeſſions, for Funerals, for Mourning, for unforeſeen Accidents, as the Death of a Man that was kill'd without the deſign of his Murtherer, for the ſeveral Crimes that might be committed, in their ſeveral Pollutions, and Sequeſtrations, *&c.*

It ſeems, that this whole people, from the time that they came, to the uſe of their reaſon, to the time of their Death, was ſtill continually obliged to keep up a Correſpondence with the Prieſts and *Levites*, whom God had for this purpoſe diſperſed amongſt all the Tribes of *Iſrael*, and to conſult the Law and the Teſtimony to be inſtructed in the manner of governing themſelves: But particularly, they were to look upon the Temple and the Tabernacle, as the Center of their whole Religion: And how could they do this, without carrying their Proſpect at the ſame time to thoſe great Promiſes of the Meſſiah, of which the *Iſraelites* were Depoſitaries: I ſay, upon thoſe Promiſes, which raiſed up ſo many Jealouſies betwixt their Forefathers, and the Anceſtors of thoſe Neighbouring Nations, with whom they had always ſome Controverſie, and were to be conſidered as glorious and honourable to the whole Nation.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXII.

That it appears by the Books of Moſes, *that this whole Model which God had framed, was to laſt but until the coming of the Meſſiah.*

BUt if we find in *Moſes*'s Law a ſevere reſtriction in all that belongs to the execution of the Promiſe of the Meſſiah (which ſhews, that God intended to have that Nation diſtingniſh'd from all others, till the Bleſſed Seed was come;) if we find, that he reſtrained that Promiſe to one Tribe, one Town, one Family, one particular individual perſon in that Family, that they might not be to ſeek in a confuſed Crowd of a whole people, made up of ſeveral Millions of perſons, or in a whole Tribe, or even in a City filled up with ſeveral Families: If upon this account his Birth was reſtrained to one People, one Tribe, one little Town, and one ſingle Family which was ſetled there, the *Jews* could not but obſerve, that it was God's deſign to break all thoſe Reſtrictions, and to follow quite another Method, when the Meſſiah was once come.

For in the Firſt place, the firſt Promiſe of the Meſſiah, was expreſs'd in very general Terms, which mentioned a common benefit to all the Sons of *Adam*. This Promiſe was made before God had rejected *Cain*'s Poſterity, by preferring that of *Seth*; it was made before the Reſtriction was made to *Noah* in *Seth*'s Family, and to *Shem* in *Noah*'s Family.

Secondly, God, who by Circumciſion had diſtinguiſhed *Abraham* and his Poſterity from the reſt of the Family of *Sem*, did expreſly promiſe to *Abraham*, that in his Seed all the Nations of the World ſhould be bleſſed: This Promiſe was made alſo, before God had reſtrained the Promiſe to the perſon *Iſaac* in prejudice of *Iſhmael*, and then afterwards to the perſon of *Jacob*, in the prejudice of *Eſau*.

Thirdly, One ſee's this ſame Truth yet more clearly explained out of *Jacob*'s Oracle concerning *Judah*, *Gen.* XLIX. wherein *Jacob* expreſly foretels, that the Meſſiah ſhould be the expectation of the Nations; that is to ſay, the Comfort, the Glory, the Hope, and the Joy of all the Nations of the Univerſe.

As this was a Capital Truth, ſo God propoſed it by *Balaam*, at the *Iſraelites* entring into *Canaan*, that they might thus underſtand, that all thoſe diſtinctions, which their ſeparation living in *Canaan* from the reſt of the World, might keep up, were not always to laſt.

But this particularly appears out of *Moſes*'s Law, which allows of ſeveral ſorts of Proſelytes, receiving ſome without tying them to the obſervance of all the Ceremonies in the Law, which it would never have done, if it had been abſolutely neceſſary to be a *Jew* before they have a ſhare in the benefits of the Promiſe.

Secondly, It ſuppoſes, that God was to remove that People out of *Canaan* into remote Countreys, and to diſperſe them, as it were, into the uttermoſt parts of the World, which was done by Divine Providence, only to publiſh the Promiſe of the

Messiah, to establish the Belief in the Prophets and so to facilitate the calling of the Gentiles to the Faith.

Thirdly, He declares expresly, as St. *Paul* observes, that he was to call his people, that which was not his people, that he might by that means provoke the people of *Israel* to Jealousie. This Notion of Jealousie mentioned by St. *Paul*, deserves to be taken notice of with very great care, if we reflect upon the Spirit of Jealousie, which reigned amongst the *Israelites*, and their Neighbours.

I shall take notice in another place of the great number of Oracles of *David* upon the same Subject, altho he otherwise insults upon the *Moabites*, and *Edomites*, upon all occasions, and shews as much Aversion, and Jealousie against those Nations, as was possible for one that lived in a continual War with those people.

I shall also make some Reflexions upon *Solomon*'s Marriage with the Princesses of *Tyre*, of *Sidon*, and of *Egypt*; that is to say, with the Posterity of *Ham*, which was united to that of *Judah*, to take a part with them in the Blessing; from whence it came to pass, that the Song that was written upon that Marriage, was preserved as a piece divinely inspired, and ought to be considered, as a happy presage of the calling of the Gentiles to the Communion of the Messiah.

One may also joyn here the manner of *Solomon*'s giving to *Hiram*'s Subjects, who had helped him in the building of the Temple, the Countrey of *Chabul*, which was incloſed within *Judea*, altho those people were of the *Canaanites* Posterity, upon

on whom *Noah* had particularly pronounced, *Cursed be Canaan*. Gen. IX.

One may also see, that as God had permitted his people to be Transported into *Chaldea*, and *Babylon*, and had raised up there Prophets amongst them on purpose to acquaint the World with the glorious hopes of the *Jews*, so he caused the Books of Scripture to be Translated into Greek about 300 years before our Saviour's Birth, not only to prevent all suspicion of falshood in the minds of the Gentiles, if they were produced of a suddain after the Birth of the Messiah, but also to instruct the Heathens by little and little of the Right which all Nations had as well as the *Jews* to that Promise; that they might take their share in it whenever they should be invited to it by God, and especially to take away the Scandal which was to follow upon God's destroying the Form of that Commonwealth by the *Romans*, according to *Daniels* Prediction.

All these things, no doubt, engaged the *Jews* who read the Books of *Moses* to make particular Remarks upon them.

But they ought to have observed three things especially: The First was, That altho God had at first chosen their whole Nation, yet he was pleased to disperse afterwards almost ten parts of thirteen; which plainly shew'd, that this choice which he had made, was only an Oeconomical choice, and for a particular design.

The Second is, That altho he was very severe and punctual in exacting obedience to the Ceremonial Service, yet he had fixed the most part of their observances to certain places, to certain

times, and to certain persons: It was easie to judge, that when God bounded them in this manner, it was only for an Oeconomical Service prescribed only upon a particular prospect, which was one day to have an end.

The Third is, That experience convinced them that altho God seemed to have fixed his Service to the Temple, yet he suffered the *Chaldeans* to destroy the first, and did not restore to the second, the first Marks of his presence, when it was rebuilt by the order of *Cyrus*.

From whence it was natural to conclude, that such a glory as retired by little and little from that place which God had chosen, was only design'd to be there for a time, till God should extend his Service, by calling all the World to his Religion, and so making the whole Universe his Temple, as we see it done in our days, by the calling of the Gentiles to the Religion of our Saviour.

FINIS.

REFLEXIONS
Upon the
BOOKS
OF THE
HOLY SCRIPTURE
To Establish the
TRUTH
OF THE
CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

Volume II.

LONDON,
Printed for **Richard Chiswell** at the *Rose* and *Crown* in St. *Paul*'s Church-yard. MDCLXXXVIII.

THE PREFACE.

IN my *Reflexions upon the Book of* Geneſis, *I have ſhewed the means God made uſe of to imprint the Idea's of the Creation of the World, and the Promiſe of the Meſſiah, during that long Tract of* 2500 *years, before the Children of* Iſrael *departed out of* Egypt, *and before the Hiſtory of it was penn'd by* Moſes.

They that conſider that God at firſt preſcribed the Law of the Sabbath, to fix the belief of the Creation of the World, and that this Law hath been conſtantly obſerved ſince the beginning of the World, until Moſes, *and is ſtill to this day obſerved amongſt the* Jews, *eaſily apprehend, that this Fact of the Creation, could not be more inconteſtably proved, or more firmly grounded.*

In like manner an attentive Reflexion upon the Oracles which I have mention'd, and which alone at firſt were the foundation and hope of the Re-

ligion of the Patriarchs, and were afterwards recorded in the Book of Geneſis, *is ſufficient to perſwade any one, that it was impoſſible, but the memory of the Promiſe of the Meſſiah, ſhould be deeply engraven in the minds of the* Iſraelites, *tho we ſhould ſuppoſe, that the Spirit of Jealouſie, which God had raiſed amongſt the ſeveral Pretenders to the execution of that great Promiſe, did not much contribute to preſerve the remembrance of it; as I have ſhown very carefully, that it was very uſeful for that purpoſe.*

I have in my Reflexions afterwards proved upon the four laſt Books of Moſes, *that God proſecuted the ſame deſign in the Laws which he gave to the People of* Iſrael, *as well as in the peculiar Forms and Regulations of their Government and Religion; the great deſign of which Rules, was only that the Meſſiah at his appearance in the World, might be unqueſtionably known.*

Whoever ſhall read the Reflexions which I have made upon this matter, will eaſily perceive, that the long Life of the Patriarchs, was of great efficacy, to make ſo freſh and lively an impreſſion of thoſe illuſtrious Facts, the Creation of the World, and the Promiſe of the Meſſiah, *that there was no need of very frequent Oracles to confirm the ſame, as indeed we find that in the*

ſpace of 2553 years, only five or ſix principal Oracles were given, which have a particular Relation to the Meſſiah, as I ſhall ſhew afterwards.

Now this Reflexion being once ſuppoſed, as the Life of Man was afterwards conſiderably ſhortned at the time of Moſes, *ſo one may judge, that this Promiſe ought to be more frequently propoſed, and more clearly explained. And we ought to ſuppoſe that in proportion to the delaying of the Promiſe, and the ſhortneſs of Mens Lives which diſcouraged their hopes of ever ſeeing a Promiſe fulfilled, which their Anceſtors whoſe Lives were much longer, could never attain to the more diſtinct knowledge which God gave of this great object, was in order to ſtir up ſtrong deſires in the minds of the* Iſraelites, *as well as of the* Gentiles, *to whom God was afterwards to renew the Ideas of it: and conſequently we find, that a greater number of Oracles and Propheſies, were required from time to time, to entertain and ſtrengthen the belief of a Promiſe, the accompliſhment whereof was ſo conſiderably deferred.*

And indeed, this was exactly the Method which God followed, the Spirit of Propheſie having in a moſt illuſtrious manner been employ'd to preſerve the Ideas of the Promiſe of the Meſſiah, and to increaſe them in the minds of the Jews, *until the time of the accompliſhment it ſelf; and God hath*

ſo

so exactly set down by the Prophets, the several parts of his design, as there needs not be afterwards any difficulty in discerning the prosecution of that design which he had formed at first.

I intend in this Third part of my Reflexions on the Writings of the Old Testament to explain this Method which God hath followed, in shewing how he hath accommodated himself to the state of the Jews, *whom he had made the Depositaries of his Oracles, and proportioned them to their understanding and desires.*

For the more happy execution of this Design, and a clearer discovery of this Conduct of God, which seems somewhat obscured, by intermixing these Predictions concerning the Messiah, with a great number of Events, during that Series of Ages, whereof we have the History written by his own order: I think my self obliged first of all to explain the Reasons why God was pleased to interweave the Oracles which relate to the Messiah, with other Matters, that seem to be of a very different nature; and then shall lay down the Rules which one ought to follow in applying the ancient Prophesies to the Messiah.

After these Preliminary Reflexions I suppose, that in order to a fuller discovery of the Series of God's design and a more distinct knowledge of the Progress of the Revelation of this Matter, that I ought again to resume, and to set before the Eyes

Eyes of the Reader, the five or six principal Oracles which God hath given concerning the Messiah, from the beginning of the World to Moses, *together with that Oracle which he uttered by the mouth of that illustrious Legislator.*

One will easily judge without my undertaking to prove it, that the Idea's of these Oracles were familiar to the Jews, *until* David, *during the space of* 400 *years, after which God began to discover the same more particularly, in choosing* David *to be the Person, in whose Family that Prophecy should be accomplished, because the Messiah was to be born of his Seed.*

And so I shall immediately pass on to the consideration of those Oracles *which* David *himself uttered on this Subject, which deserve so much the more attention, because God, who at that time changed the Government of the* Jews, *did considerably augment the Idea's which the Ancients had concerning the Promise of the Messiah.*

Lastly, I shall collect under certain Heads those Oracles which were uttered by the Prophets concerning the Messiah, some hundred of years before the Captivity of the Jews *in* Babylon, *and soon after; and forasmuch as the Light concerning this matter was at that time much encreased, and the Oracles themselves are much more clear and distinct, as giving many more particular Characters of the Messiah, so I shall con-*

rent my self briefly to touch upon them, in following the principal Characters which they give concerning the Messiah.

After which I shall have nothing else to do, but to make some Reflexions upon the state of the Jews, *from the time of the last of the Prophets, until that wherein the Christians pretend that this Promise and these Oracles were accomplished in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Tho' the multiplicity of the things which I am to handle, and which I intend to do with the greatness briefness that is possible, might seem to oblige me to omit the examining the succession of the History of the Jews; *yet God having been pleased to intermix the History of the* Jews, *and many other Transactions, with these Prophecies, it obligeth me in this third part to make also some Reflexions upon the Historical Books of the* Old Testament. *And indeed, this will be of great use to prove the truth of these Oracles, and the manner how God hath constantly followed that Draught, which he at first form'd to himself; as also to make it appear, that notwithstanding the different Revolutions of the Jewish Commonwealth, he hath always continued those Means, which he chose at first, to facilitate the distinct knowledge of the Messiah, whenever he should appear.*

It is very necessary to explain this Series of the Design

Design of God, to make the Authority of these Prophecies more firm and unmoveable; those Laws, the observation of which served to distinguish the Family of Judah, *and that of the Messiah, being so many Boundaries and Limits, within which God was pleased to confine himself, that his Conduct in this matter might be the more easily observable and known.*

And forasmuch as in my Reflexions upon the Books of Moses, *I have begun by the firm establishment of the Truth of those Books, on which I made my Reflexions, without which that Work would have wanted all its strength; so I intend also in this part to follow the same Rule; and accordingly I shall at first establish the Truth of the Historical and Prophetical Books of the* Old Testament: *for if one ought to prove that these Prophecies were well known and very famous, then it will be expected from me that I should solidly demonstrate the Truth of those Books in which those Oracles are recorded, before I can of right conclude that the Facts which are related by other Authors, are the accomplishment of these Prophecies.*

This design would naturally engage me to prove the Truth of every one of these Books in order particularly; but as I have not only proved the Truth of the Books of Moses *already, but that moreover I intend in my reflexions on the Books*

of

of the New Teſtament, *to demonſtrate the Truth of them beyond all conteſt; and beſides, that the Hiſtorical and Prophetical Books of the* Old Teſtament *are ſo eſſentially linked with thoſe of* Moſes, *and the Diſciples of Jeſus Chriſt, that it is impoſſible to acknowledge the Truth of the one, without owning at the ſame time the Truth of the others, I believe I may be diſpenſed with, as to the proving the Truth of every Book of the* Old Teſtament *in particular; And therefore becauſe I intend to be very ſhort, I will confine my ſelf to ſome general Reflexions upon thoſe Books of the* Old Teſtament, *which were writ ſince* Moſes, *but ſuch, as I hope, will be ſufficient to ſatisfie an equitable and intelligent Reader.*

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REFLEXIONS
UPON THE
Hiſtorical and Prophetical
BOOKS
OF THE
OLD TESTAMENT,
To Eſtabliſh the Truth
OF THE
CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

CHAPTER I.

That there is in the Hiſtorical Writings of the Old Teſtament, an uninterrupted Series of Events, which have a natural and neceſſary dependance for more than Ten Ages.

THE firſt general Proof which I make uſe of to eſtabliſh the Truth of the Hiſtorical Books of the Old Teſtament, after *Moſes*, may be lawfully drawn from the uninterrupted Series of Events, which are

related by those Authors who have written the History of the State and Church of *Israel*.

We may observe several considerable *Epocha's* of this History, which takes in about One thousand and forty years.

The first part takes in all that happened after *Moses* 'till the establishment of the Kingdom, which is related in the Books of *Joshua*, *Judges*, *Ruth*, and the First Book of *Samuel*.

The second contains the History of the Kings of *Juda* and *Israel*, 'till the Destruction of *Samaria* and *Jerusalem*.

The third contains an Account of what passed during the *Jewish* Captivity, and after their re-establishment.

Now there is not one of these Books which concern the History of this People, in one or other of these *Epocha's*, which has not certain Characters of the truth of its Relations, by the necessary Connexion which it has either with those Events which went before it, or with those which follow'd it, and this by a natural and immediate dependance. This ought to be confirm'd by some Observations.

The Book of *Joshua*, which contains the Conquest, and division of the Land of *Canaan*, is the Execution of *Moses*'s design, who brought the People of *Israel* out of *Egypt*, to go and make themselves Masters of a Countrey, which the *Jews* pretend that God promised to *Abraham*. The Division of this Land amongst the Tribes, is the Title which each Tribe had to its Possessions in it; and this Division subsisted a great while very distinct, and well known by the several Tribes of this

this People. There happened no considerable Change, but only when the Kings of *Assyria* carried the Ten Tribes into Captivity, after the taking of *Samaria*, in the Three thousand two hundred and eighty third year of the World: The Country continuing in the same state, under the two remaining Tribes, without any Change ensuing upon their Transportation into *Babylon*, as I have observed in the Nineteenth Chapter of my Reflexions upon *Exodus*, and the following Books.

This Book has a very natural Influence upon the following Books, as is manifest from the History of the Alliance which the *Gibeonites* got from the *Jews* by surprize. It serves for a foundation to all that happened for Four hundred and thirty years after, in *David*'s Reign, under whom the Commonwealth, being already changed into a Monarchical Government, had in all appearance undergone a great Alteration.

The Book of *Judges* has an essential Relation to the Books of *Moses* and *Joshua*, the most part of the Captivities of the People of *Israel*, being a Consequence of their Quarrels with the Nations which they had subdued, or with their Neighbours, as the *Moabites* and *Ammonites* descended from *Lot*, who were jealous of this People that was descended from *Abraham*.

There we may see, for Instance, the *Israelites* upon the Defensive part, because God forbad them to set upon the *Moabites*, and the *Ammonites*; whereas these last pretended that *Israel* had usurped some part of their Country.

It must be granted, that there is nothing so re-

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There we may see, for Instance, the *Israelites* upon the Defensive part, because God forbad them to set upon the *Moabites*, and the *Ammonites*; whereas these last pretended that *Israel* had usurped some part of their Country.

It must be granted, that there is nothing so re-

markable as the Actions of these Judges, whom God raised up to deliver his People from those different Captivities, through which they passed for Three hundred fifty six years together. But we may find the Memory of some of them preserved by those publick Hymns which were famous throughout the Nation, and by these illustrious Monuments of their Judicial Authority, which were preserved amongst them, and which kept up a Remembrance of them amongst the *Israelites*, and the Neighbour Nations.

For this ought to be observed with care, That since the *Jews* could not invent any thing upon this Head, which would not be well known by all the Neighbouring Nations, as the *Tyrians*, who kept up their own Government 'till *Alexander*'s time, who subdued them intirely, and the *Moabites*, whose Empire continued for Fourteen Ages after *Lot*'s time, until the Destruction of *Jerusalem* by *Nebuchadnezzar*, it was not easie for any fabulous Relations in this matter, to obtain Authority.

The Book of *Ruth*, seems not to have any thing considerable, but the Conversion of *Ruth* a *Moabitess*, who rely'd upon the hopes of the House of *Juda*, out of which she had marry'd her Husband. But we may take notice of three things besides; 1. Of the exact Practise of that Law which obliged them to marry the Widow of a Relation who dy'd without Issue. 2. Of their lively remembrance of the Deeds of their Ancestors, as of *Juda*'s Incest with *Thamar*, which was look'd upon however, as a fountain, and a pattern of Blessings. 3. Of the Lineage of *David*, whom

whom this Author represents as deriving his Pedigree from a *Moabitess*, which not making much for the Honour of a King of *Israel*, do's at the same time confirm the Truth of the Relations which are contained in that Book.

The First Book of *Samuel* contains the History of *Eli*'s and *Samuel*'s Judicatures, of the change of the Government from a Commonwealth to a Monarchy under *Saul*, of *David*'s Anoynting, *Saul*'s Rejection and Death.

The Second contains the History of *David*, his Victories, his design of building a Temple, a design which God left to *Solomon* to execute, his Wars with the *Ammonites*, his Crime with *Bathsheba*, his Son *Absalom*'s Insurrection against him, and his great Successes against his Enemies. There is nothing in these two Books, which has not an exact Connexion with what went before, and what follows. One see's throughout, an exact Relation to the Law of *Moses*; One see's throughout, Monuments set up in several Places, to preserve the memory of particular Actions; One see's also in the Wars of the *Israelites* with their Neighbours, a constant Series of those old Differences, which were the Fruits of the Jealousie of these Nations against the Children of *Israel*.

The Books of the *Kings*, which the *Jews* reckon but as one Book, contain an Abridgment of *Solomon*'s Establishment in the Place of *David*, of the Glory of his Empire, which was carried by *David* to the Banks of *Euphrates*, according to the ancient Prophecyes, of his Marriage with the King of *Egypt*'s Daughter, of the Building of the Temple, and his own Palace, with the

help of *Hiram* King of *Tyre*; One see's the manner of the Queen of *Sheba*'s visit to *Solomon*, of his Alliances with the *Moabites*, the *Ammonites*, the *Edomites*, the *Zidonians*, and the *Hittites*; thinking by these Marriages to have put an end to the old Quarrels between his People, and these Nations, who were jealous of the People of *Israel*. All this was done in the Forty years of *Solomon*'s Reign; and as there never was so famous a Reign in *Judea*, so never was there any, of which there are left so many Monuments, as well there, as in the Neighbouring Countreys.

One see's afterwards in the same Book, the Division of *Solomon*'s Empire into two Governments, that of *Juda*, which continued from *Solomon*'s Death, during the Reign of Eighteen Successors, for Three hundred eighty six years, to the taking of *Jerusalem* by *Nebuchadnezzar*; and that of *Israel* form'd by *Jeroboam*, which lasted Two hundred fifty four years, under the Reign of Nineteen Successors, until the taking of *Samaria* the Capital City of the Kingdom of *Israel*.

The History of the *Chronicles*, which was written about Twenty six years after that of the *Kings*, carries the History down to *Cyrus* the Founder of the Empire of *Persia*, who gave the *Jews* their Liberty again. The Books of *Ezra* and *Nehemiah* contain the History of what passed under his Successors, to the time of *Artaxerxes* for almost Eighty two years.

It was in this Interval that the Deliverance happened which the *Jews* received under *Esther*, Wife to one of the most powerful Kings of *Persia*, the

the Memory of which the *Jews* celebrate every year in all places, the Thirteenth and Fourteenth days of the Month *Adar*, (which answers to our *February*) by virtue of *Esther*'s Law.

After these general Remarks with which I shall content my self at present, I ought to make some Reflexions, which cannot be omitted without taking away a great deal of force from those Proofs which establish the Truth of this Matter.

The First is, That as these Histories have a necessary Relation to the Laws of *Moses*, so they could not have been neglected by a People, who in their Religious and Civil Conduct, were absolutely regulated by those very Laws.

The Second is, That all the Actions related in this History, have passed altogether in the bosom of a People, the Extent of whose Country is not Twenty Leagues in breadth, nor Eighty in length.

The Third is, That this People having observ'd the Law of the Seventh year, and of the First year, or Year of Jubilee, (which Law you have in the Twenty fifth of *Leviticus*) from their first Conquest and Division of the Country, Forty seven years after their coming out of *Egypt*. This Observation has serv'd for a double Cycle, to fix the remembrance of those Actions, and to make it pass from one Generation to another. And so, the greatness of that Promise which God made to *Hezekiah*, *Esai.* XXXVII. 30. and II *Kings* XIX. 29.) may easily be understood; that altho' *Sennacherib*'s Invasion would in all probability lay waste all *Judea*, yet they might eat the Fruits of the Earth in quietness, the Fourteenth year of *Hezekiah*,

Hezekiah, and the next year they ſhould eat the Fruits that would grow up of themſelves without Tillage, and that on the Sixteenth year they ſhould have liberty to till the Ground, as formerly; which ſhews, without any force upon the words, that the Fifteenth year of *Hezekiah*'s Reign, was the Sabbathical year, in which the *Jews* were forbidden to Cultivate the Ground.

The Fourth is, That it appears in effect by the Series of this whole Story, that things were written ſo, as to agree with the publick Records which were extant amongſt the People: This is manifeſt, if we conſider how often the Sacred Penmen refer us to the Hiſtories and Annals of thoſe Kings of whom they ſpeak, and of whom they only quote the principal Stories in ſhort in purſuing their Deſign, which was intirely to bring an Account of the ſtate of the Religion and the Government of the *Jews* and *Iſraelites*, under one view.

Let us go on to other Proofs to eſtabliſh this Truth.

CHAP. II.

That there is a ſtrict Connexion between the Sacred Hiſtory, and the oldeſt Monuments which we have of Prophane Hiſtory.

AS there was but few very Ancient Writers of Prophane Hiſtory, and as we have but ſmall Fragments of them diſperſed here and there, preſerved

preſerved for the moſt part by the care of *Joſephus* the Jewiſh Hiſtorian, and of *Euſebius* in his Books *De Præparatione Evangelicâ*, ſo we ought not to be ſurprized, if but few of the more illuſtrious Paſſages and Events of the Jewiſh Hiſtory be taken notice of by Pagan Writers. The People of *Iſrael* being otherwiſe engaged by the Obſervation of the *Moſaick* Law, to keep cloſe to that Country where it was eſtabliſhed; this made their Neighbours have leſs knowledge of their Hiſtory.

However, there is enough left to ſhew with how great fidelity and exactneſs the Sacred Writers penned the Hiſtory of their own Nation: In ſhort, we may find amongſt the Heathen Hiſtorians and Poets, (who were their firſt Hiſtorians,) ſeveral Relations which ſhew that the Matters of Fact related by the Sacred Writers, were well enough known to them, and in the ſame manner that they are related in thoſe Hiſtorical Books which were writ after *Moſes*.

The Memory of *Joſhua* and his Conqueſts was famous amongſt the Heathens; There are ancient Monuments extant which prove that the *Carthaginians* were a Colony of the *Tyrians*, who eſcaped from *Joſhua*; as alſo that the Inhabitants of *Leptis* in *Africa*, came originally from the *Zidonians*, who forſook their Country, becauſe of the Miſeries which afflicted it. *Procop. Vandalicorum lib. II. c. 10.*

The Fable of the *Phœnician Hercules* aroſe from the Hiſtory of *Joſhua*; the overthrow of the Giants, and the famous *Typhon*, owe their Original to the overthrow of *Og* the King of *Baſhan*, and of the *Anakims*, who were called Giants. *Polybius Frag. CXIV. Saluſt. de Bello Jugurthino.*

The

The Tempeſt of Hail ſpoken of in the Eleventh of *Joſhua*, was transformed by the Poets into a Tempeſt of Stones, with which, as they ſay, *Jupiter* overwhelmed the Enemies of *Hercules* in *Arim*, which is exactly the Country where *Joſhua* fought with the Children of *Anak*.

One finds the Memorial of the Actions of *Gideon* preſerved by *Sanchoniathon* a *Tyrian* Writer, who lived ſoon after him, and whoſe Antiquity is atteſted by *Porphyry*.

One finds in the manner of *Jephtha*'s Sacrificing his Daughter after his Victory over the *Ammonites*, the Original of the Sacrificing of *Iphigenia*, it being uſual with the Heathens, as *Ælian* judiciouſly obſerves, to attribute to their later Hero's the Glory of the Actions of thoſe who lived long before.

Varia Hiſtoria Lib. V. cap. 3.

We have an Account of a Feaſt which was obſerved by the Heathen *Romans* in *April*, the time of the Jewiſh Harveſt, in which they let looſe Foxes with Torches faſtned to their Tails, which certainly came from the Story of *Sampſon*, and was brought into *Italy* by the *Phœnicians*.

Ovid. Faſtorum Lib. IV.

One finds in the ſame Hiſtory of *Sampſon* and *Dalilah*, the Original of the Story of *Niſus*, and his Daughter, who cut off thoſe fatal Hairs, upon which the Victory depended.

Ovid. Metam. Lib. VIII. Fab. I.

Nicolaus Damaſcenus has preſerved the Account of the Victory which *David* obtained over the *Syrians* of *Zoba*, upon the Banks of the *Euphrates*, as it is deſcribed by the Sacred Writers.

Joſeph. Antiq. Lib. VII. cap. 6.

There are Monuments extant which deſcribe the part which *Hiram* King of *Tyre* had in the building of the Temple of *Solomon*, almoſt the ſame

ſame with the Account which the Sacred Authors give us of his part in the Erection of that great Work.

One finds in *Herodotus* an Account of the taking of *Jeruſalem* by *Seſoſtris* King of *Egypt*, as it is deſcribed in the Hiſtory of *Rehoboam*.

Joſeph. Antiq. Lib. VII. cap. 6.

One finds the Hiſtory of the Kings of *Syria* related by *Nicholaus Damaſcenus* in the ſame manner as it is deſcribed by the Sacred Writers, when they give us an Account of the Victories which the Kings of *Syria* obtained over the Kings of *Samaria*.

One finds that the Story of *Phaeton* is ſolely founded upon the Tranſlation of *Elijah* in a Chariot of Fire.

II Kings II.

All that I have taken notice of happened before the time of the firſt *Olympiad*, from whence the learned *Varro* has obſerved, That the firſt Knowledge of Hiſtory began amongſt the *Greeks*; whence alſo it is that they call all the precedent Time fabulous, the *Greeks* having before nothing but Fables, into which they had turned whatever ancient Hiſtory they were acquainted with.

Since that time, we do not find fewer Marks of the Truth of the Sacred Hiſtories.

One ſee's in the Pagan Writers the Reign of *Tiglah-Pileſer*, who is the ſame with the younger *Ninus*; as alſo the deſtruction of the *Syrian* Monarchy by his means, as it is deſcribed to us in the Sacred Hiſtorians. *Nicholas Damaſcenus* in *Joſephus*, *Antiq. Lib.* VII. *cap.* 6.

One ſee's amongſt the Heathens, the Succeſſion of *Shalmaneſer* as it is deſcribed in the Scriptures.

Caſtor. in Euſeb.

One

Menander apud Joseph. Lib. IX. cap. ult.

One see's the manner of *Sennacherib*'s conquering the most part of the Towns of *Palestina*, of *Tyre* and *Sidon*, described in Heathen Writers, particularly as we have it in the Scriptures.

The manner of *Sennacherib*'s Succession to *Shalmaneser*, of his desolating the Country of *Palestine* while he carried on his Victories, is described by the Heathens, *Herodot. Lib.* II. *& Berosus in Josephus Lib.* X. *c.* 1. exactly as the Sacred Historians relate it.

Strabo Lib. I. & XV.

The Memory of *Tirhakah* King of *Æthiopia*, as of a great Conqueror, is preserved amongst the Heathens; for it was his coming, in short, which obliged *Sennacherib* to arise from before *Libna*, whence he intended to go and besiege *Jerusalem*.

One finds amongst the Heathens the remembrance of the manner of the Destruction of all *Sennacherib*'s Army, for his Blasphemies against God, which the *Egyptians* disguised to appropriate to themselves. *Herodot. Lib.* II. *cap.* 141.

Herodot. Lib. I. cap. 104. Lib. II. cap. 1. Lib. VII. cap. 10.

One finds the ruin of *Ashdod* by King *Psammetichus* described by Heathen Authors, as we have it in the Sacred Scriptures, *Herod. Lib.* II.

One finds an Account of the ways by which the *Medes* lost the *Empire* of *Asia* under *Cyaxares*, after his Conquests over the *Assyrians* in the Heathen Writers, much the same as it is described in *Nahum*. II. 5.

Alexand. Polyhistor. ap. Syncellum.

The Account of the taking of *Nineve* by *Nabopollasar*, and by *Astyages*, is much the same in Heathen Authors with the description of it in *Nahum*, *Esaiah*, and *Ezekiel*.

The manner of *Josia*'s undertaking a War against

gainst *Pharaoh-Necho* King of *Egypt*, when he was overthrown in the Plains of *Megiddo*, as it is described by the Heathens, agrees with the Relation which are given of it in the Holy Scriptures. *Herodot.* Lib. II.

The Victories of *Nebuchadnezzar* over the *Egyptians* and the *Jews*, the carrying away of the consecrated Vessels of the Temple, and of the *Jews* to *Babylon*, are described by the Heathens. II Kings XXIII. 29, 30.

The manner of the yielding up of *Tyre* to *Nebuchadnezzar*, as they describe it, agrees with what *Ezekiel* says *Chap.* XXVIII. 18, 19. *Annal. Phœnicic. ap. Joseph.* Lib. I. contra *Apionem.*

One finds in Heathen Authors an Account of the stately building of *Babylon* by *Nebuchadnezzar*, which is described exactly in the Scriptures. *Berosi. Abyden.*

One finds also in them, That the death of *Pharaoh-Hoptha* or *Vaphres* as they call him, happened according to *Jeremiah*'s Predictions, *Chap.* XL. 30. *Herodot.* Lib. II cap. 163 & 169.

One finds also the taking of *Babylon* by *Cyrus*, as it is described by the Prophet *Jeremiah*, *Chap.* LI. 46. *Herod.* Lib. I. cap. 178.

One finds also that the Death of *Belshazzar* happened exactly as *Daniel* had described it, *Chap.* V. *Xenophon. Histor.* Lib. VII.

One see's there an Account of *Xerxes*'s great Undertaking against *Greece*, as *Daniel* had foretold it, *Chap.* XI. *Herod.* Lib. VII. capp. 5, 6.

Here then is an Agreement which is perfect enough in several Articles, to which we might add a greater number, if we had a greater number of Pagan Historians: But as we cannot find after the Reign of *Artaxerxes Longimanus*, Histories amongst the *Jews* of equal Authority with those

thoſe which were written by and after *Moſes*, as *Joſephus* the Jewiſh Hiſtorian obſerves; ſo we cannot compare the Jewiſh and Pagan Hiſtories together afterwards, in that form we have done hitherto.

But it is eaſie to obſerve four things, which are very conſiderable upon this Head.

I. That the Credit of the Sacred Hiſtorians may be grounded upon the great number of Remarks we have made already, or elſe nothing will ever eſtabliſh it. For how can we conceive that all ſorts of Hiſtorians, of all Nations and all Ages, *Babylonians*, *Aſſyrians*, *Tyrians*, *Egyptians*, and *Greeks*, could agree ſo exactly with the *Jews* in thoſe Facts they relate, if the Jewiſh Authors had not exactly follow'd the Rules of Truth?

II. That as the Prophecies of *Zechariah* and *Daniel* deſcribe, with an almoſt incredible exactneſs the conſiderable Events which happened in the Countries near to *Judea*, and in *Judea* it ſelf, in a time which was not expired until the Sacred Writers had given over writing amongſt the *Jews*, ſo there was need of almoſt nothing elſe, but to look over the Books of *Daniel*, to ſee what happened from day to day. And here we may obſerve, That the Reaſon why *Porphyry* thought the Book of *Daniel* was forged after the time of *Antiochus Epiphanes*, was becauſe this Book ſeem'd to him to be rather a Hiſtory than a Prediction, which he juſtify'd in making a ſort of Commentary upon this Prophecy, by comparing with it the Pagan Hiſtorians which were then extant.

III. That as the Jewiſh Commonwealth came under the Power of the *Greeks*, who were Maſters of Learning, and of the Art of writing Hiſtories, ſo there is little need of any other Witneſſes beſide the *Greek* Authors, as *Joſephus* demonſtrates, in effect, by proving that the *Greeks* were well enough acquainted with the Affairs of the Jewiſh Nation.

IV. That we do really find after the time of *Artaxerxes*, a very great part of the Jewiſh Hiſtory compoſed by the care of ſome particular Men, with ſufficient exactneſs, tho' it be not of equal Authority with the Sacred Writers.

CHAP. III.

That there is an uninterrupted Series of Events foretold by the Sacred Oracles, of which we may ſee a very great number accompliſhed in every Age.

AS we may very reaſonably ſay, That all the Hiſtory of the People of *Iſrael*, has a very exact dependence upon the Writings of that famous Legiſlator; ſo we may alſo obſerve, That there are ſcarce any conſiderable Events which make up the Body of this Hiſtory, which do not deſerve a particular Remark, either as a fulfilling of *Moſes*'s Prophecies, or of thoſe other Prophets whom God raiſed up after him to reform the Errors of that Nation. And it is a very conſiderable thing, That in all the Series of Events foretold by the Prophets, there was not one Generation

tion amongſt all the Offſpring of the People, but what ſaw the Accompliſhment of ſeveral of theſe Oracles. A little attention and care in comparing the Chronology of the Oracles with that of the Events, will ſufficiently juſtifie what I ſay. I ſhall content my ſelf with obſerving their different Orders, which will ſatisfie a Judicious Reader, ſince my Deſign do's not engage me neceſſarily to do a thing which would carry me too far, and which may be done with little Application.

We may conſider four ſorts of Oracles; 1. Thoſe which have reſpect to particular Facts nigh at hand. 2. Thoſe which have reſpect to particular Facts, but at a greater diſtance. 3. Thoſe which have reſpect to Facts which belong to the whole Jewiſh Nation. 4. Thoſe which have reſpect to Facts which belong to Foreign Nations, either bordering upon *Paleſtina*, or further from it. Now there is nothing ſo exactly fulfilled, as theſe four ſorts of Oracles.

You have, for particular Facts, which were nigh at hand, and foretold by the Prophets, the Oracle of *Moſes* concerning the advancement of *Joſhua*, and the Conqueſt of *Paleſtine*, which happened ſoon after.

You have *Debora*'s Oracle of the Victory promiſed to *Barak*.

You have *Samuel*'s Oracle of the Advancement and Rejection of *Saul*.

You have an Oracle of the ſame *Samuel*, of the Advancement of *David*.

You have *Nathan*'s Oracle concerning *Abſalom*'s Revolt.

You

You have *Ahijah*'s Oracle concerning the Advancement of *Jeroboam*, and the Diviſion of *Solomon*'s Kingdom into Ten Tribes, and into Two Tribes, whereof the leſſer part was to continue in the Poſſeſſion of *Solomon*'s Heirs.

You have *Ahijah*'s Prediction of the Death of *Jeroboam*'s Son.

You have a Prediction of the Advancement of *Jehu* in the place of *Jehoram* King of *Iſrael*.

You have *Elijah*'s Prediction of the exemplary Puniſhment of *Ahab* and *Jezabel*.

You have the Prediction of *Jehoiakim*'s Death made by *Jeremiah*, *Chap.* XXII. 18,19. and *Chap.* XXXVI. 30. which happened Ten years after.

You have the Prediction of *Jechoniah*'s Miſeries made by *Jeremiah*, *Chap.* XXII. 3.

You have *Jeremiah*'s Prediction of the Death of the falſe Prophet *Ananiah*, but Seven Months before it happened.

You have an expreſs Deſignation of *Zorobabel* to conclude the Re-building of the Temple, made by *Zechariah*, *Chap.* IV. 9. and which was compleated in Four years.

It is therefore fully evident, That the Prediction of particular Facts, which were to happen in a very ſhort time, ſerved to eſtabliſh the Authority of the Prophets. And in effect one ſee's that they proceeded upon the Authority which thoſe Predictions of nearer Events gave them, to foretell other particular Events at a greater diſtance.

So you ſee that *Moſes* foretold after a ſort, after *Jacob*, the manner how the Land of *Canaan* was to be divided, tho' the thing was to be done by Lot.

You see the same *Moses* foretelling the several Captivities which the People of *Israel* suffered after the Conquest, and the Method of God's raising up several Judges, to the number of Fourteen, to bring them out of those Calamities.

You see the same *Moses* foretelling that the Temple should be built in the Tribe of *Benjamin*, tho' it was the least.

You have *Joshua*'s Prediction of the way how the Re-builder of *Jericho* should be exemplarily punished, which was accomplished in *Ahab*'s time, (1 *Kings* XVI. 34) about 570 years after this Prophetical Imprecation of *Joshua*.

You have the Prediction of a Prophet, who was contemporary to *Jeroboam*, about the Birth of *Josiah*, which was not till 350 years after, (1 *Kings* XIII.) and of the manner of his destroying the Altar which *Jeroboam* built.

One see's a Prediction of the overthrow of the Kingdom of *Samaria*, within 65 years by *Isaiah*, in the Reign of *Jotham*.

One see's the Destruction of *Jerusalem* by *Nebuchadnezzar*, foretold by several of the Prophets.

One see's the taking of *Tyre* by *Nebuchadnezzar*, foretold by *Isaiah*, *Chap.* XXIII. 15, 17.

One see's the Promise of its Re-establishment, Seventy years after its Destruction.

One see's the Promise of *Cyrus*'s Birth made by *Isaiah*, *Chap.* XLIV. 45. as of one that should restore Liberty to the *Jews*, and give them opportunities of Re-building their Temple at *Jerusalem*.

One see's the Prediction of the manner how *Antiochus*

Antiochus Epiphanes would treat the *Jews* in his Life time, and how he should be punished for his Cruelties and Sacriledges.

One see's the Prediction of the Courage of the *Macabees*, who should oppose the Tyranny of that Prince, and purifie anew the Divine Worship.

So that it is plain, That the foretelling of these particular Facts, which were at so great a distance, revived the Memory of these Prophets amongst the *Jews* in every Age, and made them read them with a singular attention.

One ought also to make the same Reflexion upon those Oracles which have respect to the particular Events of the state of the *Jews*, and its Continuance until the time of the Messiah, after which the Prophets foretel its Ruin and Destruction without Remedy.

In short, one may say, That there was no Revolution never so little considerable, of which we do not find very many, and very particular Predictions, foretold by several Prophets upon very different Occasions, and particular Circumstances.

One see's in the Books of *Moses* exact Descriptions of the Pilgrimages of *Abraham*'s Posterity, of their continuance in *Egypt*, of the Oppression they were there to undergo, of their prodigious Increase, of their robbing the *Egyptians* at their departure, of their methods in conquering the Land of *Canaan*, of the way how Kings should arise from *Abraham*; which was accomplished in the *Ishmaelites* and *Edomites*, and at last in the *Israelites*.

One ſee's expreſs Predictions of the ſeveral Judges whom God ſhould raiſe up to the People of *Iſrael.*

One ſee's an expreſs Prediction of the Advancement of the Tribe of *Juda* to the Kingdom.

One ſee's a Prediction of the future Subjection of the *Edomites* to the power of the Kings of *Juda*, and of their conquering of the Countries which lye along the Banks of *Euphrates*, which was fulfilled in *David*'s time.

One ſee's an expreſs Diviſion of that Kingdom into two very unequal parts.

One ſee's great numbers of Predictions concerning the ſtate of the Kings of *Juda* and *Iſrael*: For Inſtance, you have an Oracle concerning the Deſtruction of *Jehu*'s Family in the Fourth Generation. II Kings X. 30.

The Deſtruction of the Kingdom of the Ten Tribes is expreſly foretold, and the Term is very exactly ſet down.

The Ruin of *Jeruſalem*, and of its Kings, is alſo expreſly foretold.

The time of the Captivity of the *Jews* in *Babylon*, and

Their Re-eſtabliſhment by *Cyrus* after Seventy years are alſo very diſtinctly foretold.

The Deſolation of *Judea* under the Empire of *Alexander*'s Succeſſors, is foretold very exactly.

Their Re-eſtabliſhment after theſe Deſolations, and the way by which they were to be defended by the *Maccabees*, who ſhould become their Kings is likewiſe foretold.

In

In ſhort, one ſee's expreſs Predictions of the Ruin of *Jeruſalem*, and of the whole Nation under the *Roman* Empire, after the coming of the Meſſiah.

As the People of *Iſrael* had always great quarrels with the Neighbouring Nations; ſo one finds that amongſt the Oracles which particularly regard the ſtate of the *Jews*, the Prophets have interwoven a great number, which concern thoſe ſtrange People, with relation to thoſe Differences which were kept up between the People of *Iſrael*, and them.

So one ſee's the *Egyptians* and the *Canaanites* puniſhed, in the Execution of the Oracles pronounced againſt the Deſcendants of *Cham.*

One ſee's the Prediction of the Ruin of *Benhadad* King of *Syria*, and of his Houſe, foretold to the Tenth Generation.

One ſee's the Prediction of the Ruin of *Egypt* and *Tyre*, which happened under *Nebuchadnezzar.*

One ſee's the Prediction of the Ruin of the *Moabites*, which was under the ſame *Nebuchadnezzar*, after that Kingdom had ſubſiſted almoſt Fourteen Ages from its firſt Foundation.

One ſee's frequent Oracles concerning the Ruin of *Niniveh*, and its Empire.

One ſee's Oracles concerning the Ruin of *Babylon*, which happened under *Cyrus*:

One ſee's Oracles of the Deſtruction of the *Perſian* Empire by *Alexander.*

One ſee's Oracles concerning the manner of this Princes conquering the greateſt part of the World, and of his leaving his Empire divided into four Kingdoms.

One ſee's frequent Oracles concerning the ſtate of the Empire of the *Seleucidæ*, and the *Ptolemees*, who had particular Quarrels with the Jewiſh Commonwealth.

One ſee's the Alliances which were to be between the two Kingdoms foretold, and the ſmall Succeſs which ſhould ariſe thence in terminating their Differences.

One ſee's Predictions of the Treatment which the *Jews* ſhould meet with in thoſe Kingdoms.

One ſee's a Prediction of the Retreat which *Egypt* was to give to the *Jews*, and of the Temple they were to build there.

One ſee's an exact Prediction of the manner of the prophanation of the Temple by *Antiochus Epiphanes* for Three years together.

One ſee's the Prediction of the Ruin of theſe two Governments by the Arms of the *Roman* Empire.

It is very natural to make ſome Reflexions upon ſuch a various multitude of Oracles.

I. That there are no Books in the World which are formed like thoſe which we find in the hands of the *Jews*.

One finds there a Hiſtory exactly purſued, and in a natural dependance, from the beginning of the World, for 3500 years.

One finds there a Series of Oracles which foretel all ſorts of Events, ſo inſeparably united with the Hiſtory, that it is impoſſible to find by what means the Prophecies could have been ſo brought to ſupport the Hiſtory, and the Hiſtory to ſupport the Authority of the Prophecies.

One

One finds Oracles ſo clear, and ſo particular, eſpecially in the Book of *Daniel*, That *Porphyry* a mortal Enemy to the Chriſtians, was forc'd to aſſert that the Book of *Daniel* was forged after *Antiochus Epiphanes*'s time; a ridiculous Imagination! For this Prophecy was tranſlated into *Greek* more than One hundred years before, and was in the hands, not only of the *Jews*, but of the *Egyptians* alſo, mortal Enemies to the whole Jewiſh Nation.

This alſo is very ſurprizing, That ſince the *Jews*, after their Diſperſion, preſerve theſe Hiſtories wherever they are, as the Accompliſhments of the Oracles, and theſe Oracles as Predictions of thoſe Events of which their Hiſtory is very full, they ſhould never think of propoſing to us any Books of a like Nature, conſidering that now for One and twenty Ages they have had no parallel Authors, who have both writ Hiſtory, and pronounced Oracles.

II. But, as theſe Reflexions lead us on to others, ſo we ought to enter upon them by conſidering what the moſt unreaſonable Obſtinacy can oppoſe to the Authority of the Hiſtorical and Prophetical Books of Scripture.

CHAP. IV.

That how common soever Oracles may have been amongst the Pagans, yet nothing amongst them can justly be compared with those which are found amongst the Jews.

ONe of the greatest Objections which can in all probability be made against this surprizing Series of Oracles, which are found in the Books of the Old Testament, is taken from that great number of Oracles which are found amongst the Pagans. This Objection deserves to be considered, because it will more clearly demonstrate the Authority of the Prophetical Books, which are in the hands of the *Jews*.

I confess there have been false Prophets: And indeed, since God has given us Marks to distinguish them from true Ones, which may be seen in the Books of *Moses*, it cannot be denied but there have been some false Prophets. And that moreover, the History of the Prophets discovering to us Impostors frequently, we may freely acknowledge, that amongst the Pagans, and the People bordering upon *Judea*, there have been Men who have boasted of Predictions of things to come, as well as amongst the *Jews*.

I confess also, That some Heathen Writers speak of certain Oracles, which in all appearance are very well circumstantiated, and of which they relate a very exact Accomplishment.

But

But several things ought to be observed upon this Argument, which deserve an attentive Consideration.

I. We see that their most celebrated things have been only an imitation of what was done amongst the *Jews*. The *Egyptians* imitated the *Urim* and the *Thummim* of the Jewish High Priest. And they appropriated to him the right of giving Oracles: And so we see they are given by a Voice from Heaven, which the *Jews* saw was granted to their Prophets. We may see it in the History of *Socrates*'s Life, and in *Apuleius*, *p.* 339.

II. We see that the same Pagan Historians take notice that very many, even the greatest part of their Oracles, were very ambiguous, and false. The Philosophers, and *Tully* particularly, openly laugh'd at them (*Lib.* I. II. *de Divinatione.*) They thought it a ridiculous thing that *Apollo Delphicus*, the God of Poetry, should give his Answers in very bad Verse, and at last be reduced to Prose. *Eusebius* quotes a Discourse of *Oenomaus* a *Greek* Philosopher, who wrote against Oracles, to decry them as Impostures.

III. We see, that those Oracles which had acquired the greatest Reputation by their Accomplishment, were borrowed from the Prophets of the Synagogues. We have an illustrious Example in the Birth of *Cyrus*, which the Prophet *Isaiah* had foretold, about the Year of the World 3292. and concerning which they pretend to shew Prophecies of *Nebuchadnezzar* and *Crœsus*, about the Year 3492. which shows that if the thing was really known to them, they could not have known it but by the Prophetical Writings which were amongst

Abydenus. *Herodot.* Lib. I. cap. 55. & 91.

mongſt the *Jews*, and which could not have been concealed from them, becauſe the *Jews* read them with care, to comfort themſelves under that Captivity to which they were reduced by *Nebuchadnezzar*.

IV. It is in effect proved by examining their Oracles, moſt of which were either falſe or forged. This *Euſebius* has clearly proved, [*de Præpar. Evangelicâ*, *Lib.* IX. *cap.* 5.] The Proverb of the *Sibyll*'s, or *Delphick* Prieſteſs's, favouring of *Philip*, is commonly known. It was eaſie for theſe Heathen Princes to biaſs their People with ſuch Predictions. But what *Euſebius* ſays, puts the thing beyond all Queſtion, for he expreſly ſhews, That when the Prieſts were put to the Rack, they confeſſed the whole contrivance of thoſe Oracles, which they pronounced to abuſe the Credulity of the People.

Lib. IV. *de Præparat. Evangel.* Lib. IV. initio.

V. We ought to obſerve, That we cannot find great numbers of Oracles upon the ſame Subject, whereas one ſee's that the Prophets follow'd (as it were) *Moſes*'s Model of the State of the Commonwealth of the *Jews*, and that they frequently concur in foretelling the ſame Facts from one Generation to another.

VI. We ought to remember that theſe Oracles were not kept within the Limits of one ſingle State or Nation.

VII. It may be ſaid that they were not publickly known, having been only propoſed in private places, before a very few, and in ſhort, that they were not actually known to the moſt part of the Neighbouring People; whereas one ſee's that the Jewiſh Prophets gave their Oracles in the moſt ſolemn

ſolemn Aſſemblies, and when they were committed to Writing, they were known to all thoſe who had any Commerce with that Nation. So that *Iſaiah*'s Prophecies were queſtionleſs known to *Nebuchadnezzar* and *Cyrus*, who look'd upon himſelf as deſigned by God to reſtore their Liberty to the *Jews*. We may make the ſame Judgment of the Book of *Daniel*, which was known to *Alexander* without all queſtion, as one may collect from the favourable Reception the *Jews* found from him.

VIII. We ought to obſerve, That theſe pretended Oracles were given, for the moſt part, in favour of thoſe Princes, who could ſatisfie the greedineſs of the Prieſts. Whereas the Prophets among the *Jews* lived in the moſt diſintereſted manner in the World, and uſually pronounced nothing but Reproaches and Menaces of cruel Calamities to thoſe Princes who had the Government in their Hands. Their Miniſtry conſiſted in a couragious oppoſition to the Corruptions in their Laws, and their Religion, and in cenſuring their Princes and Governours with a ſingular Intrepidity; and indeed, we ſee that moſt of them met with the puniſhment of their Boldneſs, and made trial of the moſt cruel Tortures.

IX. Laſt of all, We ought to take notice, that as the Oracles which are mentioned in Heathen Authors, were only of Facts of ſmall importance to thoſe People, amongſt whom it is ſaid that they were pronounced, ſo we do not find that they thought themſelves much concerned in their preſervation; whereas one ſee's that the Jewiſh Nation were ſo perſwaded of the Truth of theſe Oracles,

Oracles, with which they were entrusted, that nothing to this very day could ever oblige them to discontinue the reading of them, whatever Disputes they may otherwise have with the Christians, who make use of them to establish their Pretentions, notwithstanding *all the Claims* of the Synagogue.

When this is laid down, it would seem as if I might reasonably conclude, That the wonderful variety of Oracles which are to be found amongst the *Jews*, cannot be at all weakned by those Oracles of which we find so frequent mention in Pagan Writers.

But we ought to go further, in explaining two things, which will perfectly clear this matter; One is, That the Historical and Prophetical Books of the Old Testament, after *Moses*, can be no Forgeries: The other is, That in truth, those Oracles which we find inserted in those Books, could not possibly have been forged after their Completion.

CHAP. V.

That the Books, in which we may find these Oracles, were never forged.

I Have observed formerly, That it is absolutely necessary that the Authority of those Books, in which these Oracles are inserted, be established, before we can build upon the Authority of the

the Oracles. And indeed, if we cannot clearly shew that these Books were written, and publickly known, before the Things happened, which are said to be Accomplishments of those preceding Oracles, it would be natural to call in question the Authority of these Oracles. But it is very easie to satisfie an equitable Reader herein, and to establish in general, or severally, the Existence of these Prophetical Writings, before the times in which those Facts happened which we propose as the Accomplishment of those Prophecies.

I shall make use of two sorts of Reflexions to establish my Proposition. The First consists in general Considerations upon the Books themselves: The Second has respect to particular Facts, which are uncontested, and whence the same Truth very naturally results.

I. We ought to observe, That whereas in *Genesis Moses* makes use of no other *Epocha* to fix the time of any Event, but the years of the Life of some famous Patriarch: As for Instance, He fixes the Flood to the 600 year of *Noah*'s Age; in *Exodus* and *Numbers* he uses the time of their coming out of *Egypt* for his *Epocha*; in the Books of the following Authors, the years from their departure out of *Egypt* were carefully set down 'till the Fourth year of King *Solomon*'s Reign, which was 480 years after their departure. This was a Character to fix the time of all those who lived after that *Epocha*. Exod. XIX. Numb. XXXIII. 38.

II. The Building of the Temple began a new *Epocha* amongst the *Jews*, as appears from II *Chron.* VIII. 1. tho' they began after that time to reckon by the years of the Kings of *Juda* and *Israel*,

Israel, as appears by the Books of the first Prophets. Which is a Character sufficiently certain, to distinguish those who liv'd after *Solomon*, with the time when they liv'd.

III. It's plain, That the *Babylonish* Captivity, and afterwards their subjection to the *Persian* Empire, obliged them to fix their Events, and to date their Prophecies, by the years of the Governments of those Foreign Kings. [See *Daniel, Ezechiel, Zechariah*, and *Haggai*.] So the Author of the Book of *Maccabees* refers to the years of the *Selucidæ*. Now, that we may the better perceive the force of this Observation, we must remember three things. 1. That the Authors who lived after the carrying away of the *Jews* into *Babylon*, make use of some *Chaldee* Terms, which are not to be found in the foregoing Prophets. For we may see in the Books of *Haggai, Zechariah*, and *Malachi*, the same style with *Ezra, Nehemiah*, and *Daniel*. 2. The Authors of these Books, give names to the Months, which they had not before the Captivity. The *Jews* only called their Months, First, and Second, *&c.* and so they gave Names which were unheard of before. 3. The Authors of these Prophecies take particular notice of any newly instituted Fasts; thus we see that the Prophet *Haggai* mentioned those Fasts of which we have nothing in the Law, but which were instituted during the Captivity.

Ezech. XL. 1. Daniel X. Zach I. Hagg. I.

Talm. Rosch. Hassanah. c. 1.

We must blind our selves of purpose, to conceive that any Impostor could forge Books, which have so exact a Relation, and such certain Characteristicks to fix them to the time in which every Author lived, and to the Circumstances wherein he wrote.

wrote. We must of necessity grant, That before such an Impostor could bring about such a Design, he must have made himself Master of the whole Prophane History, to fix so exactly the History of the Jewish Nation, and of those Oracles which have been given in Circumstances which are unintelligible without the help of Prophane Histories of different Nations.

I come now to Facts which cannot be contested. It is sufficient that those Facts be acknowledged as true, to establish in general the Truth of those Books whereof we teach.

I. It cannot be denied, that the *Jews* preserve these Oracles to this day, with great fidelity.

II. It cannot be denied, that they are in the hands of Christians, who preserve them as well as the *Jews*, since they have been separated from them; that is, for almost Seventeen Ages.

III. It cannot be denied, that these Prophecies have been exactly read by the *Jews*, because of those Oracles upon which they believe, to this day, that the whole happiness of their Nation is founded.

IV. It cannot be denied, that the *Jews* have read these Books exactly to refute the Disciples of Jesus Christ, who have pretended from the first Age of their appearing, that Jesus Christ is the Messiah mark'd out by these Oracles. In short, whereas the Christians pretend to prove by the accomplishment of the ancient Oracles, that Jesus Christ was the Messiah: It is known, that the *Jews* endeavour to this day to wrest the sense of these Oracles, and to shew that there are many things which are not literally accomplished, and which

which by conſequence cannot be apply'd to Jeſus Chriſt.

V. It cannot be deny'd, that moſt of the Controverſies of the *Jews* with the Chriſtians, only regard the Application of the Text of the Prophetical Authors. The Chriſtians explain them in a Myſtical Senſe, the *Jews* maintain that they ought to be explained Literally.

VI. It cannot be deny'd, that about 300 years before the Birth of our Saviour, the Prophetical Books were tranſlated, and put into the Hands of the *Egyptians*, having been carried to, and tranſlated at *Alexandria*, by a publick Order of the whole Nation, for the ſatisfaction of a King of *Egypt*. The Hiſtory of that Verſion which put thoſe Sacred Books into the Hands of the *Greeks*, and the *Jews* who dwelt in *Egypt*, is the moſt famous thing in the World, and which made thoſe Books perfectly known.

Here we have now theſe Books in *Hebrew*, and in *Greek*, that is to ſay, in the Primitive Language of the *Jews*, and the Vulgar Language of the Empire which *Alexander* founded.

It is known, that from that time the Chriſtians took care to make great numbers of Tranſlations into all the Vulgar Tongues, after the preaching of the Goſpel; and that they preſerved thoſe ancient Books as the firſt Elements of their Religion.

Now it will be ſufficient to acknowledge thoſe Truths, to conſider;

That thoſe Oracles were true which foretold things which happened almoſt four Ages after their Prediction. Thus, for Inſtance, the Deſtruction

ction of *Jeruſalem*; the Overthrow of the Jewiſh State; the calling of the *Gentiles* to the Service of the God of *Iſrael*; the Deſtruction of the *Syrian* and *Egyptian* Monarchies; are all contained in the Books of *Daniel*, *Haggai*, *Zachariah*, and *Malachi*.

Now there is not more difficulty to conceive, that ſuch Authors as *Iſaiah*, *Amos*, *Joel*, ſhould have foretold the ſame thing Eight or Nine hundred years before, than there is to believe that they were foretold by thoſe who liv'd but little above Four Ages before they actually came to paſs. There is therefore no difficulty in conceiving that theſe ancient Oracles were propoſed as we ſee them, and in thoſe times to which we find them fixed.

But we ought to go further into this matter, and to eſtabliſh the ſame thing by the conſideration of the things themſelves.

I confeſs that we might have a ſuſpicion of thoſe Oracles which are not related upon the Faith of a publick Volume. As for Inſtance, thoſe of *Elijah*, *Eliſha*, and *Uriah* the Son of *Shemaiah*, who ſeem never to have publiſhed any thing.

But here we are to obſerve, 1. That uſually the Authors who publiſh the Oracles, are not the ſame with thoſe who tell us of their accompliſhment. 2. That the Oracles of which we now ſpeak, were upon Subjects perfectly known, and upon very illuſtrious Exigencies. What more illuſtrious than the Deſtruction of *Ahab*'s Family, foretold by *Elijah*? What more extraordinary than the manner of *Jezebel*'s Death, foretold by the ſame Prophet?

In short, we ought to take notice, I. That these Oracles were written for the most part in compleat Volumes: We have Sixteen Prophets sufficiently distinguish'd by their proper Volumes.

II. Each of these Authors has a very different Character from the rest; so that some, as *Daniel* for instance, write in a peculiar Language one part of his Book being in *Chaldee*.

III. Every one has some relation to the rest: So those who liv'd together, often treat of the same things: So *Isaiah* for instance, *Joel*, *Amos*, *Hosea*. But they had separate Idea's, and particular Oracles, and a turn which perfectly distinguishes them one from another.

IV. One needs only read their Works to find that they wrote in different places. *Amos* was of *Juda*, and went to prohecy in *Israel*, that appears plainly. *Ezechiel* and *Daniel* prophesied in *Chaldea*; that's seen by reading their Works.

V. There is a natural dependance between the Books of *Moses*, and those of the Prophets in general; For the Prophets were continually reproaching the Kings and People with the Crimes which they committed against the Law of God proposed by *Moses*.

VI. There is a natural dependance between the Writings of the former, and of the latter Prophets. So *Jeremiah* is quoted by *Daniel*, as foretelling the time when the Desolations of *Jerusalem* were to have an end; this he proposes, not as if he had learnt it by a Revelation, but as a thing which he had found out by an attentive examination of the Prophecy of *Jeremiah*.

Dan. IX. 2.

VII.

VII. There is an exact Connexion of these Oracles with the History of the time, which is often interwoven with the Prophecies. One see's it in the Books of *Isaiah*, *Jeremiah*, and *Daniel*; the other Historical Books not being altogether so particular, as these Prophetical Books are.

VIII. In short, one see's that these Books are interwoven with Oracles concerning ancient Events, and People which have now no Existence, so that that hinders us from suspecting any Forgery.

I shall not repeat here the common Arguments which establish the Credit of these Books, I brought in most of them when I established the Authority of the Books of *Moses*. I shall only make some Reflexions here, to establish the same Truth.

CHAP. VI.

That the manner of writing the Prophetical Books of the Old Testament, shews that those Oracles could not have been forged after their Completion.

I Have several things to take notice of, to make this Truth more sensible. The first is taken from the necessary connexion of all the parts of the History of the Old Testament, the truth of which I have proved by several Characters. This History is exactly written by several Authors: Now

the Hiſtory of the Prophets, and of their Oracles, is ſo exactly *framed* into the Hiſtory, that it is impoſſible to take it out, without confounding the whole.

The Books of *Samuel*, which were written by *Samuel*, by *Nathan*, and by *Gad*, as appears by I *Chron.* XXIX. 29. contain the Hiſtory from the Year of the World 2888, to the Year 2987.

The Books of the *Kings* contain the Hiſtory of the Kings, and of the Prophets, from the Year 2989. to the Year 3442.

The Books of the *Chronicles* recapitulate the Hiſtory, from the beginning of the World, to the Year 3468.

Ezra writ his Hiſtory from the Year 3468. to the Year 3538.

Nehemiah continued it from 3550. to 3563.

Here is therefore on the one ſide an uninterrupted Series of Hiſtory; and on the other ſide a continued Succeſſion of Prophecies.

David, who began to Reign in the Year 2950. with ſeveral other Prophets of that time, writ the moſt part of the *Pſalms*, which are full of Oracles, and which were ſung by the People, as a part of the Divine Service.

Iſaiah began his Prophecy in 3246. and dy'd in the Year 3306. *Hoſea*, *Micah*, and *Nahum* were contemporary with him.

Jeremiah begun his Prophecy in the Year 3375. and liv'd at the ſame time with *Zephaniah*.

Daniel was carry'd into *Babylon* in 3401. and propheſied until 3470.

Ezechiel

Ezechiel prophecy'd at *Babylon* in 3509.

Haggai and *Zachariah* prophecy'd in 3590. ſoon after *Ezra*, in the time of *Nehemiah*.

Malachy ſeems to have lived until the Year 3589.

Can we therefore in the leaſt imagine that a Hiſtory ſhould be ſo intermixed with Propheſies and Oracles, without conceiving at the ſame time the Truth of both by an invincible neceſſity?

But we may make a ſecond Reflexion hereupon.

There are three general Characters which diſtinguiſh Prophets very ſenſibly from the generality of Authors.

I. They were publick Cenſors; Let us but read the Hiſtory of *Iſaiah*'s conduct, who called all the Heads of the People, Rulers of *Sodom*; or that of *Jeremiah*, *Chap.* XXXVI. or of any other of the Prophets in general.

II. They were Comforters of the People, when they had brought them to Repentance by their preaching. There are as many Inſtances of this, as there are Prophets.

III. They foretold remarkable Occurrences, happy or unfortunate, long before there was any probability that they ſhould happen.

It is impoſſible to conſider theſe Characters, without ſeeing that the ſtate of Affairs was that which gave a foundation for their Sermons: So that one muſt of neceſſity have framed their Hiſtory of new, to give ground for a Forgery. This change in the ſtyle of the Prophets, follows the Circumſtances of the Jewiſh State exactly. All

that *Isaiah* or *Jeremiah* say, will hold no longer than whilst you suppose the State of the *Jews* to be as corrupt as the History of that time represents it. But if you suppose it to be as the History do's distinctly explain it, nothing can be imagined more forcible than their Sermons. For as they joyned Oracles with Promises in their *thundring* Sermons, so one see's that they cannot be parted.

One may make another Reflexion upon this matter, by shewing that these Oracles, and these Books were so famous amongst the *Jews*, that no Forgery can be supposed.

The times in which they were writ, are a great proof, for they appeared upon very remarkable Occasions.

One may rank the Prophets into four Orders, according to the several times in which they appeared: *David*, and the Prophets of his time; Those who lived before the *Babylonish* Captivity; as *Jonah, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Isaiah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Jeremiah.*

Those who propheſied during the Captivity; *Jeremiah, Ezekiel,* and *Daniel.*

Those who lived after their Return from *Babylon*; *Haggai, Zechariah,* and *Malachy.*

Now we have an equal Assurance of all these Prophets, that they were famous.

Who can deny the Oracles of *David* to have been famous, when they were preserv'd amongst their publick Hymns?

One see's that *Micah*'s prediction sav'd *Jeremiah* whom they would have condemned for propheſying the Ruin of the Temple under *Jehoiakim,*

kim, when *Micah* had propheſied the same thing under *Hezekiah*, that is to say, about One hundred and twenty years before this Prediction of *Jeremiah*: Here's an Event which assures us without affectation, That this Prophecy was very well known: were not therefore the other Propheſies which were in the hands of the *Jews* very well known by the whole Nation?

The other Prophets lived in very remarkable times: *Isaiah* under *Jotham, Ahaz,* and *Manasseh* impious Princes: the last of which put him to a cruel Death, for the freedom of his Censures and Predictions.

There was in the time of every Prophet, a great number of Circumstances which may be enlarged upon, and which will further prove, That their Works must of necessity have been very publick, and very famous amongst the *Jews.*

We must not here neglect what do's more particularly regard the persons of the Prophets.

I. Some of them were Priests, that is to say publick Ministers of their Religion. *Jeremiah* and *Ezechiel* were of that number: This may be observed in reading of their Works, and in observing the nature of their Revelations, which were for the most part accommodated by God to those Idea's about which the Prophets were most employ'd.

II. Some were very illustrious by their Birth: Thus *David*, for instance, was King of *Israel*, *Isaiah* was a Prince of the Blood, and *Daniel* was one of the Princes of *Judah*; which may be easily found out by considering the Majesty of their Style, and greatness of their Expressions.

III. Some were very contemptible by their Employment, and by their Birth: So *Amos*, for instance, and those other Prophets whose Father is barely named, without joyning to it any honourable Title, if the *Jews* observation has any strength.

Now, it is well known, that tho' the gift of Prophecy made him who had it sufficiently famous, yet the Character of the Person often made the Prophecy famous. Sometimes indeed the meanness of the Person, as in *Amos*, made the Work to be more regarded, every Body taking occasion from the ancient Profession of the Prophet, to consider the Prophecies which he published with more attention.

One ought to observe, with care, That those Prophets whose Writings are preserv'd, as well as those who did not write, were continually struck at by false Prophets, who opposed them with great heat. Since then we have no Prophecies preserved, but of those whose Predictions were accomplished, the Event justifying the Truth of their Predictions, with regard to particular Facts near the time which they had foretold to establish their Authority, whereas the Predictions of others, wanting this Character, were neglected, and at last absolutely lost: It appears plainly, That those which remain were things of the greatest Reputation among the *Jews*.

Besides, I may add, That one needs only read their Books to see that they not only foretold obscure things, or what particularly concerned their State; but also things of a more splendid Nature, the overthrow of Kingdoms, of Cities, the Destruction

struction of whole Nations, the Destruction of their own City, with its re-establishment; Matters which would render their Books very illustrious, and which would cause them to be read, not only by the *Jews*, but also by the Neighbour Nations, the *Ammonites*, *Moabites*, *Assyrians*, *Persians*, *Egyptians*, &c.

Is not this therefore a very particular thing, and that which made the Prophets very illustrious, That the great lustre of the Prophets continued but for a certain time: There have been none since the Year 3553. their Glory appeared in the History of Eight Ages, but it do's not extend it self any farther: Now why, I pray, should there be no Impostors after *Malachy*, as well as there were Impostors before him?

One may imagine perhaps, That the Prophecies were immediately dispersed, some being uttered in one place, and some in another: Some in the Kingdom of *Judah*, and others in the Kingdom of *Israel*: Some in *Babylon*, others in *Egypt*, which might give Opportunites for Impostors. But,

I. This Objection may be strongly retorted back: For how can we conceive, that in the Division, which separated the *Israelites* from the *Jews*, those of *Judah* would charge themselves with the Writings published in a Kingdom so much an Enemy to them, without examination, when every thing which comes from thence, ought to appear suspected.

II. They were all collected into particular Volumes: But the Prophecies of *Hosea*, *Isaiah*, and *Jeremy*, and the most considerable of the rest,

are

are preserved in Books which contain many other things.

III. They are all exactly joyned with the History of the same Nation, each one in a place where there was an equal concern to preserve, and to gather them together. But besides, they were all collected into one Body. In short, the LXXII. Interpreters translated them into *Greek* in the Year of the World 3727. and so submitted them to the Examination of the *Egyptians*; and this also keeps us from doubting of their Truth.

This Translation was made but One hundred thirty and eight years after *Malachy* the last of the Prophets.

But what Judgment soever may be made of these Reflexions, the Design whereof is only to establish the Reputation of these Prophecies, and of the Books wherein they are written, that so no room may be left for any suspicions of Forgery: I shall add two Considerations to what I have said already, which ought to appear convincing to every attentive man.

I. One can suspect none but the *Jews* as Forgers of these Oracles: Now, not to say any any thing of the Absurdity of supposing that a whole Nation should have subscribed to such an Imposture; all the *Jews* throughout the World, were after their return from the Captivity, strongly prepossessed with an opinion of the Messiah's being a great Temporal King: and they have the same belief to this very hour, in all places of the World, wherever they are dispersed.

This being once laid down, I affirm it to be impossible that the *Jews* should forge Oracles which assert

assert expresly, That the Messiah should be put to death in so very odious a manner. For, as I shall afterwards shew, the oldest Doctors attributed to the Messiah, all those Oracles which speak of the Death of the Messiah according to the Christians, and which they themselves in process of time were forced to interpret of two Messiah's, one exposed to a world of Miseries, and the other only glorious: Or at least, I may say it is impossible that the *Jews* should consent to a Forgery which thwarted their common Idea's and Pretensions in so very sensible a manner.

II. The second Consideration establishes the same Truth with no less firmness, which is that the Call of the Gentiles to have a share in the Blessings of the Covenant which God made with the People of *Israel*, was the thing in the World from which the *Jews* had the greatest aversation; they looked upon the Blessings which the Messiah was to communicate, as advantages entirely reserved for those of their own Nation: How then can we conceive that the *Jews* should forge so many Oracles which should thwart their Prejudices so sensibly? or how can we imagine that a whole People would authorize with their approbation an Imposture so contrary, and so very opposite to their own Opinions?

But it is no hard thing to imagine, That when the *Jews* were once perswaded of the Authority of their Prophets, either by their Miracles, or by the ready Accomplishment of every Oracle which they had *publickly* pronounced, that they should receive their Books, with a profound submission, and

and preſerve them with the utmoſt care. But it appears to be an incomprehenſible thing, for a People to receive Impoſtures contrary to their Prejudices, and Impoſtures reiterated ſo often, without any ground, but what a vaſt number of Records never before heard of would produce.

But I ſuppoſe theſe Reflexions will ſuffice to eſtabliſh the Truth of the Hiſtorical and Prophetical Books of the Old Teſtament: So that there will be no need of alledging particular proofs, which might demonſtrate the Truth of each Book in particular, which would carry me out to too great a length.

I ſhall now conſider the Oracles themſelves, and I ſhall ſhew the progreſs of the Light of this Revelation, with reſpect to the Promiſe of the Meſſiah; That this progreſs may be the better obſerved, I ſhall do three things, as I have formerly obſerved, without which the mind of a wiſe Reader will not receive ſatisfaction.

I. I ſhall explain in a few words the Reaſon why theſe Oracles are interwoven with ſeveral Hiſtories, or Prophecies which ſeem to have no Relation to the Promiſe of the Meſſiah.

II. I ſhall give ſuch Rules as will ſerve to juſtifie the Application which both *Jews* and *Chriſtians* have equally made of ſeveral Oracles only to the Meſſiah.

III. I ſhall ſet the Oracles according to the Order of Time, which will manifeſt the Advancement and Progreſs of that Light which is to be found in the Revelation it ſelf: As indeed, it is natural to conceive that God ſhould explain himſelf more clearly, in this matter, in proportion as the things themſelves were nearer to their Completion.

CHAP. VII.

For what Reaſon the Oracles, which relate to the Meſſiah, were interwoven with other things, which ſeem to be very widely diſtant.

ONe of the greateſt Difficulties which may be raiſed againſt the Oracles of the Old Teſtament which concern the Meſſiah, is that ſurprizing mixture which one ſee's of thoſe Oracles, and of other Subjects which ſeem to be widely diſtant from any Idea of the Meſſiah.

There are none ſo prophane, as to deny, that if in the ſame Author, and in the ſame Chapter, any man ſhould read in one continued Series Predictions which ſhould explain the miraculous Birth of the Meſſiah, his Family, his Preaching, his Miracles, his Sufferings, his Reſurrection, his Aſcenſion into Heaven, the Sending of the Holy Ghoſt, the Calling of the *Gentiles*: but that the Hiſtory of the Goſpel would ſufficiently juſtifie Jeſus Chriſt to be the promiſed Meſſiah.

But they take it to be a very ſtrange thing, that the Apoſtles ſhould apply ſeveral paſſages in ancient Authors to the Hiſtory of Jeſus Chriſt, the

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II. The ſecond Conſideration eſtabliſhes the ſame Truth with no leſs firmneſs, which is that the Call of the Gentiles to have a ſhare in the Bleſſings of the Covenant which God made with the People of *Iſrael*, was the thing in the World from which the *Jews* had the greateſt averſation; they looked upon the Bleſſings which the Meſſiah was to communicate, as advantages entirely reſerved for thoſe of their own Nation: How then can we conceive that the *Jews* ſhould forge ſo many Oracles which ſhould thwart their Prejudices ſo ſenſibly? or how can we imagine that a whole People would authorize with their approbation an Impoſture ſo contrary, and ſo very oppoſite to their own Opinions?

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But they take it to be a very ſtrange thing, that the Apoſtles ſhould apply ſeveral paſſages in ancient Authors to the Hiſtory of Jeſus Chriſt, tho' the

the whole Contexture of their Books do not seem to oblige us to make any such Interpretations.

They therefore suppose that the Apostles made several fortunate Allusions to the more remarkable passages in those ancient Authors, which may pass for Predictions of those Events, which afterwards happened; just as *Nonnus* wrote the History of the Gospel in *Homer*'s Verses; and as *Eudoxia* made a *Cento* out of *Virgil*'s Poem, which contained the same History, tho' neither *Homer* nor *Virgil* had any of the Mysteries of the Christian Religion then in view.

That this apparent Difficulty may be solved, it will be necessary to examine Three things: I. The Matter of Fact it self. II. The Reasons which gave occasion for the doing of it. III. The Impression which this Fact has produced in the minds of men to this very time.

For the First; Tho' it is well known that common use do's not allow men to joyn Foreign Idea's in the same Discourse, yet we may easily conceive that God might and ought to do it, if we will allow what may be easily collected, that he resolved to send the Messiah into the World: Such a practice was the more natural, because the ancient Patriarchs before *Moses*, and *Moses* himself, who form'd the Commonwealth of the *Jews*, had prepar'd the minds of the People to such sort of Expressions as were raised above the present Subject.

And certainly if one takes but the pains to consider the wisdom and beauty of the Authors who writ these Prophetical Books on the one side, and the Character of the Writers of the New Testament

ment on the other, he would perceive, that if these words, *That it might be fulfilled*, were of necessity to be changed into these, *As one may perceive a sort of Completion of such or such Passages in the Old Testament*, yet notwithstanding that, the most part of those Quotations would evince an exact Accomplishment, and the Oracles which they alledge would bear a just proportion to those Events which are related by the Evangelists in our Saviour's Life.

Can any thing be more singular than the Prophecy in the Seventh of *Isaiah*, of the Messiah's being born of a Virgin; of the piercing of his hands and feet *Psal.* XXII: of the mixture of Gall which was offered him to drink, hinted at *Psalm* LX. 22. of his being sold for Thirty pieces of Silver: *Zechar.* XI. 3. or then several others of a like nature, which at present I shall not stand to reckon up.

It must be confessed however, that these Oracles are interwoven for the most part with Matters relating to Events happening in the time when each Prophet lived, or which seem to be applicable personally to the Prophets.

Three Orders or Reasons may be conceived, which will justifie the Wisdom of God in the ordering of these Oracles in a way which seems so contrary to the common practice of the World.

The first Order contains Reasons drawn from the person of the Messiah himself of whom we speak.

The second Order contains those which arise from the consideration of the People amongst whom

whom the Messiah was to be born.

The third contains those Reasons which respect other Nations amongst whom the Messiah was to be preached. I shall examine these three sorts by themselves, and I hope that we may gather from thence, that the Eternal Wisdom presided over this mixture of these Oracles which relate to the Messiah, with other Idea's which seem to be wholly foreign to the Subject.

In short, it may be urged, That the belief of a Messiah form'd of so apparent Contradictions, cannot easily be received of the suddain. A Messiah of the Seed of *David*, whom *David* calls his *Lord*: a Messiah, who complains that he is *forsaken by God*, whom however he ought to adore: A Messiah born with the weaknesses of Youth, who at the same time is called a *mighty God*, and the *Father of Eternity, &c.*

However, these Idea's which seem so opposite ought of necessity to have been so separated by the Prophets, least they should have been looked upon as Chimerical Descriptions, and incompatible in one and the same Subject.

A second Reflexion which may be made upon this Matter, is, That the *Jews* were bound not only to preserve their Oracles, but also to execute them in part; Thus for instance, there was a necessity for them to reject the Messiah, to deliver him up to the *Gentiles* to be crucified; there was a necessity that their punishment should be as signal as their Crime, and that they should be dispersed over the World, after the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, as the Prophets have clearly shewn. Now how could all this have ever been effected, if the Description

Description of the Messiah by the Prophets had been as Historical as that of the Apostles, or the Evangelists, who gave us only a Narrative of Matters of Fact.

In a word, was it not the interest of the *Gentiles*, to whom the Gospel was to be preached, that these Oracles should be scattered up and down the Writings of these ancient Authors? They were to be Called upon the Rejection of the *Jews*: The *Jews* were bound to preserve the Books of the Old Testament, after they were cast off by God, that the Authority of these Books, and these Oracles, might be beyond all contest, as Testimonies with which we are furnished by the adverse Party, which ought to have place, until the fulness of the *Gentiles* should profess Christianity. Let any one therefore judge if it was not necessary in this state of Affairs, that there should be some obscurity in the Prophetical Descriptions, and by consequence that this interweaving of foreign Idea's with those which concerned the Messiah, as also this dispersion of the Oracles through different places of the Sacred Writers was not necessary, and so much the more as they were uttered upon several Occasions by different Authors.

And we may affirm it, as a certainty, That according to the purpose of God, this obscurity did not hinder either *Jews* or *Pagans* from perceiving those *ruling* Idea's of a Messiah, when they read the Old Testament. Neither was the dispersion of these Oracles through so many different places, any greater hindrance to their application; since the *Jews* laid it down as a constant Maxime,

That the accompliſhment of every thing which we find to be foretold as great and illuſtrious by the Prophets, ought to be looked for in the Perſon of the Meſſiah, when the Events of a nearer Date did not anſwer to the greatneſs or magnificence of the Predictions.

Several Ages had paſſed from the time in which the Prophet had foretold that the Meſſiah was to be born at *Bethlehem*, and yet we ſee that the Idea of it continued very freſh amongſt the *Jews*, in our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt's time, as is plain from the Anſwer which they gave to *Herod*.

There are ſeveral other Examples might be given, which ſhew that the *Jews* in our Saviour's time applyed the very ſame Oracles to the Meſſiah which we do; and without queſtion, if it had not been ſo, the Apoſtles would firſt have proved that theſe Oracles had relation to the Meſſiah, which they took for granted, as a thing conſtantly acknowledged, whereas now they only endeavoured in the Goſpel to juſtifie that Jeſus Chriſt was the Meſſiah, by ſhewing one by one that all the Characters which the *Jews* attributed to the Meſſiah, were to be found in him.

Beſides, it is manifeſt from our Saviour's explication of the CX *Pſalm*, that tho' the *Jews* could not conceive the Solution of that Difficulty which naturally appears in thoſe words, *The Lord ſaid unto my Lord, ſit thou at my right hand*, yet afterwards they immediately applied that Oracle to the Meſſiah, without ſeeking after any other Subjects to which they might apply it, as the *Jews* endeavour to do at this day.

But after theſe Remarks upon the mixture of thoſe

thoſe Oracles which relate to the Meſſiah, with others which ſeem to be of a more foreign Nature, we ought to come to ſome general Rules by which we are to apply the ancient Oracles to the Meſſiah.

CHAP. VIII.

General Rules for the Underſtanding of ancient Oracles, and for the Application of them to the Meſſiah.

I. AS it appears very natural to conceive, That the moſt ancient Revelations ought to be expreſſed in the moſt general terms, becauſe they were furtheſt from the time of their accompliſhment, and ſo one ought to find in them a more imperfect delineation of the Deſign of God: yet it is viſible however, that they ought to contribute very much to the underſtanding of thoſe later Oracles, becauſe if theſe later ones do really contain a more particular explication of his Deſign in ſending the Meſſiah into the World, yet they ought always to follow thoſe Idea's which God at firſt made uſe of to make his Deſign known in the World.

II. It is natural to grant, That when God had told the *Jews* by *Jacob* and *Balaam*, that the coming of the Meſſiah was not ſuddainly to happen, if he intended to bring them to a certain

knowledge of the Messiah after a long Revolution of years, by those Ceremonial and Judicial Laws which he established, that he ought to breed them up in an expectation of the Messiah, by lively Idea's, and by Oracles which should particularly explain the manner and circumstances of his Appearance.

III. It is no less natural to acknowledge, That when God promised some illustrious Person, or some great advantage to the Jewish Nation, he did it only to entertain the People with an expectation of the Messiah, and upon that account, that he might and ought to joyn the Promise of the Messiah with it, as the principal Object which the *Jews* ought always to have in view, until it should actually happen.

In short, there are two sorts of Oracles in the Old Testament: The first are such as it is impossible to apply to any other besides the Messiah; as for instance, *The place of his Birth*; *The seed of the Woman shall break the Serpents head*; *The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy Brethren, like unto me*; *unto him ye shall hearken.* Whereupon he that added the Relation of *Moses*'s Death, takes notice that after that there arose up no Prophet in *Israel* like unto *Moses.*

Gen. III. 15. Deut. XVIII. 15. Deut. XXXIV. 10.

The second are such as seem to agree in part to some body else besides the Messiah, tho' we may find there also such particular Characters, that it is impossible to apply them perfectly; and in their utmost extent, according to the whole force of their expression to any other Subject besides the Messiah. And so *Balaam* seems to have spoken of *David*, *Numb.* XXIII. as *Julian* the Apostate maintains, and of his Victories over the *Moabites* in the same place where he promises the Messiah, and where he speaks of the manner of his subduing the Children of *Seth*; And so *David* in the second *Psalm* speaks of the oppositions which he met with, in his advancement to the Throne, but in Terms too Great and too Emphatical to be apply'd to him alone.

Those Principles which I have now established, that God promised the Messiah in general terms, but without any intention of sending him into the World, until several Ages had been passed, gave rise to these two sorts of Oracles. On the one side, there was a necessity of explaining this Promise distinctly from time to time. And on the other side, there was a necessity of accommodating himself to the Desires of the *Jews*, by joyning these Idea's with every thing that was great and considerable in those Events, and in those Persons to whom the Prophetick Spirit intended to add a lustre by its Predictions.

The *Jews* are agreed at present, as they were also in our Saviour's time, in the application of the most part of those Oracles in the Old Testament, which the Christians apply to the Messiah, and if they dispute some of them, which they explain in a sense perfectly forced, yet at least they cannot dispute these following Truths.

I. That the most part of those Oracles which we apply to the Messiah, were apply'd in the same manner by the Jewish Doctors in our Saviours time: As the CX *Psalm*, for instance, which has relation to the Nature and Glory of the Messiah;

the II *Pſalm*, which has reſpect to the Conſpiracy of the Princes and the People againſt the Meſſiah; that place in *Micah* which fixes the Birth of the Meſſiah to *Bethlehem*, *&c.*

II. That as they thought themſelves obliged to make two Meſſiahs, becauſe of the apparent Contradictions which are to be found in thoſe various Events which are apply'd to the Meſſiah in thoſe Predictions; ſome perfectly glorious, and others every way contemptible: ſo there is no injuſtice done, in explaining thoſe Oracles which at firſt ſeem only to have relation to one ſingle perſon, of the Meſſiah, and of ſome other perſon.

III. That ſince they themſelves believe, That their Anceſtors might lawfully paſs from one ſenſe to another in their Explications of thoſe Oracles, ſo that they were permitted to apply an Oracle to ſome other Subject, which did not ſeem to agree exactly enough to that Subject which their Anceſtors had firſt in view, as the particular Subject concerning which the Oracle treated: So it is not only juſt, but neceſſary too, to paſs from one Subject to another as the Apoſtles have actually done.

IV. That we ought to pay a much greater deference to the Opinion of the ancient *Jews*, than of thoſe, who have been ſowred by their Miſeries and Diſputes to ſuch a degree, that they have loſt that principle of Equity which keeps Men from denying the moſt evident Truths, and which have been the moſt univerſally acknowledged by a whole Nation, that was not prepoſſeſſed with ſo great a degree of Obſtinacy.

But we ought to obſerve, beſides, That this ſeeming

ſeeming Confuſion of thoſe Oracles which relate to the Meſſiah, with other Subjects treated of by the Prophets, aroſe from ſeveral Cauſes.

I. From the Prophet's often joyning the Idea's of the principal Promiſe, the ſending of the Meſſiah, with the promiſe of thoſe means which were abſolutely neceſſary for the accompliſhment of that promiſe, as the preſervation of the *Jews* for inſtance. So the Captivity of the *Iſraelites* in *Egypt*, and their departure from thence, with their ſettling in the Land of *Canaan*, which he had promiſed them before, were foretold, as neceſſary means in the order of Providence, to the Execution of the great Deſign of God.

For ſo the *Babyloniſh* Captivity, and their Deliverance there from, which are both foretold, are foretold as ſteps towards the execution of the promiſe of ſending the Meſſiah.

And ſo likewiſe when they foretold the Perſecutions by *Antiochus*, and the other Neighbouring Nations, they alſo foretell the deliverance which God would grant to the *Jews*, and their re-eſtabliſhment until the Birth of the Meſſiah, which was the accompliſhment of that great Promiſe.

II. This ſeeming Confuſion aroſe from the writing of theſe Books piece by piece, which afterwards were put into this order, without having always a regard to the time in which they were writ, and without taking notice of all the occaſions which engaged the Prophets to write. And thus we ſee the Prophecies which relate to the Meſſiah joyned to ſeveral other Tranſactions, and to ſeveral other Predictions, whoſe con-

nexion is not always so very evident.

III. It arises from the writing of the Prophecies each by themselves, so that all those of the same Prophet were put together as they came out, making only a new Chapter in the Work; whereas they ought to be considered rather with relation to the Matter, than to the Order in which they lye in the Book, as we have it at the present. For the Prophets often borrow their Light from what they themselves had said some time before, or from what some other Prophet had foretold, which ought to be observed particularly of those who lived about the same time.

But besides those Rules which I proposed in the beginning of this Chapter, and besides those Observations of the joyning the Oracles which relate to the Messiah with other Subjects, I must add two Rules more, which may be useful in determining the sense of great numbers of Oracles which are expressed in figurative terms. The first is, That it is natural to conceive that when the Prophets were to speak of the Messiah, and when they were intent upon the Description of his Kingdom, they should make use of Expressions which seem'd to foretell a sort of overturning of nature, which should happen at that time: But then these Expressions ought to be understood in a figurative sense, in the same Spiritual sense in which the Christians understood them, as the famous *Maimonides* allows in that passage of *Isaiah*, where the *Wolf* and the *Lamb* are said to feed together.

Lib. de *Regibus*, cap. XII.

Secondly, Since the Messiah is described as one who should unite in his own Person, the Glory of the

the Divinity, and the meanness of the Human Nature together, we ought to understand those Oracles in such a manner, that what is *great* in those Prophetical Descriptions, should not contradict the more contemptible part, when we consider the Messiah as cloathed with all the meannesses of the Human Nature. These Idea's which are often joyned in one and the same Oracles, ought to be exactly applyed to the different consideration which the Prophets had of the Messiah, or to those various States through which they themselves assures us that the Messiah was to pass.

An intelligent Reader will easily judge, that I might have added a third Rule to the two former; which is, That when a person, who has all the Characters of a Prophet, applys an old Oracle to any Subject, one cannot reasonably dispute his application. This the Christians assure us was done by the Apostles in a very great number of Oracles. But because this supposes a Prophetick Character in the Apostles before it has been established by solid proofs, I shall wave the proposal of it at present.

After these general Remarks I shall gather together those Oracles in the Old Testament, which relate to the Messiah; I might here follow the order of the Matters, by bringing under each Article those Oracles which relate to it, which would give a great Light to the Subject, as *Eusebius* has rightly observed, and as he has practised himself in his Books *de Demonstratione Evangelicâ*. However, I rather chose to follow the Order of Time in which these Oracles were uttered,

tered, which did not ſeem improper to explain thoſe Truths which are contained in thoſe Oracles.

In ſhort, this is of great importance: I. Becauſe it is very natural to conſider the Series of God's deſign, and the connexion which may be found in thoſe Idea's which are made uſe of to expreſs it.

II. Becauſe of the neceſſity of the encreaſe of the Light in the Revelations, proportionably as the time drew near; ſo that, it is of uſe to obſerve how the Divine Wiſdom follow'd this natural Order in making the later Oracles clearer than the former, and in hinting by little and little a greater number of Circumſtances, by which it was neceſſary to explain them.

III. Becauſe this ſerves to give us a very ſtrong proof, That God intended to furniſh us from the Scriptures themſelves, with that which ſhould fix us in a Belief of this Capital Truth in our Religion. In ſhort, when the Truth of each of the Books in the Old Teſtament is once approved, and their Age ſet down, it appears that ſeveral Prophets did agree wonderfully without any concert, in the explication of the ſame Truths at ſeveral Times, and in ſeveral Places and Circumſtances, which hinder men for the moſt part from agreeing in the moſt common Matters, which are the Subjects of their Reflexions.

I have already conſidered that the Wiſdom of God follow'd Rules very conformable to the Condition and Inclinations of the Patriarchs, when it ſpoke of the Meſſiah. We may ſee the ſame Conduct in the following times.

So

So ſince God had promiſed Children to *Adam* in *Abel*'s ſtead, one may ſee that he alſo promiſed *David* a Son who ſhould ſet upon his Throne. He explains almoſt all the Circumſtances of his Coming, his Humiliation, his Exaltation, the Oppoſitions he ſhould meet with, the Victories he ſhould obtain, and his Offices, Prophetical, Prieſtly, and Royal.

One ſee's afterwards that the Prophets explain in a more particular manner all theſe Idea's which *David* had already propoſed. *Iſaiah* ſpeaks of his Birth by a Virgin, of his Spiritual Gifts, of his Miracles, of his Sufferings, of his Reſurrection, of his Calling of all Nations in to his Worſhip, and of his Caſting off the *Jews*.

Thoſe who come after point out the place particularly, and the Town where the Meſſiah was to be born; they deſcribe his Covenant, and the Calling of the Gentiles to the Service of the God of *Iſrael*.

In ſhort, they deſcribe both the Character of the Forerunner of the Meſſiah, and the Empire under which he was to appear, and the very Year in which he was to dye, as *Daniel* particularly doth.

I cannot undertake to relate all the Oracles which are contained in the Books of the Old Teſtament, they are ſo very numerous. But I hope at leaſt to mark the more principal, and the moſt illuſtrious ones, and to explain them in ſuch a manner, that all ſhall be obliged to acknowledge, I. That God deſigned to give infallible proofs to his Church, of his deſign in ſending the Meſſiah into the World, and to preſerve

ſerve the continual remembrance of him, as of a Perſon who was promiſed to give all Comfort to his Church, and whoſe coming ſhould bring Salvation to all Mankind. II. That the care which he took in ſpecifying all the Circumſtances of his coming into the World, ſhew that he deſigned to prevent the Scandal which the abject Life and Death of a Meſſiah might produce, and the falſe Judgments which Men might form of the Works of a Divine Wiſdom, when they only judge of them by the outſide. III. That he deſigned to give an infallible proof, that this ſending of the Meſſiah, was the Work of his Wiſdom and Fidelity, which at laſt accompliſhed a thing, the Deſign whereof had been propoſed to Mankind immediately after the Fall.

CHAP. IX.

Of thoſe Oracles concerning the Meſſiah which are to be found in the Book of Geneſis.

I Begin with thoſe Oracles which are contained in the Book of *Geneſis*, ſince it is convenient to touch them all over again in few words.

The firſt Oracle is comprized in theſe Terms, *Gen.*

Gen. III. 15. *I will put Enmity between Thee and the Woman, and between thy Seed and her Seed; it ſhall bruiſe thy Head, and thou ſhalt bruiſe his Heel.*

This Oracle has conſiderable advantages; tho' it is expreſſed in figurative Terms. God uttered it in the beginning of the World, after he had given Sentence againſt *Adam*, and the Woman, and the Serpent in a very ſenſible manner, even under a Human ſhape, if we may dare to affirm it. He uttered it before the Head of all Mankind, which ought to make it conſiderable to all his Poſterity. He expreſſes it by an Alluſion to the nature of the Temptation, and to the form of the Serpent, which the Tempter had took upon him. He preſerves thereby the memory of the Temptation, by inſpiring all Mankind with an invincible Hatred againſt all Serpents in general, tho' the Tempter had took the ſhape but of one particular kind, for an Inſtrument to accompliſh his Deſign.

In ſhort, this Oracle clearly ſhews, I. That it ſhould be particularly the Seed of the Woman: *Adam* not being touched at. II. That the Seed of the Woman, that is to ſay the Meſſiah, ſhould deſtroy the power of the Serpent expreſſed by the Head, that is to ſay the power of the Devil. III. That this Seed ſhould however receive a conſiderable wound from the Devil, tho' it ſhould only touch his Heel, the leaſt conſiderable part of the Meſſiah. IV. That all the Bleſſings which God ſhould give to Mankind after the Fall, ſhould be grounded upon the ſending of this Seed into the World: This is more clearly

clearly expreſſed by God's telling *Abraham, That in thy Seed all the Nations of the Earth ſhould be bleſſed.*

Gen. XXII. 18.

That this Oracle *Gen.* III. has relation to the Meſſiah, is plain: I. Becauſe it is the Source and Abridgment of the whole Revelation. II. Becauſe all the ancient *Jews* in effect underſtood it ſo. III. Becauſe the Apoſtles, in following the Idea's of the Synagogue plainly referred them to the Meſſiah, by the Alluſions which they make to them: *John* XII. *Romans* XVI. II *Cor.* XI. I *John* III.

Targum in h. l.

The ſecond Oracle which relates to the Meſſiah, is contained in theſe Terms, when God ſpoke to *Abraham*; *In thy Seed ſhall all the Nations of the Earth be bleſſed.*

This Oracle is very illuſtrious: I. By the perſon of *Abraham*, whom God made the Depoſitary of it, and who made himſelf ready to Sacrifice his own Son. II. By the frequent Repetitions which God made to this Patriarch, uſing in effect all thoſe ways which he afterwards follow'd in his Revelations to the Patriarchs, for fifty years together, from the Year 2083. to the Year 2133. of the World. III. Becauſe it was accompanied by the Circumciſion, ſo that tho' it foretold that the Advantages ſhould be in common to all Nations, yet it limited the Meſſiah to be born of *Abraham's* Seed.

It alſo intimates very clearly, I. That the Bleſſings which it promiſes ſhould be in common to all Nations. II. That this Bleſſing ſhould be quite of another nature from Temporal ones, as the encreaſe for inſtance, and the power of *Abraham's*

Abraham's Poſterity, which had been promiſed to him before. S. *Paul's* Reflexion *Gal.* III. 8. That God ſpake of Seed in the ſingular Number is very remarkable, and ſo much the more, becauſe the *Jews* make a like Obſervation upon a parallel place in the Old Teſtament.

As God repeated this Promiſe when he ſpoke to *Iſaac* in the Year 2200, and to *Jacob* in the Year 2245. *Gen.* XXVIII. 14. *And thy Seed ſhall be as the Duſt of the Earth; and thou ſhalt ſpread abroad to the Weſt, and to the Eaſt, and to the North, and to the South: and in thee, and in thy Seed, ſhall all the Families of the Earth be bleſſed*, ſo one ought to repeat again the ſame Reflexions. This ought only to be added, That God reſtrained the honour of bringing forth the Meſſiah to *Jacob* the Son of *Iſaac*, that the *Edomites* might not come in to challenge the right, as I have very particularly explained in my Reflexions upon *Geneſis*.

We come now to the Oracle which *Jacob* gave in the Year 2315. It is one of the cleareſt Predictions in the whole Bible, and it is expreſſed in theſe Terms: Judah, *thou art he whom thy Brethren ſhall praiſe; thy hand ſhall be in the neck of thine Enemies: thy Father's Children ſhall bow down before thee.* Judah *is a Lions whelp; from the Prey my Son thou art gone up: he ſtooped down, he couched as a Lion, and as an old Lion; who ſhall rouze him up? The Scepter ſhall not depart from* Judah, *nor a Law-giver from between his Feet, until* Shiloh *come, and unto him ſhall the gathering of the People be. Binding his Fole unto the Vine, and his Aſſes Colt unto the choice Vine; he waſhed his Garments in Wine,*

and

and his Clothes in the Blood of Grapes. His eyes ſhall be red with Wine, and his Teeth white with Milk. *Gen.* XLIX. 8.---12. I know very well, that ſome of the *Jews* have pretended, that *Moſes* ought to be underſtood for *Shiloh*; But this is ſo ridiculous an Opinion, that there is not the leaſt probability to maintain it: What Scepter had *Judah* before *Moſes* came? How was *Moſes* the Expectation of the *Gentiles*, and the Object of their Hope?

And indeed, the Body of the Jewiſh Nation are agreed, that this Oracle was meant of the Meſſiah, ſo *Onkelos* the *Chaldee* Paraphraſt, ſo the *Jeruſalem Targum*, and *Jonathan*'s, ſo *R. Solomon Jarchi*, *Abenezra*, and *Kimchi* are agreed.

Now theſe Reflexions may be naturally drawn from this Oracle which *Jacob* uttered upon his Death-bed.

I. This Oracle is found amongſt a great number of Oracles which concern the other Tribes of the *Iſraelites*, and which were accompliſhed as to every Tribe.

II. This Oracle contains ſeveral particular Events which relate to private Tranſactions in the Tribe of *Judah*.

III. This Oracle was, as it were, *Jacob*'s Will in favour of *Judah*, at a time when he divided amongſt his Children their Portions which they were to expect from him.

IV. This was a Preference of *Judah*, who was but the fourth, to *Reuben* who was the eldeſt, and who by conſequence ought to have been the Head of his Family. The Scepter, and the Authority

thority of Legiſlator was promiſed to *Judah*, which did not belong to him by the right of his Birth.

Jacob therefore prepared his Children to look for an accompliſhment of thoſe Promiſes made to *Abraham* in *Judah*, as well for the Kings who were to be deſcended from him, as for the Nations of the Earth, who were to be bleſſed in *Abraham*'s Seed.

But we muſt go yet further; I ſhall therefore obſerve, I. That this Prophecy particularly regarded the Tribe of *Judah*, as all the preceding and following Oracles concern'd thoſe Tribes, whoſe Heads were then named by *Jacob*.

II. That this Prophecy concerns the Tribe of *Judah*, as ſettled in the Land of *Canaan*, by a diſtinct eſtabliſhment from the other Tribes. In ſhort, it is certain that the Tribe of *Judah* had ſome ſuperiority; Thus God for inſtance commanded that Tribe to march the firſt, *Numb.* II. & X. Its Heads offered their preſents firſt, *Numb.* VII. 11, 12, 83. In *Joſhua*'s time this Tribe took its Diviſion without drawing Lots for it. One ſee's that God ordered the Tribe of *Judah* to lead the People out to the Conqueſt of the reſt of the Country. One ſee's the ſame Prerogatives in the Book of *Judges*, tho' they were often of other Tribes. From *David*'s time to the taking of *Jeruſalem* by *Nebuchadnezzar*, the Kings were all of that Tribe; and *Zorobabel* afterwards headed thoſe who returned out of *Chaldea*. The Book of the *Chronicles* names the Tribe of *Judah* firſt; *Herod* was the firſt King who was wholly a Stranger.

III. That *Jacob* supposed that the Tribe of *Judah* should be in possession of a Form of Government, and of a Community till the coming of the Messiah: This was all very proper, and indeed we see that this Tribe continued under its own Governours, after the other Tribes had been transported, II *Kings* XVII. 18. It almost swallowed up *Benjamin* and *Levi*, who settled in their Country; and indeed *Josephus* assures us, That there were but few of the Ten Tribes who came back again into *Judea* under *Ezra*, for the greatest part of them stayed beyond *Euphrates*. And we see that at last they gave their Name to the whole Country.

IV. That this Oracle was fulfilled by degrees. This I have observed already of the preheminency of the Tribe of *Judah* before *David*'s time, which was a step to the advancement of it to the Throne. And the lessening of their Dignity, which was to be entirely taken away when the Messiah came, had also the same Gradations. *David* was set upon the Throne over all *Israel*; but his House lost the Government over Ten Tribes in his Grandson *Rehoboam*'s time. His Successors were Tributary to the neighbouring Princes: whereas *David* carried his Empire to the Walls of *Babylon*, tho' afterwards the *Babylonians* subdued the *Jews*, and deposed the Kings of *Judah*. At last they absolutely lost all that Authority which they had hitherto kept. They recovered a little in the Person of *Zorobabel*, and tho' they were soon after invaded by the *Seleucidæ*, yet the *Maccabees* preserved them a little, till *Herod* and the *Romans* took away all those Remnants which they had yet left. In

In carrying these Views of this Oracle further, we may yet further observe, I. That God intended to oblige the *Israelites* to wait for the Scepter in the Tribe of *Judah*. It must be there before it could depart thence. It was natural to conceive, that the *Jews* were to look yet much further than *David*. Those words, *It shall not depart*, denote a continuance of the Scepter in the House of *David* for some considerable time.

II. It is easie to comprehend a lessening of the Dignity in the term *Lawgiver*, [See *Judges* V. 14. מְחֹקְקִים] which God seems to have made use of, as a Mark of the Fall, which I have observed in the Person of *Zorobabel*, who as to the time was about the middle of the Oracle.

III. In a word, it is easie to acknowledge that this Oracle assigns the *Epocha* in gross for the time of the coming of the Messiah, *viz.* the Ruin of that Authority and Power which the *Jews*, properly so called from the Tribe of *Judah*, should enjoy after their re-establishment. God could not explain himself more particularly, in stating the precise time when this thing should happen.

There are two other very considerable Oracles; one uttered by *Balaam* in the Year 2553; before the King of the *Moabites*, who had sent for him to curse the People of *Israel* that lay in the Plains; the other uttered the same Year by *Moses* the famous Legislator of the *Jews*; the first is inserted by *Moses* in the XXIV *Chapter* of *Numbers*; the other is in the XVIII of *Deuteronomy*.

The first is in these words; *I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of* Jacob, *and a Scepter shall rise out of* Israel, *and shall smite all the Corners of* Moab, *and destroy all the Children of* Seth: *And* Edom *shall be a Possession,* Seir *also shall be a Possession for his Enemies, and* Israel *shall do valiantly. Out of* Jacob *shall come he that shall have Dominion, and shall destroy him that remaineth of the City.*

One ought to observe, that *Balaam*'s Character, the presence of the King and the Elders of *Moab*, and all the Circumstances in which it was uttered, do advance its Authority considerably.

But the turn of his Expressions is equally singular and remarkable: I. He speaks of the Messiah as of a Star, hinting out to us the Celestial Nature of the Messiah: whereas hitherto God had only described him under the Figure of a bare man: tho' the other was made sufficiently intelligible, when the Destruction of the Empire of the Tempter, and the right of procuring a Blessing unto all the Nations of the Earth which he was personally to enjoy, were attributed to him; things infinitely beyond the power and condition of Mankind to perform, were attributed to him. II. He observes, That this Person of whom he speaks such magnificent things, ought however to be descended from *Jacob*; which ratifies *Jacob*'s Prophecy in favour of *Judah*. III. Tho' he hints very clearly at the effects of those Blessings and Temporal Victories which *Jacob*'s Posterity was to obtain over their Neighbours, yet at the same time he insinuates plainly enough, that the bestowing of the Blessing which all the Nations of

of the World should obtain, was to be reserved to *Jacob*'s Seed; when he refused to retract those Promises of Blessing which God had made to *Abraham, Isaac*, and *Jacob*, to which Oracles he made a sensible Allusion.

And it is very important to consider that the *Jews* always applyed this Oracle to the Messiah, as may be seen by their *Chaldee* Paraphrast; and it was acknowledged so generally, that the famous *Achiba*, who lived under the Emperour *Hadrian*, pretended that *Barchocheba* was the Messiah, because his name was *Chochab*, which is a *Star* in *Hebrew*; as if God intended to mark that Impostor for the true Messiah, by foretelling what name he should be called by.

The Oracle which *Moses* uttered a little before his Death, is very considerable. The People being terrified with the manner of God's speaking to them upon Mount *Sinai*, desired that God would no longer speak as he had done before, but that *Moses* should give them an Account of whatever God should command. Hereupon God consents to their Request, and promised them by *Moses*, that he would raise them up a Prophet like unto *Moses*, to whom they ought to hearken, upon pain of being cut off.

He that made the Addition to the last Book of *Moses*, wherein his Death is described, takes notice, that there never rose up afterwards a Prophet in *Israel* like to *Moses*: If it was *Ezra* who made that Addition, then here is a plain and clear decision against the *Jews*, some of whom assert that *Joshua* or *Jeremiah* was the Prophet whom *Moses* promised: If it was *Eleazar*, who liv'd

liv'd in *Joshua*'s time, then here *Joshua* at least is excluded from this priviledge of being designed by *Moses*.

But it is to no purpose to stop at such frivolous Objections: One needs only observe *Moses*'s Character to take notice of four certain Marks of *Moses*'s Prophecies, which advance him infinitely above all the other Prophets. I. He had all the sorts of Revelations which are generally found amongst all the Prophets. II. He was illustrious for great numbers of Miracles. III. He not only reform'd the Errors and false ways of Worship then prevailing amongst the *Jews*, but he set up a new Worship, and a new Form of Religion. IV. He introduced this Law, and this way of worshipping God, by such a conversation with God, as one see's amongst two intimate Friends: In which of the Prophets may these four Characters be found.

The *Galileans* themselves testified plainly that these Characters ought only to be found in the person of the Messiah, when they saw the Miracles of Jesus Christ, *John* VI. 14. and the *Jews* acknowledged the same in our Saviours time, when they applyed that Oracle to the Messiah, *John* I. 45.

But if these Oracles were obscurely hinted at in this Oracle, one may see them clearly apply'd to the Messiah in the following Oracles, proportionably as the Revelation encreased, and as God unravelled the Idea's of these ancient Oracles by explaining them more particularly by those Prophets whom he afterwards raised up. This may clearly be seen, if we pass on to those Oracles which

which were uttered by *David*, and the other Prophets who lived about his time.

CHAP. X.

Of the Oracles which concern the Messiah in the Book of Psalms.

THese were the Oracles which were the subjects of the Meditations of the Faithful from the Year of the World 2553, in which *Moses* dyed, until *David*'s time, who was particularly chosen by God to be the only man of *his Family*, which was also separated from all the other Families of *Judah*, who came from *Pharez*, from whom the Messiah was to be descended.

I have observed in another place, that in all probability God raised *David* to the Throne, only to make the Genealogy of that Family better known, from which the Messiah was to spring.

As this double advancement of *David*, one to the Throne of *Israel*, the other to be the Father to the Messiah, ought to have inspired him with lively Resentments of Gratitude, and as his Oracles would be much more famous, being uttered by a Royal Prophet, and the rather because God employ'd him in the making a just Regulation of the Service of the Sanctuary; so we see that *David* employ'd his Pen in giving more distinct Idea's of that Messiah which he promised them.

The Name *Meſſiah* properly ſignifies a perſon conſecrated by anointing to be King, Prieſt, or Prophet. This Name was particularly applyed by *David*, and the Prophets who lived after him, to that holy Seed which God had promiſed to *Abraham*'s Family by *Iſaac*, by *Jacob*, by *Judah*, and by *David*; and one may obſerve in *David*'s *Pſalms*, and in the Prophets of his time, that they gave the Name of Meſſiah to the promiſed Seed, under one or other of theſe three Senſes.

The Characters both of a Prophet and a Prieſt, tho' each of them are auguſt enough, yet yield to that of a King. Theſe are the different Idea's which *David*, and the Prophets of that time follow'd in all the variety of their Deſcriptions.

But it is not my Deſign to give a particular Account of all thoſe Oracles which deſcribe theſe different Characters, for fear of being exceſſively long: So I ſhall content my ſelf with obſerving two things: I. That *David* alone uttered more Oracles than all the Prophets who came before him. II. That theſe Oracles of *David* concerning the Meſſiah are clearer than all the precedent ones.

Now, I ſay, that *David* alone uttered more Oracles than any one Prophet who came before him; Thus in the XL *Pſalm* he explains the Decree by which the Meſſiah became the Servant of God, and clothed himſelf with the form of a Servant, to offer unto God a more perfect Obedience than that which had formerly been offered by Burnt-Offerings and Sacrifices. He deſcribes the meaſure and the Nature of his Miniſtry, which was

was to conſiſt in the inſtruction of the People, in Righteouſneſs, Truth, and the Salvation of God. *Pſalm* XL. 7. —— 11. *Sacrifice and Offering thou didſt not deſire, mine Ears haſt thou opened: Burnt-offering and Sin-offering haſt thou not required. Then ſaid I, Lo I come; in the Volume of the Book it is written of me: I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy Law is within my heart. I have preached Righteouſneſs in the great Congregation: Lo I have not refrained my Lips, O Lord, thou knoweſt: I have not hid thy Righteouſneſs within my heart, I have declared thy Faithfulneſs, and thy Salvation: I have not concealed thy loving Kindneſs, and thy Truth, from the great Congregation.*

In the XVI *Pſalm* he deſcribes the inviolable ſtedfaſtneſs of the Meſſiah to the Service of God, who had ſent him to form a great People; with the manner of his deliverance by God from all the powers of the World, by raiſing him up from the dead, and afterwards receiving him into Glory. *Pſalm* XVI. 8. &c. *I have ſet the Lord always before me: becauſe he is at my right hand, I ſhall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoyceth; my fleſh alſo ſhall reſt in hope. For thou wilt not leave my Soul in Hell; neither wilt thou ſuffer thy holy One to ſee corruption: Thou wilt ſhew me the path of Life; in thy preſence is fulneſs of joy: at thy right hand there are pleaſures for evermore.*

In the XXII *Pſalm* he deſcribes the Agonies through which the Meſſiah was to paſs, the manner of his Death, the Victory which he ſhould obtain over his Enemies, and the Converſion of thoſe very Nations which had caſt him off.

In

In the CIX *Psalm* he speaks of the Oppressions of the Messiah, pronouncing great numbers of Imprecations against that very person who should signalize himself by persecuting his Innocence. *Hold not thy peace O God of my praise: for the mouth of the wicked, and the mouth of the deceitful are opened against me; they have spoken against me with a lying tongue,* Verse 1, 2. *Set thou a wicked man over him, and let Satan stand at his right hand. When he shall be judged, let him be condemned, and let his prayer become Sin. Let his days be few, and let another take his Office,* Verse 6, 7, 8. *Because that he remembred not to shew mercy, but persecuted the poor and needy man, that he might even slay the broken in heart. As he loved cursing, so let it come to him: as he delighted not in blessing, so let it be far from him. As he clothed himself with cursing like as with his Garment, so let it come into his bowels like water, and like oyl into his boner,* Verse 16, 17, 18.

In the CXIX *Psalm* he carries this Argument further, in his Description of the Zeal of the Messiah for the House of God, and of those insultings which he should meet with, and the manner of their giving him Vinegar and Gall to drink, with the hardning and rejection of those who had used him in that manner. *Save me O God, for the waters are come in unto my soul. I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing: I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me,* Verse 1, 2. *Let not them that wait on thee, O Lord God of Hosts, be ashamed for my sake: Let not those that seek thee be confounded for my sake, O God of* Israel. *Because for thy sake I have born reproach; shame hath covered*

covered my face. I am become a stranger unto my Brethren, and an Alien unto my Mothers Children: For the zeal of thy House hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached thee, are fallen upon me, Verse 6, 7, 8, 9. *Reproach hath broken my heart, and I am full of heavinesse: and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none. They gave me also Gall for my meat, and in my thirst they gave me Vinegar to drink. Let their Table become a snare before them; and that which should have been for their welfare, let it become a trap. Let their eyes be darkned, that they see not; and make their loins continually to shake. Pour out thy indignation upon them, and let thy wrathful anger take hold of them,* Verse 20, 21, 22, 23, 24.

In the XCVII and XCVIII *Psalms* he describes the destruction of Idolatry when the promised Saviour should appear, and when God should raise him upon his Throne. *The Lord reigneth, let the Earth rejoyce; let the multitude of the Isles be glad thereof.* Psalm XCVII. 1. *Confounded be all they that serve graven Images, that boast themselves of Idols: worship him all ye Gods.* Zion *heard, and was glad, and the Daughters of* Judah *rejoyced; because of thy Judgments, O Lord: For thou Lord art high above all the Earth: thou art exalted far above all Gods,* Verse 7, 8, 9. *O sing unto the Lord a new Song, for he hath done marvellous things: his right hand, and his holy arm have gotten him the Victory. The Lord has made known his Salvation: his righteousnesse hath he openly shew'd in the sight of the Heathen. He hath remembred his Mercy and his Truth towards the House of* Israel: *all the ends of the Earth have seen the Salvation of our God. Make*

a

a joyful noise unto the Lord all the Earth: make a loud noise, and rejoyce and sing praise, Psalm XCVIII. 1. — 4.

In the LXVIII *Psalm* he explains the glory of the Messiah, and his Ascension into Heaven, with the effusion of those gifts which he was to spread abroad for the Conversion of the Nations, that God might dwell amongst the most rebellious. *Princes shall come out of* Egypt, Ethiopia *shall soon stretch out her hands unto God: Sing unto God, ye Kingdoms of the Earth: O sing praises unto the Lord. To him who rideth upon the Heavens of Heavens, which were of old; lo he doth send out his voice, and that a mighty voice. Ascribe ye strength unto God: his excellency is over* Israel, *and his strength is in the Clouds. O God, thou art terrible out of thy holy places, the God of* Israel *is he that giveth strength and power unto his people,* Verse 31, 32, 33, 34, 35.

The Prophets who lived in the time of *David*, or soon after, pursued all his Idea's. One see's that *Nathan*, II *Sam.* VII. foretells *Solomon*'s glory, and the honour which he should have in building that Temple of which *David* had formed the design before, in such a manner, that he clearly shews three things which will by no means agree with *Solomon*. I. That God should raise up a Son to *David* after his Death, and place him upon his Throne; whereas *Solomon* was born, and advanced to the Throne by *David* himself. II. It was promised that his Government should be endless; this is not applicable to the Royal Posterity of *David*, who had but Twenty Successors who bore the Title of Kings. III. That God particularly promises to be the Father of this promised Son,

Son, which is not more applicable to *Solomon*, than to *David*, to *Josiah*, or *Hezekiah*.

One see's that *Corah*'s Posterity gave that Account of *Solomon*'s glory upon his marriage with the King of *Egypt*'s Daughter; He speaks of a Throne much more august then that Princes was, and he represents to us a God consecrated with Oyl of Gladness above his Fellows. This exactly sets forth the august Character of the Messiah, and his Anointing to be the King of all Nations, their Prophet, and their Priest. *Psalm* XLV. 1. *My heart is inditing a good matter: I speak of the things which I have made touching the King: my tongue is the pen of a ready writer.* Verse 7, 8. *Thy Throne, O God, is for ever and ever; the Scepter of thy Kingdom is a right Scepter. Thou lovest righteousness and hatest wickedness; therefore God, thy God hath anointed thee with Oyl of Gladness above thy Fellows.* Verse 16. *Instead of thy Fathers shall be thy Children whom thou maist make Princes in all the Earth.*

One see's the same Prophets inviting all Nations in the XLVII *Psalm* to acknowledge the Kingdom of God: which *Daniel* afterwards describes as that which the *Jews* already knew was to be governed by the Messiah.

One see's *Asaph* describing in the L *Psalm* the manner of the Messiah's assembling all People, and of his rejecting the ancient and Legal Service, and prescribing a Spiritual one, even Sacrifices of Vows, and of Praise. *Verse* 6, 7, 8, 9, 10. *And the Heavens shall declare his Righteousness: for God is Judge himself. Hear O my people, and I will speak,* O Israel; *and I will testifie against thee: I am God, even thy God. I will not reprove thee for thy*

thy Sacrifices, or thy Burnt-offerings, to have been continually before me. I will take no Bullock out of thy Houſe, nor He-goat out of thy Folds. For every Beaſt of the Foreſt is mine, and the Cattle upon a thouſand Hills.

One ſees the Author of the LXXII *Pſalm* deſcribing the glory and happineſs of *Solomon*'s Kingdom in ſuch a manner, that he carries his views as high as the Meſſiah at the ſame time; He foretels the continuance of his Kingdom as long as the Sun and Moon endures; that all the Kings of the World ſhould bring Preſents to him, and that all the Nations of the Earth ſhould worſhip before him. *Verſe* 5. *They ſhall fear thee as long as the Sun and Moon endure, throughout all Generations.* Verſe 8. *He ſhall have Dominion alſo from Sea to Sea, and from the River unto the ends of the Earth.* Verſe 11. *All Kings ſhall fall down before him, all Nations ſhall ſerve him.* Verſe 17, 18, 19. *His Name ſhall endure for ever; his Name ſhall be continued as long as the Sun, and Men ſhall be bleſſed in him; all Nations ſhall call him bleſſed. Bleſſed be the Lord God of* Iſrael, *who only doth wondrous things: And bleſſed be his glorious Name for ever, and let the whole Earth be filled with all his Glory; Amen and Amen.*

One ſees that *Ethan* the *Ezrahite*, who is repreſented to us as the wiſeſt Man in that Age after *Solomon*, explains the promiſe made to *David* of a Son who ſhould reign for ever, and whoſe Throne ſhould be immoveable in the LXXXIX *Pſalm*. This agrees to none but the Meſſiah, whom he deſcribes as the Firſt-born of the Princes of the Earth, and as the Son of God

God in a manner, which is not applicable to any of *David*'s Poſterity, except only to the Meſſiah. *Verſe* 19, 20. *Then thou ſpakeſt in Viſions, to the holy one, and ſayſt, I have laid help upon one that is mighty; I have exalted one choſen out of the people. I have found* David *my ſervant; with my holy Oyl have I anointed him.* Verſe 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29. *My Faithfulneſs and my Mercy ſhall be with him; and in my Name ſhall his Horn be exalted. I will ſet his Hand alſo in the Sea, and his right hand in the Rivers. He ſhall cry unto me, Thou art my Father, my God, and the Rock of my Salvation. Alſo I will make him my Firſt-born, higher than the Kings of the Earth. My Mercy will I keep for him for evermore, and my Covenant ſhall ſtand faſt with him. His Seed alſo will I make to endure for ever, and his Throne as the days of Heaven.* Verſe 33, 34, 35, 36, 37. *Nevertheleſs my loving kindneſs will I not utterly take from him, nor ſuffer my faithfulneſs to fail. My Covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips. Once have I ſworn by my Holineſs, that I will not lye unto* David. *His Seed ſhall endure for ever, and his Throne as the Sun before me: It ſhall be eſtabliſhed for ever as the Moon, and as a faithful Witneſs in Heaven.*

One needs only read over the *Pſalms* which I have now taken notice of, and which are almoſt all applyed by the *Jews* to the Meſſiah, to ſee the great Number of Oracles which God gave in *David*'s time, concerning this matter; not to ſpeak of thoſe which deſcribe the Calling of the *Gentiles*, which fill up the Book

Book of the *Pſalms* almoſt entirely.

I come now to the proof of the ſecond Article, which is to ſhew, That the Oracles which *David* uttered are much clearer, and much more particular than thoſe which were given before. This I hope to prove beyond all contradiction, by conſidering two *Pſalms*, the one whereof deſcribes the prodigious Humiliation of the Meſſiah; and the other deſcribes his Advancement at the right hand of God; two of the greateſt Truths declared by the Prophets, and two the moſt ſingular of all the Characters which belong to the *promiſed Meſſiah.*

CHAP. XI.

Conſiderations upon the Sufferings of the Meſſiah, and upon his glorious Aſcenſion into Heaven, foretold by David *in the* XXII *and* CX Pſalms.

IT cannot be deny'd, when one reads the XXII *Pſalm*, but that the perſon there ſpoken of, is deſcribed figuratively, as one expoſed to the ſevereſt Sufferings, from which he is afterwards delivered by the Divine aſſiſtance, and advanced to rule an Empire which extends it ſelf over all the Nations of the World, and afterwards univerſally adored.

I. He

I. He that ſpeaks, cries out as if God had forſaken him, and had ſtopped his Ears unto his Cry.

II. He deſcribes himſelf as a Worm, and no Man, as the reproach of Men, and one deſpiſed by the people.

III. He takes notice, that thoſe who were witneſſes of his Sufferings, made a mock at them, bidding him truſt in God, that he might deliver him.

IV. He ranks his Enemies amongſt the Bulls of *Baſhan*, and raging Lions, who (according to the Prophetical way of ſpeaking) are the chief Men in the Nation. *Amos* IV. 1. *Ezech.* XXII. 25.

V. He joyns the Dogs with them, that is, prophane perſons or the *Gentiles.*

VI. He repreſents his Hands and his Feet as pierced with Nails.

VII. He ſhews that he was ſtretched out before, in ſuch a manner that they might count all his Bones; this expreſſes the Idea of a Man faſtned to a Croſs, and expoſed to the view of all the World; as he afterwards deſcribes himſelf to be quite dry'd up, from the loſs of Blood when he was crucify'd.

VIII. He takes notice of their parting his Garments, and

IX. Of their caſting Lots upon his Veſture.

In ſhort, one ſee's throughout all the expreſſions of this *Pſalm* the Image of a Death which was equally ſhameful and cruel.

The other part of the *Pſalm* gives us an Account of the deliverance of that perſon who is mentioned in this holy Hymn.

I. He obliges himſelf, to praiſe the Name of

the Lord in the moſt numerous Aſſembly.

II. He obſerves it as an effect of this deliverance, that all the ends of the World ſhould remember, and turn unto the Lord, and that all the Kindreds of the Nations ſhould worſhip before him.

III. At laſt, he takes notice that the Kingdom of God ſhould ſpread it ſelf over all the Nations of the World.

One may judge by the Hiſtory of *David*, whether this *Pſalm* is applicable to him; therein we may ſee all the Croſſes which he underwent particularly repreſented, during all the former years of his Reign. But there we have no Account, that *David* ever ſuffered any thing like that which is ſo exactly deſcribed in this *Pſalm*. And this may be ſaid further, that when *David* took any Occaſion to paint out his Sufferings to us, he has put in ſeveral ſtroaks which only relate to the Meſſiah, and which ſhew us in a very lively manner, that he was to paſs through much greater Tryals than any of thoſe from which *David* had been delivered.

The later *Jews*, who endeavour to verifie this Prophecy in *Eſther* or *Mordecai*, agree with us at the bottom, that *David* carried his views further than barely his own Sufferings. And thoſe alſo who apply it to the poople of *Iſrael*, muſt acknowledge the ſame Truth even againſt their wills.

But the more ancient *Jews* were more equitable in their applications of the XXII *Pſalm* to the Meſſiah. They applyed it to him in earneſt, even after the time of Jeſus Chriſt, when the compariſon

ſon of theſe Characters of the Meſſiah, which may be found ſo exactly in the Death of Jeſus Chriſt, led them to an oppoſition of this Truth.

And certainly there needs very little equity to acknowledge that this Oracle, or rather this heap of Oracles belong'd to the Meſſiah, by the confeſſion and agreement of the *Jews* in our Saviour's time.

I. They had not then reſolved to make their advantages of the Writer's fault, who writ [כארי] *like a Lion*, inſtead of [כארו] *they have pierced* my feet, as they have done ſince. In ſhort, *Aquila* who lived 100 years after Jeſus Chriſt, and the other *Jewiſh* Interpreters, *Symmachus* and *Theodotion*, tranſlated that paſſage as we now read it.

II. The Notion which the Synagogue always had of the Sufferings of the Meſſiah, obliged them to ſuppoſe two Meſſiahs, one ſuffering, and the other glorious, rather than to contradict that Truth openly, which is expreſſed by theſe Oracles in ſo particular a manner.

III. Nothing can be imagined to be more ridiculous, than to ſuppoſe that Jeſus Chriſt ſhould quote the firſt words of this *Pſalm* upon the Croſs, thereby to engage all Mankind to take notice of the accompliſhment of this ancient Oracle in all his Sufferings, if we ſuppoſe that this *Pſalm* even by the confeſſion of the *Jews*, had no relation to the Meſſiah.

The ſame Reflexion may be made concerning the Apoſtles, who have quoted ſo many paſſages of this *Pſalm* to prove that Jeſus Chriſt was the

Meſſiah; becauſe one may find in his Death, and in the Circumſtances of it, ſuch a litteral and exact accompliſhment of this ancient Prophecy.

But if it ſhould be objected, That after all, this agreement of the Synagogue can make no more than a ſtrong prejudice; this may be eaſily anſwered; by conſidering that when the *Pſalmiſt* ſpeaks of the extent of his Kingdom over the whole Earth, it was that Circumſtance which determined the Synagogue in their application of this whole *Pſalm* to the Meſſiah; becauſe as the *Jews* themſelves acknowledge, this extent of Empire is one of thoſe Characters, which according to the ancient Oracles, is applicable to none but the Meſſiah. In ſhort, (becauſe it is of great importance, I ſhall repeat it here again) common ſenſe led thoſe who conſidered theſe ancient Oracles, to compare them (as naturally they ought) with thoſe that went before, and to determine the ſcope and intent of the later ones by the relation which they had to the precedent ones; and there was only need of one conſiderable Clauſe to make a certain determination after they had made ſuch a compariſon. This the *Jews* were certainly convinced of, when they acknowledged that the laſt words of *David*, II *Sam.* XXIII. 1——8. were to be applyed to the Meſſiah, by comparing them with *Balaam*'s Oracle of the Meſſiah, *Numb.* XXIV.

We may therefore take it for granted, That *David* did not abſolutely ſpeak of himſelf in the XXII *Pſalm*, and that he carried his views as far as the Meſſiah, that he gave a great number of Cha-

Characters to his Poſterity, whereby they might diſtinguiſh, notwithſtanding the greatneſs of his Sufferings, and even the better by his very Sufferings, than which no clearer marks can poſſibly be given; becauſe there is nothing more involuntary than enduring of Miſeries, nor nothing which depends leſs upon the choice of the perſon who is to undergo them, than the particular kind of puniſhment, or than the Circumſtances which muſt accompany his Death, when it is once left to the unjuſt power of violent Enemies.

We come now to the CX *Pſalm*, which in a very few words contains ſeveral very important Characters of the Meſſiah, which are very diſtinctly expreſſed.

If one conſiders it exactly, it ſeems to have been compoſed after that *Nathan* had acquainted *David* with the Glory of his Son which God had promiſed him; ſuch a Son who ſhould build a Houſe wherein God ſhould dwell for ever, and who ſhould ſit upon a Throne which ſhould never be overturned; whereas *David* had only form'd a Deſign of Building a Temple to the Lord.

In ſhort, one ſee's that the Spirit of Prophecy had given him a view of the Glory of this auguſt King who ſhould be born of his Seed, and of the Glory of his Kingdom which ſhould never be deſtroy'd. *David* advances this King not only above all MEN, by calling him *his Lord* who was himſelf a King; but alſo above the Angels, by making him ſit at the right hand of God in the Kingdom of Heaven. This is perſonal. He alſo deſcribes the Glory of his Office, by conſider-

ing him as a Prieſt of a higher order than that of *Aaron*, from whom *Melchiſedech* received Tithes in the perſon of *Abraham*: And, in a word, he acquaints us with the progreſs of his Kingdom, and the greatneſs of his Victories. Let us examine all theſe Characters by themſelves.

I. He brings in God ſpeaking to the Meſſiah, whom he calls *his Lord*; *Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thy Enemies thy footſtool.* This points out to us, 1. That the Meſſiah ought to be advanced to Glory. 2. That God intended to ſubdue his Enemies by little and little, whilſt the Meſſiah ſhould be in his Glory; as it was foretold in the Second *Pſalm*.

II. He obſerves, That the Empire of the Meſſiah was to begin at *Jeruſalem*, or *Sion*, which was then to be under the power of his Enemies.

III. He expreſly points out the quick extent of the Kingdom of the Meſſiah, with the Character of thoſe who ſhould ſubmit to him without conſtraint or violence, which was much practiſed under *Moſes*'s Law.

IV. He poſitively aſſerts, That the Meſſiah ſhould be eſtabliſhed a *Prieſt after the order of* Melchiſedech, which would overturn the whole Levitical Prieſthood, which then was to have an end: Yet the very ſame King who deſigned the Draught of the Temple which *Solomon* built ſome time after, undermines the Foundations of this material Building, and clearly ſuppoſes that the Levitical Miniſtry, which was fixed to *Solomon*'s Temple, ſhould laſt no longer than until the Coming of the Meſſiah.

V. He

V. He particularly takes notice, That the Meſſiah ſhould, by the Divine Aſſiſtance, deſtroy all that ſhould oppoſe his power, and ſhould bring all things under his Dominion, as a Conquerour who ſhould overturn all things with the utmoſt violence.

Nothing can be greater than theſe ſeveral Oracles; nothing can be more particular than his deſcription of the Glory to which the Meſſiah was to be advanced after that prodigious Humiliation which is deſcribed in the XXII *Pſalm*; But what can we ſuppoſe to be the reaſon of *David*'s ſpeaking of the Meſſiah in this *Pſalm*? This I am further to conſider.

One may ſay that the *Jews* did not conſtantly apply theſe Prophecies to the Meſſiah, before the Coming of Jeſus Chriſt without good grounds: They could not apply them to any of *David*'s Succeſſors; none of *David*'s Succeſſors was both King and Prieſt. *Uzziah* was the only man who dared to uſurp the Prieſthood; and he was puniſhed by God himſelf. The *Maccabees* were not of *David*'s Tribe, but were *Levites*, and none of them ever went up into Heaven to ſet at the right hand of God. Beſides, their Kingdom did not begin in *Sion*, and they never brought any other Kings under their Authority. They applyed it therefore to the Meſſiah, purſuant to the Maxim which they drew from a frequent meditation upon the ancient Oracles, that we ought only to look for an accompliſhment of thoſe Prophecies in the perſon of the Meſſiah, which they could never find to be fulfilled any where elſe, when at the ſame time they knew that the exactneſs

and truth of those Predictions could not be any ways contested.

In short, it plainly appears that they did unanimously apply it to the Messiah before *Jesus Christ* came into the World, from the manner of their confessing it to our Saviour, when he pressed them with the CX *Psalm*; tho' they could not explain the manner how *David* should call the Messiah Lord, when they allow'd him to be his Son, *Matth.* XXII. 48.

One see's nothing so frequently urg'd by the Apostles as this CX *Psalm*; they use it upon all Occasions to prove that Jesus Christ had the Characters of the true Messiah, such as *David* had given him in the CX *Psalm*, supposing still, as a thing beyond dispute, that *David* spoke of the Messiah in this famous Prophecy.

So that what Evasions soever the *Jews* may endeavour to make use of, yet they cannot deny but that their most famous Doctors since Jesus Christ, have upon several Occasions follow'd the old Notions of the Synagogue in this matter. One finds in their Writings great numbers of Testimonies which confirm this Truth. I shall not mention them at present, because they are well enough known, and because I would make haste to come to that new degree of Revelations which God gave to those Prophets who gave new Characters of the Messiah to the Jewish Nation for some Ages after *David*'s time.

They are in too great a number to be spoken of, one by one, and I am forced to range them under certain Heads; tho' I intend at the same time to make more particular Reflexions upon some

some of those which give us an account of the most remarkable Truths, and so by that means furnish us with the most sensible Character whereby we may know more certainly the person whom God proposed to his People in such a manner as the Saviour of *Israel*, and whom he had before called *The Expectation of the Gentiles.*

CHAP. XII.

That the Messiah was to have a Forerunner, and what was to be his Character.

WE shall make it manifest in the sequel of the Discourse, That the Messiah was to appear in a very despicable state, and consequently that his Appearance would be very distastful to those who expected him in the splendour of a great King and Conquerour. To oppose this preconceived Opinion of theirs, the Divine Wisdom thought fit to appoint one to be his Forerunner, who should call the *Jews* to Repentance, and a Reformation of their Lives, and form in them a true Notion of the Ministry of the Messiah, as of a Person who was to prescribe to them Laws of the greatest purity and holiness. And indeed, in examining the holy Scriptures, we find, That

That the Appearance of the Meſſiah was to be uſher'd in by a Perſon thus diſtinguiſh'd; the following Prophecies are very expreſs to this purpoſe.

The firſt of theſe we find in the XL. of *Iſaiah*, *verſe* 3. where the Prophet ſpeaks thus, before the Deſtruction of the firſt Temple; *The voice of him that crieth in the Wilderneſs, prepare ye the way of the Lord, make ſtraight in the Deſert a High way for our God.* The *Jews* acknowledge that this Chapter ſpeaks of the comfort the Meſſiah was to procure for his People, and that the Voice mention'd here refers to thoſe who were to declare and proclaim his Coming.

Iſai. XL. 3.

Abenezra.

We meet with a ſecond Prophecy in *Malachy*, who prophecied after the Rebuilding of the Temple, and who having ſhut up the Viſion, preciſely points at the Time wherein he was to appear, *viz.* during the ſecond Temple, *Chap.* III. *verſe* 1, 2, 3, & 4. *Behold, I will ſend my Meſſenger, and he ſhall prepare the way before me: and the Lord whom ye ſeek ſhall ſuddainly come to his Temple; even the Meſſenger of the Covenant whom ye delight in, behold he ſhall come, ſaith the Lord of Hoſts. But who may abide the day of his coming? And who ſhall ſtand when he appeareth? For he is like a Refiners fire, and like Fullers ſope. And he ſhall ſit as a Refiner and Purifier of Silver: and he ſhall purifie the Sons of* Levi, *and purge them as gold and ſilver, that they may offer unto the Lord an Offering in Righteouſneſs.*

R. Saad.

The *Jews* own that theſe words alſo of *Malachy*, ſpeak of the Forerunner of the Meſſias.

But we ought to obſerve in the foregoing Paſſages, 1. That they have a manifeſt Relation to the Time of the Meſſiah's coming; ſhould the *Jews* deny this (as indeed they unanimouſly acknowledge it) it would be an eaſie matter to convince them, 1. By urging the Authority of the Evangeliſts, who apply theſe very Paſſages to the Miniſtry of *John the Baptiſt*. Thus we find that St. *Matthew* and St. *Mark* make a manifeſt Alluſion to theſe two Prophecies: *Zachary* alſo, the Father of *John the Baptiſt*, applyes that of *Iſaiah* to his Son; and his Authority is the more conſiderable, becauſe he was a Prieſt. 2. By an attentive conſidering the Paſſages themſelves. 3. By the common conſent of the *Jewiſh* Church, who by a generally received and undoubted Tradition, that *Elijah* the *Tiſhbite* (the *Septuagint* in their Tranſlation of that place of *Malachy* telling us as much) was to be the Forerunner of the Meſſiah; and we find, that in the time of our Saviour, the Multitude and his Diſciples ſuppoſed the ſame thing: And the *Jews* at this day have the ſame perſwaſion, *viz.* That *Elias* is to come before the Appearance of the Meſſiah; from which Tradition of the *Jews* the *Chriſtians* of old did, and many at this day do believe, That *Elias* ſhall reſume the Functions of his Miniſtry before the laſt coming of Jeſus Chriſt *to Judge the Quick and the Dead.*

Matth. III. 1
Mark I. 2.

2. We may obſerve, That the Character of the Forerunner of the Meſſiah, being that which the *Jews* had much in their eye, it was needful for it to be as notable and extraordinary, as was that of the Prophet *Elias*; whoſe Miniſtry was without diſpute the moſt remarkable and illuſtrious of all the Prophets ſince *Moſes*; which gave the Prophet *Malachy* occaſion to call him *Elias*, much upon

upon a like account as the Prophet *Ezekiel* calls the Messiah, *David*. Ezek. XXXIV. 23,24.

But above all things, we must carefully observe the several Marks the Prophets give us of this Forerunner.

The Prophet *Isaiah* gives us these following particulars: 1. That his Ministry was to be very signal, and attended with general Respect and Veneration. 2. That he was to preach in the Wilderness. 3. That he was to call Sinners to Repentance. 4. That he was to confound those who were most eminent in Authority, and to comfort the Poor and Humble. 5. That he was immediately to precede the Messiah. 6. That his Ministry was to usher in that grand Revelation of the Glory of God in the presence of all Flesh, *i.e.* before all Nations of the Earth, who were to be called by the Messiah to his Religion, according to the express Declaration of the Prophets.

The Prophet *Malachy* doth most distinctly represent to us, 1. That the Mission of this Forerunner was not far off, *Behold*, saith he, *I send my Messenger*. He speaks of it as of a thing at the Door. Now it is evident, and the *Jews* themselves own it, That from the Time of *Malachy*, there was never a Prophet till the Appearance of *John the Baptist*.

2. It tells us that this *Elias* was to call Sinners to Repentance, and *to prepare the way before the face of the Lord*.

3. That he was immediately to precede the Messias; this he expresses by saying, *And the Lord whom ye seek shall suddainly come to his Temple, even the Angel of the Covenant whom ye delight in*. It is

is evident that he speaks here of the Messiah, whom he calls, not only *the Angel or Messenger of the Covenant*, but also *the Lord*; *The Lord*, forasmuch as God had promised him as a King to the House of *David*; and *the Angel of the Covenant*, because God by him was to make a new Covenant with the Nations of the Earth, as *Jeremy* declares *Chap.* XXXI. Psalm II.

CHAP. XIII.

That the Messiah was to be born before the dissolution of the Jewish State, and the Destruction of the Second Temple.

THE preceding Mark of the Messiah, leads us to this we are now to speak of, and affords it considerable Light. I will not repeat here what I have already set down concerning that Prophecy, *Gen.* XLIX. *verse* 10. concerning the Time when our Saviour was to appear in the World: It is evident at first sight, That that Prophecy evinces Three things: 1. That the *Scepter* was to be in the House of *Judah*, before ever the *Shiloh* was to come. 2. That the *Scepter* was to give way to an inferiour Dignity, which the Prophet sets forth by the word *Lawgiver*; and which did take place till the time of *Zerubbabel*, and his

his Succeſſors. 3. There was a neceſſity that this laſt Dignity alſo was to come to an end, which happened not till the Advancement of *Herod* the Great to the Throne of *Judea*. And it is eaſie to confirm this Truth, by other Oracles which give a further Light to this ourExplication.

We have ſeveral that are very remarkable upon this account: The firſt is that of *Daniel, Chap.* II. *verſe* 40, 41, 42, *to* 46. where he firſt takes notice of the Succeſſion of ſeveral Monarchies, until that of the Meſſiah. 2. The Time in which the Meſſiah was to appear. I confeſs he do's not determine the Time very preciſely, mentioning only the Monarchy during which he was to be manifeſted; but to make amends for this, when he comes to explain the particulars of this Prophecy, which before he had propos'd in general terms; he doth not only point at the time of his Appearance, but the very Year of his Death, and he do's it with that exactneſs, that it is impoſſible to be miſtaken about it.

See what he ſaith in the IX *Chapter* of his *Revelations, Verſe* 24, 25, 26, 27. *Seventy weeks are determined upon thy People, and upon thy Holy City, to finiſh the Tranſgreſſion, and to make an end of Sins, and to make Reconciliation for Iniquity, and to bring in Everlaſting Righteouſneſs, and to Seal up the Viſion and Prophecy, and to Anoint the moſt Holy.* Verſe 25. *Know therefore, and underſtand, that from the going forth of the Commandment to reſtore and build* Jeruſalem, *unto the Meſſiah the Prince, ſhall be Seven weeks, and threeſcore and two weeks, the Streets ſhall be built again, and the Wall even*

before the end of the laſt Week pointed out by *Daniel*, as I have ſhewed in the Eight Chapter of the Third Part of this Book.

CHAP. VI.

That Jeſus Chriſt had preciſely ſuch a Forerunner as the Prophets had deſcribed to precede the Meſſiah.

ONE will eaſily judge that it was agreeable to the greatneſs of the Meſſiah, and the contemptible ſtate wherein he was to appear to the World, that he ſhould have a Forerunner. Accordingly we find *Iſaiah* expreſſing himſelf in his manner, the year of the World 3292, almoſt 700 years before the Birth of our Saviour. *Malachy* had expreſly foretold the ſame in his Prophecy, about 420 years before his Appearance. If this be once granted, it is eaſie to conceive that the Son of a Prieſt, living without any worldly ſpendour, and dying a violent death, tho' very glorious for him, was a proper Forerunner to that Jeſus, who himſelf was to be Crucified.

Our buſineſs therefore is to enquire whether the Characters which the Prophets give to the Forerunner of the Meſſiah, do agree with *John the Baptiſt*, in whom the Chriſtians maintain that this Prophecy of *Malachy* was fulfilled. This may be eaſily made out.

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* * *

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Firſt, *John the Baptiſt* was miraculouſly conceived

ceived at a time when his Parents could not promise themselves any such thing! The Angel *Gabriel*, who had declared to *Daniel* the coming of the Messiah, by pointing out to him the number of Weeks, was the Messenger of the Conception of this Forerunner of the Messiah. Several things passed at his Birth, and at the time when they gave him his Name, which were very strange, and which could not but be generally known, as well because of the Accident which happened to *Zacharias* in the Temple, as of his quality, being a Priest.

Secondly, The extraordinary Life which S. *John* led, being a *Nazarite*, ought to be carefully considered. He liv'd in a solitary place, as the Prophet *Elijah* did before him.

Thirdly, His preaching also had the Character of that ancient Prophet, being Thundring as his was; he neither spared great men, nor those who had the reputation of the greatest sanctity, as the Pharisees particularly, whose Pride and Hypocrisie he touched to the quick.

Fourthly, He set forth the coming of the Messiah as at the door; *The Kingdom of Heaven*, said he, *is at hand*; alluding to the Seventh of *Daniel*; where the Kingdom of the Messiah is represented as a Kingdom which was to come down from Heaven, whereas the former Empires had their rise from the Earth.

In short, nothing could be more illustrious than the Ministry of this great Man.

He Baptized publickly for the space of one year, such as came to him, solemnly engaging them to Repentance, in hopes of the sudden appearance

find just Forty nine years, that is the Seven Weeks designed by *Daniel* for rebuilding of the Ruins, and fortifying of the City; and the rather because *Nehemiah* return'd to *Artaxerxes* in the Thirty second Year of his Reign, having finished that work, *Nehemiah* XIII. 6. But this Opinion cannot stand, for these two Reasons which seem to me to be unanswerable: The first is, Because they suppose that *Daniel* ends his Seventy Weeks at the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, whereas indeed he saith no such thing, but expresly tells us that the Messiah should be cut off in the midst of the Seventieth Week. The second is, That so, without designing it, they rob Jesus Christ of the Glory, of having determined the Time of the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, as if instead of a Prophecy concerning that Event, he had only given us an Explication of that of *Daniel*. Neither will I make any further stop here, to observe, That that which has given most trouble to Interpreters, hath proceeded from the want of making an exact distribution of the different parts of that Prophecy, which very distinctly delivers three things: 1. The end of the Prophecy, which happened after Seven Weeks in the time of *Malachy*. 2. The Death of the Messiah, which came to pass in the midst of the last Week of the 490 Years. 3. The Peace which was to be made in the midst of one Week, that is Three years and an half before the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, which was done not by the Messiah, as some have imagined, but by the *Romans* who made Peace with the *Parthians*, as is recorded by *Tacitus*. An intelligent Reader will easily judge, *Annal.* Lib. XV.

That this diverſity of Opinions concerning the meaning of this Oracle, has been occaſioned by want of attention to what has been now mentioned.

Now theſe Obſervations being ſuppoſed, as indeed they are Matters of the greateſt Evidence, it neceſſarily follows, That the Meſſiah was to appear before the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem* by the *Romans*. The Time is ſet down ſo preciſely by *Daniel*, as leaves no pretence to doubt of this Truth. And indeed, tho' the *Jews* ſeem preſently after the time of our Saviour, to have adopted the Opinion I mentioned before, as being unwilling to receive the Meſſiah, and therefore carried it to the end of the Seventy Weeks, *viz.* to the Deſtruction of their Temple, notwithſtanding *Daniel* expreſly tells us, That the Temple was not to be deſtroyed till after the Appearance of the Meſſias. The *Jews*, I ſay, being convinc'd by the force of this Argument, have owned that the Meſſiah was born at the time of the Deſtruction of the ſecond Temple, but that he has hid himſelf ever ſince.

The ſecond Oracle concerning the Time of the Coming of the Meſſiah, is, That of *Haggai*, which expreſly tells us, that the Meſſiah was to appear during the ſecond Temple, which was begun to be built by the Order of *Cyrus*, finiſhed under *Darius* Son of *Hyſtaſpes*, and deſtroyed by *Veſpaſian*. The Words of the Prophet are as follows, *Chap.* II. *verſ.* 7, 8, 9. *And I will ſhake all Nations, and the deſire of all Nations ſhall come; and I will fill this Houſe with Glory, ſaith the Lord of Hoſts. The Silver is mine, and the Gold is mine,*

mine, ſaith the Lord of Hoſts. The Glory of this latter Houſe ſhall be greater than that of the former, ſaith the Lord of Hoſts: and in this place will I give Peace, ſaith the Lord of Hoſts. It is worth our noting, 1. That this Oracle promiſes a very great change. 2. It deſcribes the Meſſiah as the Expectation of the *Gentiles*, ſuitable to the Idea God had given of him to *Abraham*. 3. That it fixes the Coming of the Meſſiah to the Time of the ſecond Houſe, that is to ſay, of the Temple built by *Zorobabel*. 4. It makes the Glory of that Houſe to depend upon its being honoured with the preſence of the Meſſiah.

In ſhort, if we would be convinc'd of this Truth, we need only conſider three things: The firſt is, That the Prophets *Zachariah* and *Malachy* do repreſent to us the Coming of the Meſſiah as near at hand; *Balaam* had ſaid, almoſt Ten Ages before, *I ſee him, but not nigh*, which intimated his coming to be then at a great diſtance. But *Zechariah* ſpeaks thus concerning it, *Chap.* III. *verſ.* 8, 9, 10. *Hear now* O Joſhuah *the High Prieſt, thou and thy Fellows that ſit before thee, for they are men wondred at: Behold, I will bring forth my Servant the* BRANCH; *For behold, the Stone that I have laid before* Joſhua; *upon one Stone, ſhall be ſeven Eyes; behold, I will engrave the graving thereof, ſaith the Lord of Hoſts, and I will remove the iniquity of that Land in one day. In that day ſaith the Lord of Hoſts, ſhall ye call every man his Neighbour, under the Vine and under the Figtree.*

Malachy expreſſes himſelf, concerning the approaching coming of the Meſſiah, thus, (*Chap.* III. *verſe* 1.) *Behold, I will ſend my Meſſenger, and he*

ſhall prepare the way before me; and the Lord, whom ye ſeek, ſhall ſuddenly come to his Temple, even the Meſſenger of the Covenant whom ye delight in, behold he ſhall come ſaith the Lord of Hoſts.

One ought to obſerve two very conſiderable things in this Prophecy: The firſt, That the Meſſiah was to come ſuddainly. The ſecond, That *Malachy* expreſly points to us, that the appearing of the Meſſiah was to be during the ſecond Temple; the words of the Prophecy diſtinctly expreſſing it.

And ſure it is, that all who gave any credit to theſe Oracles, did underſtand them ſo.

For firſt, Both *Jews* and *Gentiles* looked for the Meſſiah during the ſecond Temple. We find a paſſage expreſs to the purpoſe in *Tacitus*; and it was on this ground that *Joſephus* gave the Title of *Meſſiah* to *Veſpaſian*.

2. They expected him at the end of the Seventy Weeks, which was the Third Year after the Death of Jeſus Chriſt. This was the occaſion of their being deluded by ſo many falſe Meſſiah's about the time of our Saviour, and a little after.

3. They never deſpair'd of his coming (taking the Promiſe of the Meſſiah's coming to be conditional, when as indeed it was abſolute) until they began to believe that the term ſet down by God himſelf was expired.

4. The reaſon of their curſing thoſe that compute the times ſet down ſo diſtinctly and preciſely by *Daniel*, was, becauſe they found themſelves diſappointed in his Calculation, finding that the time which *Daniel* had pointed at for the coming of

of the Meſſiah, ſeem'd to be already expired.

5. 'Tis but of late that they have try'd to evade it, by maintaining that the Temple will be built a third time, and that then the Meſſiah ſhall appear; but this evaſion is unanſwerably refuted: 1. Becauſe *Daniel* aſſigns a certain term which is expired 1600 Years ſince. 2. Becauſe he expreſly tells us, That the deſolation of the Temple was to be for ever, as will appear in the following Chapters. And 3dly, Becauſe *Haggai* in effect calls the Temple of which he ſpeaks, *The ſecond or third Houſe*, by which expreſſion he ſo diſtinctly points out the ſecond Temple to us, that it would be ridiculous to ſuppoſe it meant of a third Temple, to be built 1700 Years after the ruin of that of which he prophecied.

CHAP. XIV.

That the Meſſiah was to be born of a Virgin of the Houſe of David.

HItherto we have ſeen that the Meſſiah was to be born of the Poſterity of *Abraham* by *Iſaac*, of that of *Iſaac* by *Jacob*, and of that of *Jacob* by *Juda*. This hath been ſufficiently made out already.

I have alſo ſhew'd from the Oracle in the I *Sam. Chap.* VII. That he was to be born of the Poſteri-

ty of *David*; and we find the same very particularly and fully set down in the LXXXIX *Psalm.*

The following Prophets have expresst themselves to the same purpose; *Isaiah* XI. *vers.* 1, 2, 3. and the Prophet *Jeremy* hath pursued the same Idea's, *Chap.* XXIII. *vers.* 5, 6. and *Chap.* XXXIII. *vers.* 15, 16, 17.

Neither do the Prophets only distinguish the Messiah by his being born of a Virgin, but also by determining that Virgin to the House of *David.* Neither need I repeat here what I have already observ'd, That this is a Truth, the Grounds whereof God had laid down in his first promise, *viz. The Seed of the Woman shall bruise the Serpents head*: where he makes mention of the Seed of the Woman only, without naming that of the Man, the word of *Seed* or *Posterity* very evidently designing a Man to be born of the Woman, which is acknowledg'd by the *Jews* in another Prophecy, and the same which the Apostle St. *Paul* takes notice of as a Maxim generally owned by the Doctors of the Synagogue. It is also evident that the word *Woman* plainly denotes the Sex of which this person was immediately to be born.

Galat. III.

It was obvious to judge, That something miraculous was to attend the Birth of the Messiah. We see *Isaac* born of a barren Mother, past the Age of Child-bearing: We find also something very singular at the Birth of *Sampson* and *Samuel*; and 'tis well known that the promise of the Messiah was something far greater than the Birth of these now mentioned, how illustrious soever they might

might be; and that therefore probably his Birth was to be attended by a greater Miracle. But because this was a thing wholly new, we ought to observe in what manner God did particularly foretel it.

The Prophecy of *Isaiah* expresseth it thus, *Chap.* VII. *vers.* 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17. *Moreover the Lord spake again unto* Ahaz, *saying, Ask thee a sign of the Lord thy God, ask it either in the depth, or in the height above. But* Ahaz *said, I will not ask, neither will I tempt the Lord. And he said, hear ye now O house of* David, *is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will ye weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; behold a Virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call his name* Immanuel. *Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the Evil, and choose the Good: for before the Child shall know to refuse the Evil, and choose the Good, the Land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her Kings. The Lord shall bring upon thee, upon thy People, and upon thy Father's House, days that have not come from the day that* Ephraim *departed from* Juda, *even the King of* Assyria. Where we may observe,

1. That the Promise here is made to a wicked King, but of the Family of *David*, to whom the Prophet particularly addresses himself.

2. That this Prophecy was given at a juncture of time very capable of awakening their attention to it, at a time when the State of the *Jews* was reduced to the greatest extremity, and the House of *David* in particular in a very great consternation.

3. The Prophecy was utter'd by a very illustri-

ous Prophet, who was of the Royal Family.

4. It was ſealed and confirmed with the Prediction of the Birth of a Child, which came to paſs accordingly.

5. It is ſet forth as a very extraordinary ſign, inſtead of that which the wicked King refuſed to ask, when *Iſaiah* offer'd it him, in the Name of God.

I am not ignorant that the Modern *Jews* deny that this Character of being born of a Virgin belongs to the Meſſiah: but it is an eaſie matter to confute them.

For firſt, Would it not have been ridiculous for the Apoſtles to go about to apply this Oracle to their Meſſiah, if it had not been a thing univerſally own'd by the *Jews*, that this was the meaning of *Iſaiah*'s Prophecy? Is it not evident that this Character, ſo difficult to gain belief, would rather perplex than ſtrengthen their proofs. And yet certain it is that St. *Matthew* has done ſo, *Chap.* I. *verſe* 23. as likewiſe St. *Luke*, *Chap.* I. *verſe* 31.

Juſtin Martyr obſerv'd, That the Notion of this Oracle, as we underſtand it, hath been entertain'd amongſt the Heathens, who built their Fable of *Perſeus* upon it, whom they pretend to have been born of a Virgin.

3. It appears that all thoſe Laws which I mentioned in my Reflexions upon *Exodus*, and the following Books, *Chap.* XX. and which have Relation to the diſtinct knowledge of the ſtate of Virginity, receive much light from this Notion; and are without it altogether uſeleſs.

4. 'Tis

4. 'Tis evident that the *Jews* did not diſpute this Character, till after they ſaw that the Chriſtians apply'd it to Jeſus Chriſt; and thereupon have fallen upon ſuch childiſh Fancies as may juſtly cover them with Confuſion.

But we ſhall be yet further ſatisfied hereof, if we add to all theſe juſt Prejudices, only the following Reflexions on the terms the Prophet makes uſe of.

The firſt is, That the LXX Interpreters have in tranſlating this Prophecy, made uſe of a word that ſignifies a Virgin, and not a young Woman, as the *Jews* have underſtood it ſince our Saviour's time. The firſt who rejected the Interpretation of the *Septuagint* was *Symmachus*, who lived in the ſecond Century, as it is obſerved by *Juſtin Martyr* and *Tertullian*, who for this reaſon accuſe the *Jews* of having falſified the Holy Scripture.

In Dialog. cum *Tryphon.* *Tertull.* cont. *Jud.* cap. 9.

The ſecond is, That the *Hebrew* word expreſly ſignifies ſuch an one, as according to the Law of Virgins, was kept under Lock and Key from the Eyes of Men, according to the cuſtom of the Eaſtern Nations, and eſpecially of the *Jews*, which continues amongſt them till this day.

The third is, That this word hath been taken by the *Africans* in the ſame ſignification, as St. *Jerome* obſerves.

The fourth is, That the Prophet doth ſet forth this Child-bearing as a Prodigy and Miracle altogether unheard of, and as a particular Character, by which the Houſe of *David* was to be ſtrongly confirmed in the hope of ſeeing the accompliſhment of the Promiſe which God had made of

ſetling

setling an eternal Kingdom upon it, which could not be accomplished but by means of the Messiah.

The fifth is, That tho' some *Jews* have applyed this Prophecy to King *Hezekiah*, which yet to others of them seems very ridiculous, he being Nine years of Age when the Prophecy was uttered by *Isaiah*, and themselves never making use of this Evasion, except in their Disputes against the Christians, and so on this occasion have dropt a Confession which alone was sufficient to confound them. Yet it hath been a thing so generally received amongst them, That this Prophecy did respect the Messiah, that after they had applyed it to *Hezekiah*, one of their most famous Doctors concludes, That they ought to look for no Messiah, since the time of *Hezekiah*, that Prophecy having had its accomplishment in him; an Opinion which those that succeeded him have rejected with the greatest abhorrence.

Raschi in h. l.

Gemar in Sanhed. Cap. Chelech.

The sixth is, That the Title of *Immanuel*, given to this Son, whose Birth is here promised, is represented to us *Chap.* VIII. as the Name of him who was Lord of the Land, which is a true Representation of the Heir promised to *David*, to whom *David* said, *O God, thy God hath anointed thee with the Oyl of Gladness above thy Fellows.* Psal. XLV. 7, 8.

The seventh is, That the Prophet *Isaiah* having alledged and cited two Witnesses, *Uriah* the Son of *Shemaiah*, a Prophet, who was put to death by *Jehoiakim*, and *Zechariah* the Son of *Jeberechiah*; the former of which lived long after *Ahaz*, and the latter since the Captivity, under *Darius*

Darius King of *Persia*, according to the account the *Jews* themselves give of them, he sufficiently hints by this Circumstance, That the Prophecy concerning the Birth of the *Immanuel* he speaks of, was to be fulfill'd many Ages after, and not in that Age wherein he prophecies.

CHAP. XV.

That the Messiah was to be born at Bethlehem *of the Family of* David, *which at that time was reduc'd to a private state.*

GOD had not only pointed out the time in which the Messiah was to appear, with the miraculous Manner and Circumstances of his Birth; but he had also named the Family, the Place, with the State and Condition of the Family in which he was to be born, as a triple Character by which he might be known.

I say, first, That according to the Divine Oracles, the Messiah was to be born of the Family of *David*, as will appear if we consider the following Oracles.

1. God expresly promiseth as much to *David*, II *Sam. Chap.* VII. a place I have quoted before, which proves that the Messiah was to be born of the Family of *David*.

2. It appeareth that *David* believ'd this himself, from

from *Pſalm* CXXXII. *verſ.* 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, *and* 18. *The Lord hath ſworn in truth unto* David, *he will not turn from it; of the fruit of thy Body will I ſet upon thy Throne.* And after having ſaid, *Verſe* 12. *That if his Children would keep his Covenant,* that *their Children alſo ſhould ſit upon his Throne for evermore.* And this *becauſe* (Verſ. 13 & 14.) *the Lord had choſen* Zion, *and deſired it for his habitation, &c.* and promiſed *Verſe* 15. That he would *abundantly bleſs her Proviſion, and ſatisfie her Poor with Bread*; that he would *Verſe* 16. *Clothe her Prieſts with Salvation, and make her Saints ſhout for joy.* He ſubjoyns *Verſ.* 17 & 18. *There I will make the horn of* David *to bud, I have ordained a Lamp for mine Anointed. His Enemies I will clothe with ſhame, but upon himſelf ſhall his Crown flouriſh.* It is very evident, That by this *Horn of* David is to be meant a King, the Meſſiah, whom he diſtinguiſhes by that Expreſſion from all the reſt of *David*'s Children. And *Zachariah* in his Song of Praiſe, *Luke* I. *verſe* 69. applying it to our Saviour, puts the Matter out of all doubt.

3. Hence it was the Prophets took occaſion to give to the Meſſiah the Name of *David*. So *Ezek.* XXXIV. *verſ.* 23, 24. *And I will ſet up one Shepherd over them, and he ſhall feed them, even my Servant* David; *he ſhall feed them, and he ſhall be their Shepherd. And I the Lord will be their God, and my Servant* David *a Prince among them, I the Lord have ſpoken it.*

4. The *Jews* are, and have always been firm in this perſwaſion, grounded on the foreſaid and other like places of Scripture, which they conſtantly refer to the Meſſiah.

I ſay in the ſecond place, That the Divine Oracles expreſly point out *Bethlehem* for the Birth-place of the Meſſiah. *Micah* the V. *Verſe* 2. *But thou* Bethlehem Ephratah, *though thou be little among the thouſands of* Judah, *yet out of thee ſhall he come forth unto me, that is to be Ruler in* Iſrael; *whoſe goings forth have been from of old, from the days of Eternity.*

The *Jews* acknowledge that this Oracle ſpeaks of the Meſſiah; and indeed the Prophet diſtinguiſhing by *Bethlehem* adding the word *Ephratah* (whence the Family of *David* was) from that *Bethlehem* which belonged to another Tribe, makes it apparent that nothing could be ſpoke more diſtinctly to determine the Birth-place of the Meſſiah. Beſides, we find that all the Jewiſh Rabbies and Prieſts agree in this, That the Meſſiah was to be born at *Bethlehem*, when being conſulted by *Herod* about this Matter, they declared this to be their Senſe, grounded upon the forementioned place of *Micah*, *Matthew* II. *verſ.* 4, 5, 6.

In the third place, it appears that the Meſſiah was to be born in an abject, contemptible, and weak condition, and very different from the greatneſs of the Kings of *Judah*. Indeed, ſhould we only have our eye on II *Sam. Chap.* VII. and *Pſalm* CXXXII. it would be natural enough to think the contrary; but *Micah*'s Oracle ſufficiently refutes them; for how great things ſoever the Prophet there ſpeaks of the Meſſiah, whether as to his Divine Nature, by declaring that his *Goings forth were from the days of Eternity*; or to the Majeſty and Glory of his Empire; yet however

he gives us a different Idea, inducing us to conceive of him, as of one that was to be born in the ſtate of a private Perſon; for why elſe is his Birth determined, not to *Zion*, which was the Place and Seat of the Empire of *Judah*, but to *Bethlehem*, a Town where the Family of *David* lived, whilſt they were private Perſons, except for this cauſe, to make us conceive that the Meſſiah was not to be born in that place where the Family of *David* poſſeſſed the Empire: but in a Condition far diſtant from the Glory of Kings, and in a place where the Houſe of *David* was contemptible, and of very ſmall eſteem.

The ſame is hinted to us by *Iſaiah*, in his XI *Chapter*, *v.* 1. where he calls the Meſſiah *a Rod*, or ſhoot *of the ſtem of* Jeſſe. Now *Jeſſe* was not King, but a private Perſon. And on the ſame account it is that the Prophet deſcribes him, *Chap.* LIII. as having *no form or comlineſs.*

The Prophet *Zachary* alſo, *Chap.* IX. *verſe* 9. repreſents him, not as King, ſitting on the Throne in *Zion*; but as riding to *Jeruſalem* on an Aſs; and he gives him the Title of *Lowly*; which ſignifies as well a mean Condition, as the vertue of Humility.

But in ſhort, this is very conſiderable; 1. That thoſe who acknowledged Jeſus to be the Meſſiah, thought they had the greateſt reaſon ſo to do, becauſe they acknowledged him to be the Son of *David.*

2. That thoſe who deny'd him that Title, thought themſelves ſufficiently juſtified in ſo doing, by eſteeming him a *Nazarene*; as concluding he could not be the Son of *David*; if he were born

born at *Nazareth*, as they ſuppoſed.

3. The Evangeliſts preciſely tell us, That Chriſt was born at *Bethlehem*, of the Lineage of *David*, reduced to a very obſcure Condition; and ſo making this one of the chief Characters which ſpoke him to be the Meſſiah.

CHAP. XVI.

That the Meſſiah was to work great Miracles, for the eſtabliſhing of his Miſſion, and of the Truth of his Doctrine.

HEre is another Character which is very particular, and whereby the Meſſiah might be certainly known, *viz.* That he was to work great Miracles for the confirmation of his Miſſion and of his Doctrine.

This appears, as I have already hinted, 1. From the conformity which the Meſſiah was to have with *Moſes*, in being the Founder of a new Religious Society, and in propoſing a new Doctrine to Men; upon which account there lay upon him the ſame Obligation, as upon *Moſes*, to ſupport his Authority by Miracles, that even in this he might not be inferiour to him.

2. One may gather this alſo from the Title of *Prophet*, and *great Prophet*, which are applicable to the Meſſiah; it being difficult to conceive, That God who vouchſafed the Glory of doing Miracles

Miracles to moſt of the Prophets, tho' they were barely ſent to foretel the Coming of the Meſſiah, and to give an account of him, ſhould have denied the ſame Glory and the ſame Power to the Meſſiah himſelf, of whom all the Prophets were but the Forerunners.

Beſides, it is eaſie to judge from the mean and contemptible ſtate wherein the Meſſiah was to appear, That this Glory of doing Miracles was of abſolute neceſſity to give him Authority and Reſpect: for ſince he was to be born in an obſcure Condition, and not in Royal Grandeur, it is evident that the Gift of Miracles was needful to make him known, and counterbalance that low and opprobrious Condition in which he was to appear in the World.

But this particularly appears from an expreſs Oracle which God gave upon this very Subject, in *Iſaiah* XXXV. *verſ.* 3, 4, 5, *and* 6. *Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them of a fearful heart, be ſtrong, fear not; behold your God will come with vengeance, even God with a Recompence; he will come and ſave you. Then the eyes of the Blind ſhall be opened, and the ears of the Deaf ſhall be unſtopped. Then ſhall the Lame man leap as an Hart, and the tongue of the Dumb ſing: for in the Wilderneſs ſhall waters break out, and ſtreams in the Deſert.* Which Oracle very fully expreſſes the Power of Miracles wherewith our Saviour was to be dignified, in curing all manner of Diſeaſes, of which the Prophet hath named ſome only, to give us a *Specimen* of the reſt; and it ſeems as if the Prophet had choſen theſe four ſorts before all others, becauſe throughout the whole Scripture

ture we do not find that ever any Prophet did the like, that ſo the Character of the Meſſiah might be particular in his Miracles too.

It is alſo worth our noting, in giving a Character of the Meſſiah, Firſt, That even thoſe who rejected Jeſus Chriſt, yet did at the ſame time ſuppoſe that the Meſſiah when he came, was to work Miracles. Therefore it is that we hear ſome of them ſaying to Chriſt, *What ſign doſt thou?* and others maintaining that *Moſes* had wrought greater Wonders than Jeſus Chriſt, in giving them Bread from Heaven, and feeding them miraculouſly for the ſpace of Forty Years; whilſt others affirm'd, That none could work greater Wonders than he wrought: *When the Meſſiah ſhall come, will he do greater Wonders than this Man?*

Secondly, One ought to obſerve that Jeſus Chriſt alledges this Oracle of the Prophet *Iſaiah*, taking it for granted that the accompliſhment thereof was moſt viſibly evident in the Miracles which he wrought, as appears from the Anſwer he gave to the Meſſengers of *John the Baptiſt*.

Thirdly, It is alſo obſervable, That thoſe who were willing to flatter the vanity of the Emperour *Veſpaſian* (whom *Joſephus* endeavoured to raiſe to a belief that he was the Meſſiah, becauſe he had been proclaimed in the Eaſt, applying to that purpoſe the words of *Micah*, miſapplyed, *Chap.* V. *Verſe* 2. *Whoſe goings forth are from the Eaſt*) were not wanting to attribute to him the Glory of doing Miracles, and ſuch as *Iſaiah* aſcribes to the Meſſiah, by attributing to him the cure of

one that was Blind, and another that was Lame at *Alexandria*. He that would know the Particulars, may consult *Tacitus* his History.

And last of all we ought to observe, That the *Jews* do not only agree that this Oracle of *Isaiah* refers to the Messiah; but they also still propose the Power of working Miracles, as a Character which would render the Messiah very illustrious, and certainly known.

CHAP. XVII.

That the Messiah was to be an illustrious Prophet.

THis Truth I have already asserted in the Reflexions I made on the Prophecy of *Moses*, *Deut.* XVIII. But one ought to explain this Character of the Messiah more particularly, God having been pleased further to illustrate this Oracle of *Moses*.

First then, We say that the word Messiah implies Anointing, which was common to Kings, Prophets, and Priests; and since *David*'s time, we find nothing more common than this Title in the Books of the *Old Testament*: where we may observe that *Moses* was dignified with this Gift of Prophecy; and that *Samuel* communicated the same to *Saul* and *David*, when he anointed them to

to be Kings. Yea, the *Jews* to this day are of opinion, that *Elias* the Prophet shall anoint the Messiah; that is, initiate him in his Prophetical, as well as his Royal Function.

Secondly, God more precisely signifies this, *Isai.* XI. *Vers.* 1, 2, & 3. where he declares he would communicate all the necessary Gifts of the Prophetical Function to the Messiah. *There shall come forth a Rod out of the stem of* Jesse, *and a branch shall grow out of his Roots. And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding, the Spirit of Counsel and Might, the Spirit of Knowledge, and of the Fear of the Lord. So that he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears.*

These words need no Commentary: For the *Jews* refer them constantly to the Messiah, and they plainly import that he was to be a great Prophet, forasmuch as all the *Characters* which are there given to the Spirit which was to rest on the Messiah, are the same which in the *Old Testament* we find attributed to the Prophets, and may easily be taken notice of in the History of the Prophets, especially of *David* and *Solomon*.

And much to the same purpose is that passage *Isai.* XLII. *vers.* 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7. *Behold my Servant whom I uphold, mine Elect in whom my Soul delighteth: I have put my Spirit upon him, he shall bring forth Judgment to the* Gentiles. *He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised Reed shall he not break, and the smoking Flax shall he not quench; he shall bring forth Judgment unto Truth. He shall not fail nor be discouraged till he have set Judgment in the Earth, and*

the Iſles ſhall wait for his Law. Thus ſaith God the Lord, he that created the Heavens, and ſtretched them out; he that ſpread forth the Earth, and that which cometh out of it: he that giveth breath to the People upon it, and ſpirit to them that walk therein. I, the Lord have called thee in Righteouſneſs, and will hold thine, and will keep thee, and give thee for a Covenant of the people, for a Light of the Gentiles: *to open the blind eyes, to bring out the priſoners from the priſon, and them that ſit in darkneſs, out of the priſon houſe.* In which Oracle one ought to take notice particularly of thoſe things which the *Jews* apply to the Meſſiah.

1. That God propoſes the Gifts of the Spirit, which he beſtowed upon him as an Effect of his Love, and the choice he had made of him.

2. That the Meſſiah was to make uſe of the ſame, as Rules for reforming the Country, and propounding Gods Covenant to the *Gentiles*; which clearly ſuppoſe the neceſſity of the Gift of Prophecy to qualifie him for ſuch great Undertakings.

3. That contrary to the thundring Character which diſtinguiſhed the reſt of the Prophets, who were as ſo many publick Cenſors; the Meſſiah was to ſpeak with all meekneſs and ſweetneſs to the Nations which ſhould receive his Preaching.

One ſee's that *Iſaiah* repeats the ſame Idea's, *Chap.* LXI. *verſ.* 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7. *The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, becauſe the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek, he hath ſent me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the Captives, and the opening of the Priſon to them that are bound. To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of Vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn: to appoint unto them that mourn in* Zion, *to give unto them Beauty for Aſhes, the Oyl of Joy for Mourning, the Garment of Praiſe for the Spirit of Heavineſs; that they might be called Trees of Righteouſneſs, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified. And they ſhall build the old Waſts, they ſhall raiſe up the former Deſolations, and they ſhall repair the waſte Cities, the Deſolations of many Generations. And Strangers ſhall ſtand and feed your flocks, and the ſons of the Alien ſhall be your Plowmen, and your Vine dreſſers. But ye ſhall be named the Prieſts of the Lord, men ſhall call you the Miniſters of our God: ye ſhall eat the riches of the* Gentiles, *and in their glory ſhall ye boaſt your ſelves. For your ſhame ye ſhall have double, and for confuſion they ſhall rejoyce in their portion: therefore in their Land they ſhall poſſeſs the double; everlaſting joy ſhall be upon them.*

In ſhort, he repreſents in this and the former Oracle, the *Gentiles* as a People being in darkneſs, and in the miſery of a Priſon; from whence we may eaſily infer, Firſt, That the Meſſiah was to be a Prophet, how vile and abject ſoever that Character might appear in the eyes of the World, as I have ſhewed that it was, where I ſpake of the Prophets in general. Secondly, That he was to diſcharge theſe Functions during the whole courſe of his Life, and that it was to be his chief Employment here upon Earth.

David had before ſignified, *Pſalm* XXII. *verſe* 22. that the Meſſiah was to *declare the Name of God unto his Brethren*, viz. the *Jews*, by exerciſing his

his Prophetical Function in *Judea*; but the Holy Spirit did something more when he seem'd to point out *Galilee* as the place where this Sacred Doctor was chiefly to fix his abode.

This is in effect insinuated, when God tells us that he was to begin his Ministerial Functions in the Tribes of *Naphtali* and *Zebulon*. *Isai.* IX. *vers.* 1, 2, and 3. *Nevertheless the dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation, when at the first he lightly afflicted the Land of* Zebulon, *and the Land of* Naphtali, *and afterwards did more grievously afflict her by the way of the Sea, beyond* Jordan *in Galilee of the Nations. The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light, they that dwell in the land of the shadow of Death, upon them hath the light shined. Thou hast multiplyed the Nation, thou hast encreased the joy: they joy before thee according to the joy in Harvest, and as men rejoyce when they divide the spoil.*

I shall afterwards take notice, That the time of the Messiah was to be distinguished by an incredible abundance of Spiritual Gifts: and so this shall suffice at present to prove that the Messiah was to be a very great Prophet.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVIII.

That the Messiah was to propound a new Covenant from God with all men.

THis is a Truth which is easily gathered, 1. Because all Nations, before they could be made partakers of the Blessing of God by the Messiah (according to the promise made to *Abraham*) were first to be received into the Covenant. 2. From the nature of that Covenant it self, of which *Moses* was the Mediator, the end of which was, to separate the *Jews* from other Nations, some of which were not capable of being received amongst them, till after several Generations, whereas they were to be made partakers of this Blessing by the Messiah. 3. Because in effect all the Ceremonial Law, was only added to the Moral, as it were contrary to God's principal intention, and only upon occasion of the *Jews* worshipping the *Golden Calf*, as St. *Paul* observes in the Third *Chapter* of his Epistle to the *Galatians*. Gal. 3. 19.

Besides, it appears that God at divers times had given sufficient hints concerning this.

1. He had proposed a new Priesthood of the Messiah, which was to abolish the Levitical Priesthood; and this is the more remarkable, forasmuch as *David* who pronounced that Oracle, *Psalm* CX. was he who first form'd the design of

building the Temple, to which all the Levitical Service was annexed.

2. We find him rejecting in some sort the Levitical Ministry, after he had despised it in comparison of the Spiritual Worship. *Psalm* XL. *vers.* 6. *Sacrifice and Offering thou didst not desire, mine ears hast thou opened; Burnt-offering and Sin-offering hast thou not required.* And *Psalm* L. *vers.* 8, 9, 10. *I will not reprove thee for thy Sacrifices, or thy Burnt-offerings which have been continually before me. I will take no Bullocks out of thine House, nor He-goats out of thy Folds; for every Beast of the Forest is mine, and the Cattel upon a thousand Hills.* And *Psalm* LI. *verse* 17. he tells us that *the Sacrifices of God are a broken spirit*; in opposition to the Sacrifices which the Law prescribed, and to signifie their imperfection; the Law having appointed none for the expiation of Murther or Adultery.

Isaiah follows *David*, *Chap.* I. *vers.* 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15. *To what purpose is the multitude of your Sacrifices unto me, saith the Lord? I am full of the Burnt-offerings of Rams, and the fat of fed Beasts: and I delight not in the blood of Bullocks, or of Lambs, or of He-goats. When you come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hands to tread my Courts? Bring no more vain Oblations, Incense is an abomination unto me, the new Moons and Sabbaths, the calling of Assemblies, I cannot away with, it is iniquity even the solemn meeting. Your new Moons, and your appointed Feasts my Soul hateth; they are a trouble unto me, I am weary to bear them. And when you spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you; yea when ye make many prayers, I will not hear, your hands are full of blood.* And *Jeremiah* speaks much to the same purpose, *Chap.* VII. *v.* 21, 22, & 23. But

But besides, God directly promiseth this new Covenant by *Isaiah*, *Chap.* XLII. *vers.* 6, 7. *I the Lord have called thee in Righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a Covenant of the People, for a Light of the* Gentiles. *To open the blind eyes, to bring out the Prisoners from the Prison, and them that sit in Darkness from the Prison house.*

It is natural to observe, That in this place, where God speaks of the Messiah, as the *Jews* themselves confess, he expresly declares two things: 1. That the Messiah should be a Covenant of the People, that is, that he should mediate a Covenant between God and the People. 2. That the fruit of this Covenant was to extend to the *Gentiles*, which plainly implyes that it was not the old Covenant, forasmuch as from it several were excluded.

The same Covenant is also mention'd, *Chap.* XLIX. *vers.* 8, 9. *Thus saith the Lord, in an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee, and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a Covenant of the People, to establish the Earth, to cause to inherit the desolate Heritages. That thou maist say to the Prisoners go forth; to them that are in darkness shew your selves, they shall feed in the ways, and their pastures shall be in all High-places.*

He pursues the same Notion, *Chap.* LV. *vers.* 3, 4. *Incline your ear and come unto me, hear and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting Covenant with you, the sure mercies of* David. *Behold, I have given him for a Witness to the People, a Leader and Commander to the People.* Than which, nothing can be more particular.

And to the same purpose he speaks, *Chap.* LXI. *vers.*

verſ. 8, 9. *For I the Lord love Judgment, I hate robbery for Burnt-offering, and I will direct their work in truth, and I will make an everlaſting Covenant with them. And their Seed ſhall be known among the* Gentiles, *and their Off-ſpring among the people; all that ſee them ſhall acknowledge them, that they are the Seed which the Lord hath bleſſed.*

It is as clear as the day, That God in theſe Oracles promiſeth an irrevocable Covenant, becauſe he calls it an *Everlaſting Covenant* in oppoſition to the former. He takes notice alſo in the ſame Book, That the ſaid Covenant was to be propounded in the midſt of the Nations, and that then that Bleſſing of God ſhould be known according to the ancient Oracles, which was promiſed univerſally to all Nations.

This is that which God more particularly explains afterwards, by the voice and pen of a Prophet who was of the order of Prieſts, thereby to prevent all ſorts of Exceptions.

Jeremiah in effect ſpeaks to the ſame purpoſe, *Chap.* XXXI. *verſ.* 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, and 36. *Behold the days come, ſaith the Lord, that I will make a new Covenant with the houſe of* Iſrael, *and with the houſe of* Judah: *Not according to the Covenant that I made with their Fathers, in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the Land of* Egypt (*which my Covenant they brake, altho' I were a husband to them, ſaith the Lord:*) *But this ſhall be the Covenant that I will make with the houſe of* Iſrael *after thoſe days ſaith the Lord; I will put my Law in their inward parts, and write it in their heart, and I will be their God, and they ſhall be my people. And they ſhall teach no more every man his Neighbour ſaying, know the Lord; for*

for they ſhall all know me from the leaſt of them unto the greateſt of them, ſaith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their Sin no more. Thus ſaith the Lord which giveth the Sun for a light by day, and the Ordinances of the Moon and Stars for a light by night, which divideth the Sea when the waves thereof roar, the Lord of Hoſts is his name. If thoſe Ordinances depart from before me, ſaith the Lord, then the Seed of Iſrael *alſo ſhall ceaſe from being a Nation before me for ever.*

Nothing can be deſired more particular than this Oracle; 1. It tells us that God would make a new Covenant with his People, which ſuppoſes an aboliſhing of the former. 2. That this Covenant was not to be like the foregoing. 3. That the old Covenant had been made vain, and had been broken by thoſe with whom it was made. 4. That this Covenant was to be made *after thoſe days*, that is in the time of the Meſſiah. 5. That this new Covenant was not to be engraven in Tables of Stone, but in their Hearts. 6. That in the ſame Covenant full Remiſſion of Sin is promiſed.

The ſame thing is alſo expreſſed, *Chap.* XXXII. *verſ.* 40. *And I will make an everlaſting Covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, and they ſhall not depart from me.* And *Chap.* L. *verſ.* 5. *They ſhall ask the way to* Zion *with their faces thitherward, ſaying, Come and let us joyn our ſelves to the Lord in a perpetual Covenant, that ſhall not be forgotten.*

To this purpoſe alſo *Ezechiel*, who himſelf was a Prieſt, ſpeaks of a Religious Worſhip extended

to

to all Nations, and of a new Covenant which God was to make with them, *Chap.* XVI. *verſ.* 60, 61, 62. *Nevertheleſs I will remember my Covenant with thee, in the days of thy youth, and I will eſtabliſh unto thee an everlaſting Covenant. Then thou ſhalt remember thy ways, and be aſhamed when thou ſhalt receive thy Siſters, thy elder and thy younger, and I will give them unto thee for Daughters, but not by thy Covenant. And I will eſtabliſh my Covenant with thee, and thou ſhalt know that I am the Lord.*

Here is firſt, a Covenant differing from the former. 2. A Covenant wherein other Nations were to be included, clearly intimated by the *elder* and *younger Siſters* of the Synagogue. 3. A Covenant whereby the *Gentiles* were to enjoy the ſame Priviledges with the *Jews*, and be incorporated with them.

Malachy follows the ſteps of theſe Prophets, when he calls the Meſſiah *the Angel of the Covenant*, Chap. III. verſ. 1. *Behold, I will ſend my Meſſenger, and he ſhall prepare the way before me: and the Lord whom ye ſeek ſhall ſuddainly come to his Temple; even the Meſſenger (Angel) of the Covenant, whom ye delight in, behold he ſhall come ſaith the Lord of Hoſts.* I know very well that the *Jews* apply theſe words to *Eliah*, whoſe Miniſtry, as they pretend, was to conſiſt in leading the *Jews* to Repentance. But if we read the Text with attention, we ſhall find two Meſſengers mentioned; the firſt who prepare the way of the Meſſiah; and the other is the Meſſiah himſelf, who is called *the Angel of the Covenant*, as being ſent of God to make a new Covenant with men.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIX.

That the Jews, *by a dreadful effect of their blindneſs, were to reject the Meſſiah.*

THis is a very peculiar Mark which will guide us ſurely to the knowledge of the Meſſiah. We find the *Jews* at this day very ready to follow every one that uſurps that Auguſt Title, and to take him for the only true Meſſiah that was promiſed them; which is no other than what was infallibly to come to paſs.

Neither will this much ſurprize us, if we conſider, 1. That this People, on divers occaſions, have given very ſtrange inſtances of a prodigious blindneſs: We ſee them reject *Moſes*, notwithſtanding God had authoriz'd his Call by great and avowed Miracles. Yea, we find them rejecting *David* alſo, whom God had ſo ſignally appointed to be their King, and the Father of the Meſſiah, of whom we hear theſe Prophecies.

2. That God upbraids them with this blindneſs by his Prophets, as a ſin to which they were peculiarly inclin'd; as appears from *Pſalm* LXIX. *verſ.* 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, and 28. *Let their eyes be darkned that they ſee not, and make their Loins continually to ſhake. Pour out thine indignation upon them, and let thy wrathful anger take hold of them. Let their habitation be deſolate, and let none dwell in their Tents: for they perſecute him whom thou haſt ſmitten, and they talk to the grief of thoſe whom thou haſt wounded.*

Add

Add iniquity to their iniquity; and let them not come into thy Righteousness. Let them be blotted out of the Book of the Living, and not be written with the Righteous.

One see's the same thing in *Isaiah*, Chap. VI. vers. 9, 10, 11, and 12. where the Spirit of God foretells that the *Jews* should shut their eyes against the most evident and convincing proofs imaginable. *Go*, saith the Lord to the Prophet, *and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not, and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and their ears heavy, and shut their eyes, lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart and convert, and be healed. Then said I, Lord how long? And he answered, until the Cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the Land be utterly desolate: and the Lord have removed men far away, and there be a great forsaking in the midst of the Land.*

Nothing can be imagined more particular than this Oracle concerning the *Jews* resisting the Prophet, which God expresses in terms very usual amongst the Prophets, as if *Isaiah*, who was only the foreteller of their being hardned, should himself be the cause of it.

The Prophet *Hoseah* describes the very same Complaints of God against the *Jews* for their blindness and ignorance, for which he denounces their destruction. *Hos.* IV. *vers.* 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6. *Hear the word of the Lord, ye children of* Israel, *for the Lord has a controversie with the inhabitants of the Land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the Land. By swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break*

break out, and blood toucheth blood. Therefore shall the Land mourn, and every one that dwelleth therein shall languish, with the Beasts of the Field, and with the Fowls of Heaven, yea the Fishes of the Sea also shall be taken away. Yet let no man strive or reprove another; for thy people are as they that strive with the Priest. Therefore shalt thou fall in the day, and the Prophet also shall fall with thee in the night, and I will destroy thy Mother. My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge; because thou hast rejected knowledge I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no Priest to me; seeing thou hast forgotten the Law of thy God, I will also forget thy children.

The Prophet *Jeremy* speaks to the same purpose, Chap. V. *vers.* 21, 22, and 23. *Hear now this O foolish people, and without understanding, which have eyes and see not, which have ears and hear not. Fear ye not me saith the Lord? Will ye not tremble at my presence, who have placed the Sand for the bound of the Sea, by a perpetual decree that it cannot pass it, and tho' the waves thereof toss themselves, yet can they not prevail; tho' they roar, yet can they not pass over it? But this people hath a revolting and a rebellious heart; they are revolted and gone.* And he reiterates the same, Chap. VIII. *vers.* 7. *The Stork in the Heavens knoweth her appointed times; and the Turtle and the Crane and the Swallow, observe the time of their coming: but my people know not the Judgment of the Lord.*

Ezechiel prosecutes the same matter, Chap. II. *vers.* 5, and 8. calling the *Jews* a Rebellious House. And Chap. XII. *vers.* 1, and 2. he saith, *The word of the Lord came unto me saying, Son of Man thou dwellest in the midst of a rebellious House, who have*

eyes

eyes to see, and see not, they have ears to hear, and hear not, for they are a rebellious House.

Neither do the Prophets only represent to us in general the blindness of the *Jews* upon several occasions, but they also very particularly inform us, that he who was the most considerable person of their State, and the great Minister of God, should be notwithstanding rejected by them.

And here, first, It is worth our noting that *Moses* threatens the worst of Calamities to those who should refuse to hear the great Prophet, like unto him whom God was to raise to his People, *Deut.* XVIII. *vers.* 18.

Secondly, *David*, *Psalm* CXVIII. *v.*22. expresses this in these words, *The Stone which the Builders refused is become the Head of the Corner.* From which words it is evident, 1. That the Messiah was to be rejected. 2. That he was to be rejected by those who were intrusted with the care of building the House. 3. That this was to be before he should be acknowledged the great Minister of Heaven.

God speaks the same thing by *Isaiah*, *Chap.* XXVIII. *vers.* 6. *Behold, I lay in* Zion *for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation, he that believeth shall not make haste.* Which place is to be understood of the Messiah by the Confession of the *Jews* themselves.

Daniel follows the same Notion, *Chap.* II. *vers.* 34, 35. *Thou sawest till a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the Image upon his feet, and brake them to pieces: and the stone became a great Mountain, and filled the Earth.*

On

On all which Prophecies we may make these Remarks; 1. That Jesus Christ quotes most of them, as such which by the *Jews* themselves were owned to refer to the Messiah. Thus *Matt.* XXI. *verse* 42. he saith, *Did ye never read in the Scriptures, the Stone which the Builders rejected, the same is become the Head of the Corner.* And St. *Peter*, *Acts* IV. *vers.* 11. *This is the stone which was set at nought by you builders, which is become the head of the corner.* St. *Paul* makes the same allusion, *Ephes.* II. *vers.* 20. *And are built on the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone.* And I *Cor.* III *verse* 11. *For other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.* And when Jesus Christ himself saith to *Peter*, *Matth.* XVI. *verse* 18. *Thou art* Peter, *and upon this Rock I will build my Church*, &c. He alludes to that of *Daniel*; *Then was the Iron, the Clay, the Brass, the Silver, and the Gold broken to pieces together, and became like the Chaff of the Summer threshing floors, and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the* Stone *which smote the Image became a great Mountain, and filled the whole Earth.*

Our Saviour applyes also to the *Jews* those Prophecies which foretel their being offended at the Ministers of Heaven, in particular that of *Isaiah*, *Chap.* VI. *verse* 9. *Go and tell this people, hear ye indeed, but understand not, and see ye indeed, but perceive not.*

2. We may observe that the *Jews* of old applyed those Prophecies (as the Apostles did) to the hardning of their own Nation, as appears from that of St. *Paul*, *Rom.* X. *verse* 21. *But to* Israel

he ſaith, all the day long I have ſtretched forth my hand unto a diſobedient and gain-ſaying people.

3. We muſt take notice, That the ſame temper which was in the ancient *Jews*, who rejected the Prophets, was found in thoſe who lived at the time of our Saviour; and for this we need only to read the deſcription which *Joſephus de Bello Judaico, Lib.* VII. *cap.* 3. gives of them, where he compares them with the *Sodomites*, which is the Compariſon *Iſaiah* makes *Chap.* I. *verſe* 10.

And laſt of all we may take notice, That *Joſephus* acknowledges that this Blindneſs of the *Jews* was the cauſe of the final deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, which was to ſucceed the Death of the Meſſiah, according to the expreſs Oracle of *Daniel, Chap.* IX. *verſe* 26.

CHAP. XX.

That the Meſſiah was to dye; and an Account of the ſeveral Circumſtances of his Death.

TO be convinced of this Truth, we need only prove that what is ſet down in *Pſalm* XXII. *Iſaiah* LIII. *Daniel* IX. and *Zachariah* XIII. and other prophetical paſſages of Holy Scripture, is to be underſtood of the Meſſiah; and the reading of them alone is ſufficient to ſatisfie the meaneſt Ca-

Capacity, that the perſon they point at was to loſe his life by violence, with ſeveral very infamous Circumſtances.

Now it is certain that both ancient and modern *Jews* interpret theſe places of the Meſſiah; and it is as evident that the Apoſtles underſtood them ſo; and therefore all along applyed them to Jeſus Chriſt, following therein the known explications of the Rabbies of their own Nation.

It is plain alſo, That the Death and Suffering of our Saviour would have prov'd a more efficacious Argument to refute the Apoſtles, than all the Miracles of Jeſus Chriſt could have been to eſtabliſh their Doctrine, if the Prophetical Writings had not ſo preciſely determined his Sufferings and Death, with the ſeveral Circumſtances of them.

It is alſo to be noted, That the Prophecies referring to the Death of the Meſſiah, are generally interwoven with Idea's which point to other Prophetical paſſages avowedly owned by the *Jews* to have Relation to the Meſſiah. Thus if we compare *Pſalm* XXII. *verſe* 28. with *Pſalm* LXXII. *verſ.* 8, 9. we ſhall find the ſame Idea ſet forth in them both.

And becauſe this Character was to be the moſt proper and diſtinguiſhing note of the Meſſiah, foraſmuch as none with pleaſure do precipitate themſelves into Death, or are Maſters of the Manner and Circumſtances of it, therefore God cauſed the ſame to be expreſſed by the Prophets with the greateſt plainneſs and exactneſs poſſible.

It can't be denied but that ſome of the Pro-

phets have been very cruelly perſecuted, and that ſome of them have died in the midſt of Torments: But concerning the Death of Chriſt, we have many more particulars, *viz.*

1. That he was to be forſaken by his own Friends, *Pſalm* XXII. *verſe* 11. *Be not far from me for trouble is near; for there is none to help.* And *Pſalm* LXIX. *verſe* 11. *I made Sackcloth alſo my Garment, and I became a Proverb to them.* And *verſe* 20. *Reproach has broken my heart, and I am full of heavineſs; and I looked for ſome to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none.*

2. That he was to be expoſed to all manner of reproachful uſage. *Pſalm* XXII. *verſ.* 6, 7, and 8. *But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and deſpiſed of the people. All they that ſee me laugh me to ſcorn: they ſhoot out the lip, they ſhake the head, ſaying, he truſted in the Lord that he would deliver him; let him deliver him, ſeeing he delighted in him.* And *Pſalm* LXIX. *verſ.* 1, 2, 3, 4. *Save me, O God, for the waters are come in unto my Soul. I ſink in deep mire, where there is no ſtanding; I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me. I am weary of my crying, my throat is dried, mine eyes fail while I wait for my God. They that hate me without cauſe are more than the hairs of my head, they that would deſtroy me, being my Enemies wrongfully, are mighty.*

The ſame is repreſented to us *Iſaiah* LIII. *verſ.* 4, 5. *Surely he hath born our griefs and carried our ſorrows; yet we did eſteem him ſtricken, ſmitten of God and afflicted. But he was wounded for our tranſgreſſions, he was bruiſed for our iniquities: the chaſtiſement of our peace was upon him, and with his ſtripes we are healed.*

They take notice that he ſhould be beaten and abuſed, as appears from *Iſaiah* LIII. *verſ.* 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. *He is deſpiſed and rejected of men, a man of ſorrows and acquainted with grief, and we hid, as it were our faces from him; he was deſpiſed, and we eſteemed him not. Surely he hath born our grifs, he was wounded for our tranſgreſſions,* &c. *The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppreſſed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; he is brought as a Lamb to the ſlaughter, and as a ſheep before her ſhearers is dumb, ſo he openeth not his mouth. He was cut off from the Land of the Living, for the tranſgreſſion of my people was he ſtricken.*

4. They declare that he ſhould be ſold. *Zach.* II. *verſ.* 12, and 13. *And I ſaid unto them, if ye think good, give me my price, and if not forbear: ſo they weighed for my price thirty pieces of ſilver. And the Lord ſaid unto me, caſt it unto the potter; a goodly price that I was prized at of them. And I took the thirty pieces of ſilver and caſt them to the potter, in the Houſe of the Lord.*

5. They make mention of his being condemned by the *Jews* and Heathens. *Pſalm* II. *verſe* 2. *The Kings of the Earth ſet themſelves, and the Rulers take counſel together, againſt the Lord and againſt his Anointed.* And *Pſalm* XXII. *verſe* 16. *For Dogs have compaſſed me, the Aſſembly of the wicked have incloſed me; they pierced my hands and my feet.* And *Pſalm* LXIX. *verſe* 12. *They that ſit in the Gate ſpeak againſt me, and I was the Song of the Drunkards.* And *Iſaiah* LIII. *verſe* 8. *He was taken from Priſon*

and from Judgment, and who ſhall declare his Generation; for he was cut off from the Land of the Living, for the tranſgreſſion of my people was he ſtricken.

6. They ſpecifie his Death on the Croſs. *Pſalm* XXII. *verſe* 16. *They pierced my hands and my feet.* And *Zach.* XII. *verſe* 10. *And they ſhall look upon me whom they have pierced.*

7. They intimate his dying between Thieves. *Iſaiah* LIII. *verſe* 12. *Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he ſhall divide the ſpoil with the ſtrong; becauſe he has poured out his Soul unto Death, and was numbred with Tranſgreſſors.*

8. They take notice of his being mocked before his Death. *Pſalm* XXII. *verſ.*6,7,8. *But I am a worm and no man, a reproach of men, and deſpiſed of the people. All they that ſee me laugh me to ſcorn, they ſhoot out the lip, they ſhake the head,* &c. And *Pſalm* LXIX. *verſ.*17,18,19. *Hide not thy face from thy ſervant, for I am in trouble, hear me ſpeedily. Draw nigh unto my ſoul, and redeem it: deliver me becauſe of mine Enemies. Thou haſt known my reproach, my ſhame, and my diſhonour: mine Adverſaries are all before thee.*

9. That they who put him to death ſhould divide his Garments. *Pſalm* XXII. *verſe* 18. *They part my Garments amongſt them, and caſt lots upon my Veſture.*

10. That the Meſſiah ſhould complain that God had forſaken him in the hands of his Enemies. *Pſalm* XXII. *verſ.* 1,2. *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me? why art thou ſo far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring. O my God, I cry in the day time, and thou heareſt not; and in the night ſeaſon am not ſilent.*

11. That they would give him Vinegar and Gall to drink. *Pſalm* LXIX. *verſe* 21. *They gave me alſo Gall for my meat, and in my thirſt they gave me Vinegar to drink.*

12. They ſet before our eyes the manner of his death on the Croſs. *Pſalm* XXII. *verſ.*14, 15, 16,17. *I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax, it is melted in the midſt of my bowels. My ſtrength is dried up like a potſherd, and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou haſt brought me into the duſt of death. For Dogs have compaſſed me, the Aſſembly of the wicked have encloſed me; they pierced my hands and my feet. I may tell all my bones, they look and ſtare upon me.* And *Iſaiah* LIII. *verſ.* 7,8,9.

13. That not one of his Bones ſhould be broken. *Pſalm* XXXIV. *verſe* 20. *He keepeth all his bones, not one of them is broken.*

14. That he was to be buried in the Sepulchre of a rich man. *Iſaiah* LIII. *verſe* 9. *He made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, becauſe he had done no violence, neither was deceit found in his mouth.*

We may make theſe following Reflexions on the foregoing Oracles.

1. That here are many very different Events and Circumſtances, all meeting in the ſame end.

2. That many of theſe Paſſages that might be queſtioned whether they were particularly applicable to the Meſſiah, are joyned with ſuch hints, as can no way agree with the Prophets that uttered them. Thus we find that in the XXII *Pſalm*,

there are many Expreſſions which cannot be applyed to *David*.

3. That moſt of theſe Prophecies are avowedly attributed to the Meſſiah by the moſt ancient Authors of the Synagogue. And the modern *Jews* themſelves refer them to ſome that ſuffer'd a violent Death, as to Rabbi *Akiba*, who died in the ſecond Century.

4. That the Apoſtles unanimouſly applyed them to Jeſus Chriſt, the true Meſſiah, following therein the general conſent of their Nation.

CHAP. XXI.

That the Meſſiah was ſoon after to riſe again.

FOraſmuch as Death entred into the World by Sin, and that the Meſſiah was to take it away, we may eaſily conceive, That if the Meſſiah were according to the Divine diſpoſal, to ſubmit to Death, that he could not long continue ſubject to it. He who was to reſtore life to thoſe who were dead, could never be confin'd and impriſon'd in a Grave: and he who was ſuperiour to *Enoch* and *Elias*, who aſcended into Heaven, becauſe he alone was exalted to the right hand of God, to reign there for ever, as the Prophecies concerning him aſſure us, ought certainly to leave his Sepulchre by a glorious Reſurrection.

And

And this we are poſitively aſſured of by the ancient Oracles. *Pſalm* XVI. *verſ.* 10,11. *Thou wilt not leave my ſoul in Hell; neither wilt thou ſuffer thine holy One to ſee corruption. Thou wilt ſhew me the path of life; in thy preſence is fulneſs of joy, at thy right hand there are pleaſures for evermore.* And to aſſure us that theſe and the like paſſages are applicable to none but the Meſſiah, we find in the ſame *Pſalms* expreſſions too high to be applyed to the Authors themſelves: As for example, *Pſalm.* XXX. *verſ.* 1, 2,3. *I will extol thee, O Lord, for thou haſt lifted me up, and haſt not made my foes to rejoyce over me. O Lord my God, I cried unto thee, and thou haſt healed me. O Lord thou haſt brought up my ſoul from the Grave, thou haſt kept me alive that I ſhould not go down to the pit.* And *Pſalm* XLI. *verſ.* 8,9,10. *An evil diſeaſe, ſay they, cleaveth faſt unto him, and now that he lieth, he ſhall riſe up no more. Yea, mine own familiar Friend in whom I truſted, which did eat of my bread, hath lift up his heel againſt me. But thou, O Lord, be merciful unto me, and raiſe me up, that I may requite them.* And *Pſalm* XLIX. *verſe* 15. *But God will redeem my ſoul from the power of the Grave, for he ſhall receive me.* Pſalm LVI. *verſ.* 11,12,13. *In God have I put my truſt, I will not be afraid what man can do unto me. Thy Vows are upon me, O God, I will render praiſe unto thee. For thou haſt delivered my ſoul from death,* &c. Pſalm LXXII. *verſe* 20. *Thou who haſt ſhewed me great and ſore troubles, ſhalt quicken me again, and ſhall bring me up again from the depths of the Earth.* Pſalm CXLIII. *verſ.* 11,12. *Quicken me, O Lord, for thy names ſake, for thy righteouſneſs ſake bring my ſoul out of trouble: and of thy mercy cut off mine Enemies, and deſtroy all them*

that

that afflict my ſoul, for I am thy Servant.

Hoſea ſpeaks to the ſame purpoſe *Chap.* XIII. *verſ.* 14. *I will ranſom them from the power of the Grave, I will redeem them from death. O Death, I will be thy plagues; O Grave, I will be thy deſtruction: Repentance ſhall be hid from mine eyes.*

Iſaiah expreſſes the very ſame thing *Chap.* XXV. *verſ.* 8. *He will ſwallow up death in victory, and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people ſhall he take from off all the Earth; for the Lord hath ſpoken it.* And yet more expreſly *Chap.* LIII. *verſ.* 10, and 11. *Yet it pleaſed the Lord to bruiſe him, he hath put him to grief; when thou ſhalt make his ſoul an offering for ſin, he ſhall ſee his Seed, he ſhall prolong his days, and the pleaſure of the Lord ſhall proſper in his hand. He ſhall ſee of the travel of his ſoul, and ſhall be ſatisfied: by his knowledge ſhall my righteous ſervant juſtifie many; for he ſhall bear their iniquities.*

For the better underſtanding of which paſſages, we are to obſerve, 1. That the Meſſiah in many or moſt of them, compriſeth all Believers with himſelf, according to that Maxim of the *Jews*, who attribute to the Meſſiah the greateſt of all the Prophets, whatſoever God vouchſafed to any one of the Prophets; and according to this Principle Jeſus Chriſt ſpeaks *Matth.* XII. *verſ.* 39, 40. *An evil and adulterous Generation ſeeketh after a ſign, and there ſhall no ſign be given to it, but the ſign of the Prophet* Jonah. *For as* Jonah *was three days and three nights in the Whales belly, ſo ſhall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the Earth.*

2. That upon this account the Meſſiah is repreſented to us, not as riſing again alone, but as making

king all his Brethren partakers of the ſame glory; which makes the Prophets ſpeak of him, not as a ſingle perſon, but in common with others, who by him are made poſſeſſors of the ſame advantages.

3. That moſt of theſe Texts were quoted by the Apoſtles, who in ſo doing followed the ſenſe of the whole Nation, as appears from *Acts* II. *verſ.* 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, and 29. *Whom God hath raiſed, having looſed the pains of death: becauſe it was not poſſible that he ſhould be holden of it. For* David *ſpeaketh concerning him; I foreſaw the Lord always before my face, for he is at my right hand that I ſhould not be moved. Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad: moreover alſo my fleſh ſhall reſt in hope: becauſe thou wilt not leave my ſoul in Hell, neither wilt thou ſuffer thy holy One to ſee Corruption. Thou haſt made known to me the ways of life: thou ſhalt make me full of joy with thy Countenance. Men and Brethren, let me freely ſpeak unto you of the Patriarch* David, *that he is both dead and buried, and his Sepulchre is with us unto this day.* And *Acts* XIII. *verſ.* 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, and 37. *But God raiſed him from the dead. And he was ſeen many days of them which came up with him from* Galilee *to* Jeruſalem, *who are his witneſſes unto the people. And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the Promiſe which was made unto the Fathers, God hath fulfilled the ſame unto us their Children, in that he hath raiſed up Jeſus again, as it is alſo written in the ſecond* Pſalm, *Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. And as concerning that he raiſed him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he ſaid on this wiſe, I will give you the ſure mercies of* David. *Wherefore he ſaith alſo in another* Pſalm, *Thou ſhalt not ſuffer thine holy*

holy One to see corruption. For David, *after he had served his own Generation, by the will of God fell asleep, and was gathered to his Fathers, and saw corruption. But he whom God raised again saw no corruption.*

In like manner we find St. *Paul* alluding to that of *Hosea* XIII. *vers.* 14. in I *Cor.* XV. *vers.* 55. *O Death where is thy sting? O Grave, where is thy victory?*

CHAP. XXII.

That the Messiah was to ascend into Heaven, and send down from thence the miraculous Gifts of Prophecy, Languages, &c.

Deut. XVIII. 18. THis was a thing which might rationally enough be expected; for the Messiah being to resemble *Moses*, who had not only the Gifts of the Holy Spirit himself, but also in a manner communicated the same to the Heads of the Congregation of *Israel*: it was reasonable to infer, That the Messiah was to receive much more eminent Gifts, and to communicate them to far greater numbers.

But besides this, God had expresly promised it by *David*, Psalm CX. *vers.* 1,2. where he represents the Messiah sitting at the right hand of God. *The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. The Lord shall send the Rod of thy strength out of* Zion: *Rule thou in the midst of thine Enemies.*

It

It is worth our noting, that *Daniel* represents to us the same Notion where he speaks of the Kingdom of the Messiah, *Chap.* VII. *vers.* 13,14. *I saw in the night visions, and behold one like the Son of Man, came with the Clouds of Heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him Dominion and Glory, and a Kingdom, that all People, Nations and Languages should serve him: his Dominion is an everlasting Dominion, which shall not pass away, and his Kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.* Where doth God dwell, unless in Heaven?

David expresses himself in terms which import something too great to be applyed to the Symbolical Ark of the Covenant, *Psalm* XXIV. *vers.* 7,8, 9. *Lift up your heads, O ye Gates, and be ye lift up ye everlasting Doors, and the King of Glory shall come in. Who is this King of Glory? the Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in Battel,* &c.

He speaks further of the glorious Kingdom of the Messiah, *Psalm* XLV. *vers.* 5,6,7. *Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the Kings enemies; whereby the people fall under thee. Thy Throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the Scepter of thy Kingdom is a right Scepter. Thou lovest righteousness and hatest wickedness, therefore God thy God hath anointed thee with the oyl of Gladness above thy fellows.* 'Tis evident that *David* addresses himself there to the Messiah, because he stiles him a God anointed above his Fellows. And he pursues the same Idea, *Psalm* LXVIII. *vers.* 18. *Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive; thou hast received gifts for men, yea for the rebellious also; that the Lord God might dwell amongst them.* Nothing can be imagined

gined more expreſs than theſe words, which lively repreſent to us the Aſcenſion of the Meſſiah, and the pouring forth of Prophetical Gifts, to bring the Heathens to the Service of God.

Iſaiah ſpeaks the ſame *Chap.* XLIV. *verſ.* 3. *For I will pour water upon him that is thirſty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my Spirit upon thy Seed, and my Bleſſing upon thine Off-ſpring.* The waters here ſpoken of, according to the ordinary ſtile of the Prophets, are nothing elſe but the Graces of God's Spirit.

Joel expreſſes himſelf very plainly in this matter, *Chap.* II. *verſ.* 28, 29, 30, 31, 32. *And it ſhall come to paſs afterward, that I will pour out of my Spirit upon all fleſh, and your ſons and your daughters ſhall propheſie, your old men ſhall dream dreams, your young men ſhall ſee viſions. And alſo upon the ſervants, and upon the handmaids in thoſe days will I pour out my Spirit. And I will ſhew wonders in the Heavens and in the Earth, blood and fire and pillars of ſmoke. The Sun ſhall be turned into darkneſs, and the Moon into blood, before the great and terrible Day of the Lord come. And it ſhall come to paſs that whoſoever ſhall call on the Name of the Lord ſhall be delivered: for in Mount* Zion, *and in* Jeruſalem, *ſhall be deliverance, as the Lord hath ſaid, and in the remnant whom the Lord ſhall call.*

Nothing can be conceived more particular than this Oracle, concerning the effuſion of the Prophetical Gifts upon the Servants of the Meſſiah, after his Aſcenſion. For 1. he clearly hints at the ſeveral ways of Prophecy, which ſhall be beſtowed upon the Subjects of the Meſſiah. 2. That this great Event was to be before the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, which St. *Peter* foretels as a thing at the Door, *Acts* II. *verſ.* 30, 31, 32. after he had ſhewed that the wonderful effuſion of the Spirit at Pentecoſt, was a litteral accompliſhing of the Prophecy of *Joel*, he adds, *Therefore being a Prophet, and knowing that God had ſworn with an Oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the fleſh, he would raiſe up Chriſt to ſit on his Throne: he ſeeing this before, ſpake of the Reſurrection of Chriſt, that his Soul was not left in Hell, neither his Fleſh did ſee Corruption. This Jeſus has God raiſed up, whereof we all are witneſſes.*

Ezechiel goes on with the ſame views with *Joel*, *Chap.* XXXVI. *verſ.* 26, and 27. *A new heart alſo will I give you, and a new ſpirit will I put within you; and I will take away the ſtony heart out of your fleſh, and I will give you an heart of fleſh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cauſe you to walk in my Statutes, and ye ſhall keep my Judgments and do them.* And *Chap.* XXXIX. *verſe* 29. *Neither will I hide my face any more from them: for I have poured out my Spirit upon the Houſe of* Iſrael, *ſaith the Lord God.*

And *Zachariah* agrees with both the foregoing Prophets, *Chap.* XII. *verſe* 10. *And I will pour upon the Houſe of* David, *and upon the Inhabitants of* Jeruſalem, *the Spirit of Grace and of Supplications; and they ſhall look upon him whom they have pierced, and they ſhall mourn for him as one mourneth for his only Son, and ſhall be in bitterneſs for him, as one that is in bitterneſs for his Firſt-born.*

'Tis obvious to make theſe following Obſervations upon theſe Oracles.

1. That the Meſſiah was to be raiſed above the

the reach of any of his Enemies

2. That he was to ascend to Heaven, and to be installed there in Glory, in order to his being dignified and glorified above all Nations.

3. That he was from thence to send down Prophetical Graces plentifully, which made his entrance into Heaven a kind of Triumph.

4. That this great Event was to precede the destruction of *Jerusalem*, to which the Prophet *Joel* in the fore-cited place seems to allude. The Messiah was to form a new Society, which was to be regulated, not by the Laws given on Mount *Sinai*, but by those which were to be published from Mount *Zion*.

CHAP. XXIII.

That the Gentiles in the time of the Messiah were to be called to the Knowledge of the true God,

THis Article being one of the most important and most visible Characters of the Times of the Messiah, and also the great effect of his Ministry, we see that God had a particular care to divulge the same by a multitude of Prophetical Representations of it.

Gen. III. 15. For not only had he declared that the *Seed of the Woman should bruise the Serpents head*; that is, the Works of the Devil. And we can't deny, but that the

the Errors and Idolatries of the *Gentiles*, and their Vices which arise from thence, were the Fruits of Sin, which this unhappy Spirit brought into the World. It was not only foretold that God would *perswade* Japhet *to dwell in the Tents of* Sem, by uniting the Posterities of both those Patriarchs in one and the same Religion. Not only had he signified that the Messiah should reign over the Children of *Seth*, that is over all the Posterity of *Noah*, the Off-spring of *Cham* not excepted. Not only had he foretold that all Nations, Kindreds, and Families should be blessed in the Messiah. Gen. IX. 27. Gen. XII. & Ch. XVIII. & XXII.

But God went much further afterwards, for as the Light of the Revelation encreased, so the same was declared more distinctly. For,

1. The Patriarch *Jacob* tells that the Messiah should be the desire and expectation of all Nations. *Gen.* XLIX. *verse* 10. *The Scepter shall not depart from* Judah, *nor a Law-giver from between his feet, until* Shiloh *come*; *and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.*

2. *Moses* threatens the *Jews*, that if they despised the Law of God, Strangers, that is *Gentiles*, should be preferred before them. *Deut.* XXVIII. *verse* 43. *The Stranger that is within thee shall get up above thee very high*; *and thou shalt come down very low.* The same Prophet menaceth them from God, that he would stir up their jealousie, by calling a foolish people to his Service and Worship. *Deut.* XXXII. *verse* 21. *They have moved me to jealousie with that which is not God, they have provoked me to anger with their vanities, and I will move them to jealousie with those which are not a people, I will provoke them to anger with a foolish Nation.* No-

thing can be said more express and particular than these last words of that great Law giver and Founder of the State of the *Jews*.

3. *David* sets forth the Empire of the Messiah, as that which was to reach over all the Earth. *Psalm* II. *verse* 8. *Ask of me, and I shall give thee the Heathen for thine Inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the Earth for thy possession.* And *Psalm* XXII. *vers* 27,28,29,30. *All the ends of the World shall remember and turn unto the Lord; and all the Kingdoms of the Nations shall worship before thee. For the Kingdom is the Lords, and he is the Governour amongst the Nations. All they that be fat upon the Earth, shall eat and worship; all they that go down to the dust shall bow before him. A Seed shall serve him, it shall be accounted to the Lord for a Generation.* Psalm LXXII. *vers.* 8,9,10,11. *He shall have Dominion from Sea to Sea, and from the River unto the ends of the Earth. They that dwell in the Wilderness shall bow before him; and his Enemies shall lick the dust. The Kings of* Tarshish *and of the Isles shall bring presents, the Kings of* Sheba *and* Seba *shall offer Gifts. Yea all Kings shall fall down before him, all Nations shall serve him.* Which Prophecy is the more remarkable, because the Promise made to *Abraham* is there repeated in so many words, *viz. That all Nations of the Earth should be blessed in the Messiah.* Psalm CII. *verse* 15. *So the Heathen shall fear the Name of the Lord, and all the Kings of the Earth thy Glory.* And *Psalm* CX. *verse* 2. *The Lord shall send the Rod of thy strength out of* Zion: *rule thou in the midst of thine Enemies.* One ought to transcribe almost the whole Book of *Psalms*, to take notice of all the passages which are to this purpose.

The

The Prophet *Hosea* declares in general terms, That it was not an impossible thing for those who had been God's people to cease to be so; or for those that were not his people to become his people; *Chap.* I. *verse* 10. *Yet the number of the Children of* Israel *shall be as the Sand of the Sea, which cannot be measur'd or numbred; and it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, ye are the Sons of the living God.*

Isaiah mentions this so often, and in such an emphatical manner, that it seems to be the main thing he drives at in all his Writings, *Chap.* II. *verse* 2,3. he speaks thus: *And it shall come to pass in the last days that the Mountain of the Lord's House shall be established in the top of the Mountains, and shall be exalted above the Hills, and all Nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, come ye and let us go up to the Mountain of the Lord, to the House of the God of* Jacob; *and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths; for out of* Zion *shall go forth the Law, and the Word of the Lord from* Jerusalem. And *Chap.* XI. *verse* 10. *In that day there shall be a Root of* Jesse, *which shall stand for an Ensign of the people, to it shall the* Gentiles *seek.* And *Chap.* XVIII. *verse* 7. he makes a manifest allusion to the *expectation of all Nations*: In *Chap.* XLII. *vers.* 1,2, 3,4. he repeats the same thing; *Behold my servant whom I uphold, mine elect in whom my soul delighteth; I will put my Spirit upon him, he shall bring forth Judgment to the* Gentiles. *He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the streets. A bruised Reed shall he not break, and the smoking Flax shall he not quench, he shall bring forth Judgment unto*

the Earth; and the Isles shall wait for his Law. Chap. LV. vers. 4,5. *Behold I have given thee for a witness of the people, a Leader and a Commander to the people. Behold, thou shalt call a Nation that thou knowest not, and Nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee, because of the Lord thy God, and for the holy One of* Israel, *for he hath glorified thee.* But one sees these Truths in their greatest lustre in the LX *Chap.* of his Prophecies, *vers.* 3,4,5. *The* Gentiles *shall come to thy light, and Kings to the brightness of thy rising. Lift up thine eyes round about, and see; all they gather themselves together, they come to thee, thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side. Then thou shalt see and shine, and thine heart shall fear and be enlarged, because the abundance of the Sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the* Gentiles *shall come unto thee.* And *Chap.* LXII. *vers.* 2. *The* Gentiles *shall see thy righteousness, and all Kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name.* And *vers.* 11, and 12. *Behold, the Lord hath proclaimed unto the ends of the World, say ye to the daughter of* Zion, *behold thy salvation cometh; behold his reward is with him, and his work is before him. And they shall call them the holy people, the redeemed of the Lord; and thou shalt be called, Sought out, a City not forsaken.* And *Chap.* LXV. *vers.* 1. *I am sought of them that asked not for me; I am found of them that sought me not: I said behold me, behold me, unto a Nation that was not called by my Name.* And *Chap.* LXVI. *verse* 18. *It shall come to pass, that I will gather all Nations and Tongues, and they shall come and see my Glory.*

Amos (who was contemporary with *Isaiah*) speaks

speaks the same thing, *Chap.* IX. *vers.* 11,12. *In that day will I raise up the Tabernacle of* David *which is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it, as in the days of old. That they may possess the remnant of* Edom, *and of all the Heathen, which are called by my Name, saith the Lord which doth this.*

The Prophet *Micah* also follows the Prophet *Isaiah* step by step, *Mich.* IV. *vers.* 1,2,3. *But in the lasts days it shall come to pass, that the Mountain of the House of the Lord shall be established in the top of the Mountains, and it shall be exalted above the Hills, and people shall flow unto it. And many Nations shall come and say, Come and let us go up to the Mountain of the Lord, and to the House of the God of* Jacob, *and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the Law shall go forth of* Zion, *and the Word of the Lord from* Jerusalem. *And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong Nations afar off, and they shall beat their Swords into Plow shares, and their Spears into Pruning-hooks: Nation shall not lift up a Sword against Nation, neither shall they learn war any more.*

Zephaniah is as clear as any of the rest, *Chap.* II. *vers.* 11. *They shall worship him, every one from his place, even all the Isles of the Heathen.* And *Chap.* III. *vers.* 9,10. *Then will I turn to the people a pure Language, that they may all call upon the Name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent. From beyond the Rivers of* Ethiopia, *my Suppliants, the daughter of my dispersed shall bring mine offering.*

Jeremiah in the Fourth *Chapter* of his Prophecies, *vers.* 2. confirms the same Truth; as likewise *Chap.* XVI. *vers.* 19. and more expressly *Chap.* XXXI.

verse 34. And they shall teach no more every man his Neighbour, and every man his Brother, saying, know the Lord; for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord.

After the return of the Captivity, we find that the Prophets still pursued the same Idea's. *Haggai* II. *vers.* 7,8. *And I will shake all Nations, and the desire of all Nations shall come: and I will fill this House with Glory saith the Lord of Hosts. The Silver is mine, and the Gold is mine, saith the Lord of Hosts.*

Zechariah speaks in like manner, *Chap.* II. *vers.* 10,11. *Sing and rejoyce, O daughter of Zion; for lo I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the Lord. And many Nations shall be joyned to the Lord in that day, and shall be my people; and I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know that the Lord of Hosts hath sent me unto thee.* And *Chap.* VIII. *vers.* 20,21,22. *Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, it shall yet come to pass, that there shall come people, and the inhabitants of many Cities: and the inhabitants of one City shall go to another, saying; Let us go speedily to pray before the Lord, and to seek the Lord of Hosts, I will go also. Yea, many People and strong Nations shall come to seek the Lord of Hosts in* Jerusalem, *and to pray before the Lord.* And *Chap.* XI. *vers.* 10. he expresses the same thing more distinctly. *And I will cut off the Chariot from* Ephraim, *and the Horse from* Jerusalem, *and the Battel bow shall be cut off, and he shall speak peace unto the Heathen, and his Dominion shall be from Sea to Sea, and from the River unto the ends of the Earth.*

Malachi speaks to the same purpose with the greatest clearness imaginable, *Chap.* I. *vers.* 10,11.

Who

Who is there among you that shuts the doors, or kindles fire on mine Altar for nought? I have no pleasure in you saith the Lord of Hosts, neither will I accept an offering at your hand: for from the rising of the Sun, even unto the going down of the same, my Name shall be great among the Gentiles, *and in every place Incense shall be offered unto my Name, and a pure offering: for my Name shall be great among the Heathen, saith the Lord of Hosts.*

On all which passages one may make these Observations:

1. That all this whole Series of Idea's hath as much connexion to one another, as the words of those Oracles have which we have now alledged.

2. That these Prophets have set it forth with all its possible Characters, by the Original of these People, calling them the Children of *Seth*, by their Countreys, *Egypt*, *Assyria*, the *East* and *West*; by their Idolatry, by their Aversion to the *Jews*, their Ignorance, *&c.*

3. That these Prophecies were generally understood by the *Jews* of old, of the Calling of the *Gentiles*, as appears from the use the Apostles made of them when they preached to the *Gentiles*.

4. That forasmuch as God had ordered Proselytes to be received into the Jewish Communion, he seem'd thereby to have hinted to them, that what he had enjoyn'd them as to particulars, ought with much more reason to be practised in general to all the Nations of the World, and ought also to be universally desired.

5. That the Modern *Jews* themselves constantly believ'd, that the Messiah should lead the *Gen-*

tiles to Repentance. So *Kimchi*, *Moſes Maimonides*, and many other Authors, ſince the *Talmudiſts*.

6. That the Opinion which the *Jews* have entertained, That the Meſſiah, as a great Conqueror, was to ſubdue the Nations, proceeds only from the ſenſe of the Oppreſſion they have been, and ſtill are, under, which makes them ſo earneſtly deſire a temporal deliverance from the power of the *Gentiles*, by means of the Meſſiah: and the pompous expreſſion of ſome of the Prophets, have ſtrengthen'd this belief in them; tho' they cannot deny but that the ſame Prophetical paſſages do imply that the Meſſiah was to ſubject the *Gentiles* by the way of inſtruction.

CHAP. XXIV.

That the Jews *were to be rejected in the time of the Meſſiah.*

THere are three things which make this particular very conſiderable.

The firſt is, That it ſeems altogether oppoſite to the Deſign of God, who was entred into Covenant with the *Jews*, excluding all other Nations of the Earth.

The ſecond is, That nothing ever was a greater Scandal to the *Jews* than the thoughts of a poſſibility

poſſibility that God ſhould ever caſt off their Nation.

3. The third is, That the Rejection of the *Jews*, ſeem'd leſs poſſible in the time of the Meſſiah, than at any other time: The Meſſiah being, according to their perſwaſion, to procure the ſalvation of the *Jews* in the firſt place, and before other Nations were made partakers of thoſe Bleſſings which he brought along with him.

And it was upon this Account, that God hath forgot nothing which might make thoſe Oracles that relate to the Rejection of the *Jews*, in the time of the Meſſiah, very ſenſible.

The chief Priviledges which made the *Jews* conſider themſelves, as God's peculiar People, were theſe.

1. God himſelf was in a peculiar manner their King and Soveraign; which gave *Joſephus* occaſion to call their State a Theocracy.

2. Their Religious Service did wholly depend upon God; who had inſtituted their Order of Prieſthood.

3. God had placed them in a Country by themſelves, and ſeparated them from all other Nations.

4. God had given them the *Urim* and *Thummim*, which gave them an infallible Reſolution in all important Caſes happening to their State; which was an evident Mark of the Divine Preſence and Direction.

5. God gave them particular Marks of his Bleſſing, the extraordinary Fruitfulneſs which continually uſher'd in their Sabbatical Year; the Security which they enjoyed during their three Solemn

lemn Feasts; and above all, the Deliverers which he from time to time rais'd up for them, their Fourteen Judges and Kings.

And God also threatned them with evils opposite to these Blessings; and all this is denounced against them step by step.

1. He declares that he would no longer be their God.

2. That he would abolish and reject their order of Priesthood, which was accordingly executed by degrees.

3. That he would turn them out of their own Country, without recovery.

4. That they should have no more Prophets or Revelations.

5. That he would take away from them all the Marks of his Protection. The passages expressing these several particulars are here subjoyn'd, which may be easily rang'd under the foregoing Heads, that we may understand the better that God hath plainly foretold the Rejection of the *Jews* at the time of the Messiah.

1. *Moses* then threatens them with a terrible Desolation, *Deut.* XXVIII. *vers.* 28, 29. *The Lord shall smite thee with madness and blindness, and astonishment of heart: And thou shalt grope at Noon day, as the blind groperh in darkness, and thou shalt not prosper in thy ways, and thou shalt be only oppressed and spoiled evermore, and no man shall save thee.*

Manasseh acknowledges that God in this passage foretels, not only their first Desolation under *Nebuchadnezzar*, but also that which happened under *Titus Vespasian*. The Eagle mention'd at the

the 49*th. verse* of that *Chapter*, being not only applicable to *Nebuchadnezzar*, whom *Ezechiel*, *Chap.* XVII. represents under that Notion, but more particularly to the *Roman* Emperour *Titus*, whose Eagles gave a literal accomplishment to that Prophecy.

This makes it evident, That at the same time when God threatens them with their first Desolation, he also denounces to them the last; and that consequently we may apply those passages to the second Rejection of the *Jews*, which were spoken of the first.

2. *Hosea* expresseth the same in his first, second, and third *Chapters*, where he particularly fortels their being deprived of the Royal Dignity, Priesthood and Prophecy.

3. *Isaiah* speaks to the same purpose in his first, second, and fifth *Chapters*, as also *Chap.* XXVIII. XLII, L, and LXVI. and in his XXV *Chapter* he speaks as if no Restoration was to be expected.

4. *Amos* represents the same thing, *Chap.* V. *vers.* 16, 17, and 21, 22. *Therefore the Lord the God of Hosts, the Lord saith thus; wailing shall be in all streets, and they shall say in all the High-ways, Alas! alas! and they shall call the Husbandman to mourning, and such as are skilful of Lamentation to wailing. And in all Vineyards shall be wailing; for I will pass through thee saith the Lord. I hate, I despise your Feast-days; and I will not smell in your solemn Assemblies: though ye offer me Burnt-offerings and your Meat offerings, I will not accept them, neither will I regard the Peace-offerings of your fat Beasts.* Where he hints that their Desolation shall be without recovery.

5. *Je-*

5. *Jeremiah* is very expreſs in *Chap.* V, VI, and X. *verſe* 11. where he declares that their Deſtruction ſhould be without remedy: as alſo *Chap.* XII. and XXXI.

6. *Daniel* follows their ſteps, *Chap.* IX. *verſ.* 25, 26, 27. where he directly points at the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, and the Temple. The words are theſe; *Know therefore and underſtand, that from the going forth of the Commandment, to reſtore and build* Jeruſalem, *unto the Meſſiah the Prince, ſhall be ſeven weeks, and threeſcore and two weeks the ſtreet ſhall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after the threeſcore and two weeks ſhall* MESSIAH *be cut off, but not for himſelf: and the people of the Prince that ſhall come, ſhall deſtroy the City and the Sanctuary, and the end thereof ſhall be with a flood, and unto the end of the War Deſolations are determined.* 'Tis worth our obſerving, That *Joſephus* the Hiſtorian a little after the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, acknowledges that this Prophecy of *Daniel* did expreſly foretel the ruin of the Temple of *Jeruſalem*, and of the Jewiſh Government, by the Arms of the *Roman* Empire, which himſelf was an Eye-witneſs of.

Antiq. Lib. X.

7. *Zechariah* ſpeaks after the ſame manner, *Chap.* XI. *verſ.* 9. *Then ſaid I, I will not feed you, that that dieth, let it die; and that that is to be cut off, let it be cut off; and let the reſt eat, every one the fleſh of another.*

8. And *Malachi* follows theſe common Idea's, *Chap.* I. *verſ.* 10, and 11. *Who is there among you that ſhuts the doors for nought? Neither do ye kindle fire on mine Altar for nought. I have no pleaſure in you ſaith the Lord of Hoſts, neither will I accept an Offering at your hand. For from the riſing of the Sun, even unto the going down of the ſame, my Name ſhall be great among the* Gentiles, *and in every place Incenſe ſhall be offered unto my Name, and a pure Offering; for my Name ſhall be great among the Heathen, ſaith the Lord of Hoſts.*

I cannot conceive how any that conſider the ſucceſſion of theſe Idea's, ſo interwoven one with another, can have the leaſt doubt whether the *Jews* were to be rejected at the Coming of the Meſſiah, or no; eſpecially ſince the Apoſtles and St. *Paul* in particular have made it appear, that the Prophets ſo plainly did foretel this Truth.

CHAP. XXV.

Of the time which ſucceeded the publiſhing of theſe Prophecies, till the Coming of the Meſſiah.

THus we have ſeen an Abridgment of the moſt remarkable Oracles utter'd, either by God himſelf, or by Prophets, whom he made uſe of to declare his Deſigns. I might eaſily have alledged a far greater number, but I choſe rather to content my ſelf with theſe, to avoid the Confuſion which the multiplicity of Citations is apt to occaſion. And I queſtion not but theſe I have mentioned

mention'd, will suffice to give us an Idea of God's promise concerning the Messiah sufficiently great, and enable us to make a Judgment, whether that which the Christians declare to have been the accomplishment of it, be so indeed.

In the mean time, for the further clearing of this matter, I desire the Reader to make some Reflexions on the whole Matter, which seem to me to deserve a serious attention.

The first is, That God hath by degrees put an end to those Divisions that were between some other Nations and the *Jews*, founded on their hopes of the Promise of the Messiah, as the time of its accomplishment drew near.

We hear little now of the enmity of the *Ishmaelites* against the *Jews*; God having placed them in the Desert of *Paran*, they have indeed continued there in a manner invincible, but also without any great communication with their Neighbour Nations.

As for the *Moabites* and *Ammonites*, they had their Kingdoms on the Borders of the Holy Land, and continued there till the time of *Nebuchadnezzar*, since which we find little mention made of them, as being in a manner wholly confounded with other Nations; only we meet with some few Memorials of the *Ammonites*, whose pretensions to that promise were the weaker of the two, as being the Posterity of *Lot*'s younger Daughter.

It is worth our observing, That most of the Prophecies of *David*, as well as of the following Prophets, which thunder forth such terrible Denunciations against the pride of those people, threatning them with the Curse of God and final Destruction, seem to have an eye to the old quarrel and jealousie, their State quarrel which happened afterwards, succeeding to this their first Aversion, and hatred of the *Jews*.

The State and Government of the *Edomites*, as well as their jealousie against *Israel*, continued till after *Cyrus*, who granted them the Liberty of returning to their own Country, as well as to the *Jews*, who had been carried away Captives with them by *Nebuchadnezzar*; but contrary to the hope they had of being re-established to their former Estate, we find, that according to the Prophecy of *Malachy*, they continued in Bondage to their Neighbours, yea to the *Jews* themselves, until *Herod* the *Edomite* possessing himself of the Throne of *Judea*, was probably flattered by those of his own Nation, and by some *Jews* also, into a belief of his being the promised Messiah.

We must also take notice, That the Divine Providence seems to have continued this people so long, on purpose that the Spirit of Jealousie, which was between them and the *Jews*, might preserve the Notion of the promised Messiah more fresh and lively, and to engage men to a more attentive consideration of the Prophecies concerning the same; and that God by confounding them afterwards with other Nations, intended wholly to take away their pretensions, the Service which before they rendred to the Jewish Church, being no longer needful, after so clear and distinct a Revelation.

This Reflexion will be owned to be more than a Conjecture, if we consider God's dealing with the

the Ten Tribes: God suffers them to be carried away Captives by *Salmanassar*, leaving only the Tribes of *Judah*, *Levi*, and *Benjamin* to be afterwards the Depositaries of the Divine Oracles.

The second is, That as it appears that God hath kept some distance of time in his Revelation, that the authority of the Prophets might be fully and firmly established, which, as I have observed, was done by the accomplishment of some Prophecies, respecting some particular Matters of Fact near at hand; so it pleased God for above Four hundred years, to leave the *Jews* without the light of Prophecy; because that which he had given them till *Malachy*'s time, was sufficient to make them know the Messiah, when he should appear in the World.

The third is, That this Cessation of the Gifts of Prophecy among the *Jews*, did serve to increase their desires for the Coming of the Messiah, in whose days those Gifts (which were the peculiar Glory of their Nation) were to be restored in far greater abundance, than had ever been granted to them before.

A fourth Reflexion which is well worth our attentive consideration, is, That God so ordered it in his Providence, that all the Books of the *Old Testament* were translated into the *Greek* about One hundred years after *Malachy*, that they might be communicated to all Nations, the *Greek* Tongue being at that time, and indeed ever since the Reign of *Alexander* the Great, a Language the most known and generally spoken in the World, he having with his power carried it into the *South* and *East*. It

It is natural to conceive, that the Divine Providence hereby designed these Three things:

First, To establish and confirm the Authority of those Divine Oracles, by delivering them into the hands of the Heathen, by the publick Authority of the Jewish Nation, at the desire of a King of *Egypt*.

Secondly, To prevent cavilling about the explication of those Oracles. Thus, for instance, we see there is no place left to dispute the Translation of that Prophecy, *Behold a Virgin shall conceive*, seeing the LXX Interpreters, who were *Jews*, have rendred it so themselves, some Ages before any Contests were started about it between the *Jews* and *Christians*.

The third was, To prepare and dispose the Heathen for receiving the Religion of the Messiah.

And indeed we may easily comprehend, 1. That it was necessary that the Prophetical Writings should be communicated to the Heathen, in order to their ready submitting themselves to the Authority of the Messiah, whom they knew by those Characters which had been given of him. 2. That it was not fitting that the Heathen should wholly depend on the Authority of the *Jews*, forasmuch as the same Divine Oracles do expresly affirm, That the Messiah was to be rejected by the greatest part of them.

I shall conclude these Reflexions with a short view of the State of the Common-wealth and Religion of the *Jews*, since the last of the Prophets.

First, One finds that this Government sub-

sisted as distinct from all other Nations of the Earth, as ever it did before: we see the Honour wherewith *Alexander* the Great treated their High Priest, and that when he was appointed Arbitrator of the differenee between them and the *Samaritans*, he determin'd the Matter in favour of the *Jews*.

One see's that *Alexander* preserved them in the Enjoyment of their Rights and Liberties, as they enjoyed them under the Kings of *Persia*; and in particular exempted them from paying any Tribute every seventh year, because then they did not sow their Ground, and consequently could not reap.

And if we find that *Ptolemy* took *Jerusalem* on a Sabbath day, the *Jews* making Conscience of defending themselves, because the Law required their ceasing from all work; from whence *Agatharcides* an Heathen Author takes occasion to blame their Law; if we find him carrying a great number of *Jews* with him into *Egypt*, yet withal we find him treating them with as much kindness as the *Macedonians* themselves, appointing distinct places in *Egypt* and *Lybia* for their Habitation.

If we find that powerful Princes, such as *Antiochus Epiphanes*, and some others of his Successors, broke the power of the *Jews*, prophaned their Temple, and forc'd great numbers of them to abjure their Religion; yet we see them also, at the same time, giving the highest instances of an immoveable constancy and courage in defence of their Law, and in enduring the most exquisite Tortures; we see others of them, encouraged with

with the love of their Country, as well as Religion, putting themselves into a posture of defence, purifying the Temple, and celebrating a Festival which is observed even at this day, and lastly obtaining favourable Treaties at the hands of their Enemies; as may be seen in the Books of the *Maccabees*, and in the Twelfth Book of *Josephus* his *Antiquities*: yea, we find their name and glory at that time spread as far as *Lacædemon*, with which Common-wealth they made an Alliance during the High-Priesthood of *Onias*.

One see's them after this so considerable, under the Successor of *Antiochus* their Persecutor, that even those Kings sue for their Alliance with great presents.

One see's that *Ptolomy Philometor* granted to *Onias* the Son, leave to build a Temple in *Egypt*, for the convenience of those *Jews* whom *Ptolomy* the Son of *Lagus* had carried thither; as well as for those who left their Country for the oppression of the *Seleucidæ*; for *Judea* being situate between *Syria* and *Egypt*, was ordinarily the Theatre of War between those two States. 'Tis here worth our noting, That the *Jews* undertook the building of the Temple in *Egypt*, as thinking themselves authoriz'd by that Prophecy *Isai.* XIX. 24. it being a thing otherwise forbid by the Law.

One sees in the same Prince's Reign a great contest between the *Samaritans* and the *Jews* about the pre-eminence of their Temples, at *Jerusalem*, and Mount *Garizim*, decided by him in favour of the *Jews*: on which occasion the *Jews* shewed that Prince their Law, and acquaint-

ed him with the Series of their Hiſtory, to confute the *Samaritans* pretenſions.

One ſee's after this, when the *Jews* had conferred the Soveraignty and High-Prieſthood on *Simon*, that their State became ſo powerful, that under *Hyrcanus* his Succeſſor they were in a condition to attacque their Enemies in *Syria*, and compel the *Edomites* to admit Circumciſion: *Ariſtobulus* his Son was crowned, his Brother ſucceeded him in the Royal Dignity, and left the State in a flouriſhing condition, notwithſtanding the Civil and Foreign Wars he was engaged in.

We find afterwards, That the inteſtine Diviſions among the Succeſſors of thoſe Jewiſh Princes, did by degrees open a gap for foreign power to enter and prevail over them, *Pompey* ſiding with *Hyrcanus* took *Jeruſalem*, and made the *Jews* tributary to the *Romans*, but without changing any thing in their Religion.

Julius Cæſar a while after beſtowed the Kingdom of *Judæa* upon *Herod* the *Edomite*. *Auguſtus* after him uſed the *Jews* with the ſame Equity as *Pompey* before him had done, as appears from one of his Declarations publiſh'd in favour of the *Jews* of *Egypt* and *Aſia*, recorded by *Joſephus*. This *Herod* and *Auguſtus* are the ſame under whom our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt was born.

It is evident therefore, That the State of the *Jews* has continued diſtinct from other Nations, and ſufficiently known from the time of the Prophet *Malachy*, until *Herod*.

We may alſo truly aſſert, That whatever inclination the *Jews* of old had, for the Idolatries of their Neighbours, yet we don't find them given that way

way during this interval, between the laſt of their Prophets and *Herod*, as if the charge and command of that Prophet *Malachy* had always ſounded in their Ears, *Mal.* IV. *verſe* 4. *Remember the Law of* Moſes *my Servant, &c.*

One ſee's that the *Jews* under the *Maccabees*, in great numbers ſuffered Martyrdom, rather than abjure their Religion; and that they obſerved the Ceremonial Law with all carefulneſs, of which *Auguſtus* himſelf was witneſs.

One ſee's that under Strangers and Heathen Kings they exempted themſelves from anſwering any Suit at Law on the Sabbath day, from paying Tribute the ſeventh Year, and preſerving the Rights and Priviledges of their Temple in ſpight of all oppoſition. Laſtly, one finds them, during *Herod*'s Government, ſupported by the favour of the *Roman* Empire, in refuſing to ſet up the Emperour's Trophees, for fear leaſt ſome Images might be hid under them, which they looked upon as a Crime againſt their Law.

I am not ignorant, that ſince *Malachy*, ſome Hereſies ſprung up among the *Jews*, their Commerce with the *Greeks* (who applyed themſelves to Philoſophical Speculations) having contributed to make them much more Diſputacious than they were before. The Authority likewiſe of their Kings, who were High-Prieſts alſo, may have had a great ſtroke in blemiſhing the Purity of their Religion.

But yet the Diſputes which we find amongſt them, as that of the Fatality of Events, did not at all touch the Subſtance of their Religion.

They no ſooner found the Spirit of Epicuriſme

to creep in amongſt them, but they framed ſuch additions to their publick Liturgy, as they thought moſt proper to eradicate, or at leaſt condemn that Corruption.

I confeſs alſo, that the Phariſees and Doctors of their Law had greatly alter'd their Morality, in making their own Explications (by the great Authority which they had amongſt the People) to paſs for Authentick: but yet this change and corruption in their Morals, as to practice, did not go ſo far as to aboliſh the Laws themſelves, which were only wreſted from their true meaning. This was indeed a great Corruption, but not ſuch a one as could make it to be no more the ſame Religion.

So that we may boldly aſſert (which is a thing very important to our preſent purpoſe) That the State and Religion of the *Jews* have continued ſufficiently entire till the time of the appearing of the Meſſiah in the World, for their preſerving of whatſoever was neceſſary, *viz.* as well the Books of the Old Teſtament, as the knowledge of thoſe Oracles which foretold the coming of the Meſſiah, together with the Knowledge of theſe Principles, according to which the Prophets have ſpoken in their Predictions concerning him.

REFLEXIONS

Upon the

BOOKS

OF THE

NEW TESTAMENT,

To Confirm the

TRUTH

OF THE

CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

THE

PREFACE.

I *Have ſhewn in my Reflexions upon the Book of* Geneſis, *That the Facts of the Creation, and the Promiſes of the Meſſiah, are Truths not to be queſtioned, and that the Idea's of this Meſſiah continued vigorouſly all the time that preceded the Children of* Iſrael's *going out of* Egypt.

We have ſeen afterwards in the Remarks which I have made upon the Laws which God gave to Moſes, *that it was the great deſign of God to keep men in the expectation of this Meſſiah, and to take care that they might certainly know him whenever he ſhould appear in the World.*

I have taken notice in the third part of theſe Reflexions of the care which God took to give a great number of Oracles to explain particularly all the Characters of this Meſſiah, the Place and Manner of his Birth, the principal Cir-

Circumstances of his Life, Death, and Resurrection, and to foretel the Effusion of the Gifts of the Holy Ghost upon the Gentiles, their Call to the Religion of the Messiah, and lastly, the overthrow of the whole Model of the Jewish Religion and Common-wealth, which was no longer of any use after the Coming of the Messiah, and the Calling of the Gentiles.

My present business is now to shew, That in the Books of the New Testament *we may find an exact accomplishment of this whole Design, wherein God had with so much care instructed the World so long before, and there is nothing more easie, if we will but take a little pains to read these Books attentively, and to compare them with the Model which God himself made, as we have hitherto described it.*

To make this Truth yet more evident, I think it will be necessary to do two or three things which seem to be very important for my present Design.

And first, I am to observe that there appears a most perfect Coherence between the Idea's of the Old Testament *and those of the* New, *which is absolutely necessary to shew that there is in these Books a perfect unity of Design, notwithstanding the vast difference there is between the* Jews *who preserve the* Old Testament, *and the* Christians *who preserve the* New.

Secondly,

Secondly, I am to demonstrate that the Idea's of the Messiah were very strong in the minds of the Jews *at the very time that Jesus Christ appeared in the World.*

This was absolutely necessary, that they might not have wherewith to accuse those who received Christ for the Messiah, of being deceived in their choice, for not having had the exact Idea's of the Messiah which God had promised.

I shall upon this account shew in the third place, That when Jesus Christ did appear in the World, the Model which God had framed in the Law of Moses, *whereby the* Messiah *might be plainly known, did then subsist in the manner wherein God had framed it.*

After this I shall endeavour to shew by proofs, which are indeed unquestionable, That in examining all the Characters which the Prophets gave, by which the Messiah might be known; we cannot conceive a more exact execution of God's Design as to the Messiah, than that which we find in the Person of Jesus Christ, whereof the Books of the New Testament *have given us the History.*

Lastly, I shall shew clearly that this Model which God had framed in giving the Law, and in forming the Common-wealth and Religion of the Jews *in so proper a manner, to make the Messiah certainly known, is not in being at this day;*

day; but that it was so destroyed by the total Dispersion of that People, that we should not be able to know the Messiah if he should now appear again in the World. And that indeed the principal Events, which according to the Oracles were to follow the Coming of the Messiah, are already come to pass in part, and do still come to pass every day.

I hope to evince these Truths beyond all contest; Indeed the bare reading of the Books of the New Testament *plainly discovers the Coherence which they have with the Books of the* Old. *It shews clearly that the Idea's of the Messiah were at that time very strong in the minds of the* Jews, *and it supposeth without any affectation that that Model which God had made so necessary to distinguish the Messiah, stood at that time intire.*

In particular, It is certain that the four Evangelists, by the Relation of unquestionable matters of Fact, have proved that Jesus the Son of Mary *is the Messiah which God had promised.*

Saint Luke *shews in the* Acts of the Apostles *that after the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the Effusion of the Gifts of the Holy Ghost, the Gospel was preached to the Heathens.*

The Epistles are a natural Consequence of this Vocation of the Heathens, and of the abolishing of

of the Law of Moses *which the Apostles had undertaken. They unanimously conspire to shew that God had resolved to call the Heathens to partake of Salvation, that the* Jews *for the greatest part should be justly deprived thereof, because they obstinately rejected the Messiah. Several Questions are examined, which arose either from the Calling of the Gentiles, or from the abolishing of the Ceremonial Worship.*

The Succession of the History of the Christian Church justifies, That after the Destruction of Jerusalem *all People imbraced the Religion of Jesus Christ, in receiving him for the Messiah whom God had promised to the Patriarchs, and to the* Jews.

I shall resume all these Articles one by one, in that Natural Order in which I have proposed them.

REFLEXIONS
Upon the
BOOKS
OF THE
NEW TESTAMENT,
To Eſtabliſh the Truth
OF THE
CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

CHAPTER I.

That there appears a very juſt Connexion between the Idea's of the Old Teſtament, *and thoſe of the* New, *the latter borrowing light from the former.*

AS it is not much the Character of Romances, even then when they are moſt tyed up to the Rules of Probability, to borrow either the Stile or Idea's of thoſe Authors from whom they take their Subject, ſo I ſuppoſe that in this my Under-

Undertaking to shew that the *New Testament* is an exact accomplishment of the *Old*, it is very important to make out, that at the first reading of the Gospels and Apostolical Writings, one finds in them a perfect conformity of Idea's, with the Writings of the *Old Testament*.

One may to this purpose observe in general, That the Gospel supposeth the Divine Authority of the Book of the Old Testament, as an unquestionable Truth. The Gospels and Epistles have the same coherence with the Books of the Law and Prophets, which the Writings of the latter Prophets have with those of the former, and which the Books of all the Prophets together, have with the Books of *Moses*, and with the Prophecies, Laws and Histories which are contained therein.

One may take notice afterwards, That all the Books of the *New Testament* have an essential relation to those of the *Old*, in their most principal Designs. I have shewed that their design was no other, than to raise men to expectations of the Messiah, and to paint *him* to the life, whom God had promised from the beginning of the World; and the only design of the *New Testament* is, to prove that the Messiah is come according to the Prophets. The first speaks concerning the Messiah as expected, the latter as already come.

But we must proceed to a more particular view of this matter. I say then first of all, That the Christians have the same Object of their Faith which the *Jews* had; this Jesus Christ himself declares, where he saith; *This is life Eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus*

Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent. Behold here the true Character of the Christian Religion, as well as of the Jewish, to believe one only God, to own a Messiah, and to acknowledge that Jesus Christ is he. The Jews agree with us in the two former Articles, tho' they dispute the last.

I say in the second place, That the Laws of the Gospel, which regulate Religion, and the Conduct of particular persons in that Society, are exactly the same with those of the old Testament. Jesus Christ in his Sermon upon the Mount, which contains an Abridgment of his Ethicks, had no other end but to restore the true sense and meaning of those Laws God had given upon Mount *Sinai*; and tho' in the matter of Divorces, it seems opposite to that Law wherein God had before permitted them, yet we may easily conceive that he began to abrogate those Orders and Dispensations which were only given to make the Messiah known whenever he should appear.

The prayer which Jesus Christ taught his Apostles, is full of Notions which reigned among the Jews, as several Expositors have manifested. I shall content my self with alledging the instance of the petition for our daily Bread, which has an evident regard to the Manna which God gave the Children of *Israel* in the Wilderness for Forty years.

We know also that the Sacraments of the Baptism and the Eucharist, are originally Jewish Ceremonies, which Jesus Christ hath applied with a very little variation, to much more important Subjects. Baptism was a washing which accompanied the Sacrifices and Circumcision of Prose-

lites. And the washing practised under the Law of *Moses*, signified that the Proselyte, who was admitted to the same, was resolved to renounce his former Courses, and for the time to come to follow an opposite way of living, according to the Rules prescribed him by the Ministers of Heaven, after that they in the Name of God had assured him of the remission of his sins.

The Eucharist was an Appendix of the Feast of the Passover, which preserved the Memory of the Sufferings of the *Israelites* in *Egypt*, and the deliverance he afforded them, in punishing of the *Egyptians*. This Ceremony did perpetuate the Memory of that Deliverance till the coming of the Messiah. Jesus Christ hath substituted to this figure an instance of the Curse of God against the Posterity of *Cham*, the Idea of his Death, by which he hath communicated his Blessing to all Nations of the Earth according to his promise. And he hath made it a more full and exact Memorial of his Death, which he would have us to consider as the death of the true *Lamb, which takes away the sins of the World.* As the old Covenant was made in the Blood of a Lamb, so Jesus Christ, with regard to the New Testament or Covenant promised by *Jeremiah*, *Chap.* XXXI. ordains the celebrating the Memorial of the Blood he had spilt, *This is the New Testament in my Blood*, &c. And lastly, whereas the Law ordained the Commemoration of the Paschal Lamb but once a year, Jesus Christ seems to appoint a much more frequent celebration of the Eucharist, when he saith, *As oft as ye shall eat this Bread*, &c. the reason of which, without doubt, is taken from the greatnes

greatness of the benefit which his death confers upon us.

It is well worth our Observation, That ordinarily the same Prophetical Idea's that are found in the *Old Testament* may be met with in the *New*. The Book of the *Revelations* contains abundance of particulars set down in the Prophecies of *Zachariah* and *Ezechiel*. Jesus Christ himself pursues the Idea's of the Prophet *Joel* in the XXIV of *Matthew*, when he sets forth the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, and afterwards he describes the same according to the Notions which *Daniel* gives us thereof.

Daniel foretels in the VII *Chapter* of his Book, the Destruction of the *Roman* Monarchy by the Christians, whom he stiles *the People of the most High*. St. *Paul* follows the same Notion, 1 *Cor.* VI. 2. where he supposeth it as a known thing: *The Saints* (saith he) *shall judge the World.* And St. *John* in the XX of the *Revelations*, *verse* 4. represents Satan bound, and the Government put into the hands of Believers.

It is also very remarkable, That the promises and threats of Jesus Christ are expressed in terms borrowed from the *Old Testament*. These words of Jesus Christ, *He that hears my words, and believes in him that sent me, hath eternal life, and shall not come into Judgment*, &c. have not they a plain relation to *Adam*'s unbelief and disobedience, to the judgment he underwent, and the punishment imposed on him? Is it not from this Spirit which penetrates both, that the *New Testament* so oft makes mention of a *New Canaan*, a *New Jerusalem*, a *New Name*, &c. and that Glory is represented to us

ſometimes under the Notion of Paradiſe, ſometimes of a Feaſt, where *Abraham* (who is called *the Father of the Faithful*) ſits at the upper end?

Eternal Damnation is repreſented to us under the Notion of the Valley of *Hinnom*, of a Lake burning with Fire and Brimſtone, with regard to the Lake of *Sodom*, and to the place where the filth of *Jeruſalem* was wont to be burnt up and conſumed. 'Tis upon this account that Believers are exhorted to *remember* Lot's *Wife*, *Luke* IX. 62. and XVII. 32. and to depart from the midſt of the wicked, *Hebr.* XIII.

If we conſider the Election of the Apoſtles, and of the Seventy Diſciples, we ſhall find the reference they have to the Heads of the Twelve Tribes, and to the Seventy Elders whom *Moſes* choſe, to preſerve the memory of the Seventy Souls *Jacob* brought with him into *Egypt*. Theſe paſſages, *Ye ſhall ſit on Twelve Thrones*, and *your Names are written in the Book of Life*: and the Number of 144000, being the product of 12 times 12, by alluſion to the Twelve Tribes, do all borrow their Light from thoſe ancient Hiſtories.

Throughout the *New Teſtament* we find nothing but a continual alluſion to the ſtate of the Jews; all thoſe Idea's of the *Liberty of the Sons of God* do allude to the Ceremony of their Jubilee. The *Firſt born* mentioned there, and the *Kingdom of Prieſts*, are not to be underſtood but by caſting our eye on the *Old Teſtament*. If Jeſus Chriſt be called *the chief Corner Stone*, if *Peter* be called *a Stone or Rock*, Believers *living Stones*, and the Apoſtles *Foundations*, it is by way of alluſion to the

the manner in which the Twelve Princes or Heads of the Tribes did contribute towards the building of the Temple, and to the manner of the building of it. If the Children of *Zebedee* are called *Boanerges*, 'tis with reference to the ſecond of *Haggai*, *Yet once, and I will ſhake the Heavens and the Earth*. That the Heathens are deſcribed as a people *afar off*, and what is ſpoken concerning the *Wall of Partition*, hath a viſible reſpect to the *Gentiles*, being prohibited to enter into the holy place of the Temple.

If I would inſtance in all the myſtical Relations of the one Volume to the other, I might ſay that there appears a ſingular conformity between them, even in thoſe things which ſeem moſt oppoſite. *Moſes* the firſt and great Miniſter of the Law, had a ſtammering ſpeech, *Zachary* the Father of S. *John the Baptiſt* was ſtruck dumb, when he was to pronounce the ſolemn Bleſſing to the people; whereas Jeſus Chriſt on the contrary has this character given of him, that *never man ſpake like him*. God ſaid at the beginning, *Encreaſe and multiply*, he repeats the ſame to *Noah*, in order to the propagation of Mankind, and repleniſhing the Earth; Jeſus Chriſt ſaith, *Go and teach all Nations*; and the Word is conſtantly repreſented to us as the Seed of the Regeneration, and Paptiſm as the Laver or waſhing whereby we acquire a new Birth. We ſee *Noah* receiving the Dove into the Ark with an Olive Branch, as a ſign of the peace of Heaven, and Jeſus Chriſt receives a like Token.

Fire falls down from Heaven on the Sacrifice of *Abel*, *Noah*, *Moſes*, *David*, *Solomon*, and *Elijah*,

as a Token that God accepted their Offerings; and God ſends the ſame Mark of his Favour on the day of *Pentecoſt*, to declare that the Sacrifice of Jeſus Chriſt was moſt acceptable to him.

God had forbid the High Prieſt to rend his Clothes on any occaſion whatſoever, that rending of Garments involving a Myſtery, as appears from the Hiſtory of *Jeroboam*; and yet we ſee, that the High Prieſt rent his Cloaths at the Condemnation of our Saviour, and thereby violated for ever the Authority of his Prieſthood, whereas on the contrary we find the Garments of our Lord and Saviour were left whole and entire, to ſignifie to us the Eternity of his Prieſthood. We ſee that the Ear of *Malchus* the High Prieſt's Servant was cut off by S. *Peter*, and that Jeſus Chriſt reſtored it again, to ſhew that the Synagogue had loſt the true Faith, and Jeſus Chriſt alone was able to reſtore it. We ſee the holy place in the Temple opened at the Death of Chriſt, by the rending of the Vail, which ſignified that the Ceremonial Law was then to loſe its force and authority.

But the Obſervations already made are ſufficient to make out what I intend, without having recourſe to theſe Myſteries; and I believe no man can make ſuch Reflexions, without being perſwaded that ſo great a conformity of Idea's, muſt neceſſarily imply a perfect unity of deſign; now it is impoſſible to ſuppoſe, that this unity of deſign ſhould be ſo conſtantly obſerved by different Authors, who lived at ſuch a diſtance of times, places, and intereſts, without being convinced of a perpetual Divine guidance.

I acknowledge that in the *New Teſtament* there may be found ſome Deciſions which ſeem wholly oppoſite to thoſe of the *Old*: For inſtance, We find there a total abrogation of the Ceremonial Law; but foraſmuch as all thoſe Obſervations had no other uſe, but to diſtinguiſh the *Jews* from all other Nations of the Earth, and by this means to make the Meſſiah known to the *Jews* amongſt whom he was to be born; ſo it is obvious to conceive that all thoſe Ceremonies were of courſe to be aboliſhed, after that the Meſſiah was come into the World, and that if we conſider things in this view, we ſhall find no contradiction at all between *Moſes*, who eſtabliſhed theſe Ceremonies, and the Apoſtles who aboliſhed them.

But before we come to confirm theſe Grounds, we muſt make it appear, that the Idea's of the Meſſiah continued very freſh in the minds of the *Jews*, and this ſhall be the ſubject of the following Chapter.

CHAP. II.

That the Idea's of the Meſſiah continued very freſh in the Minds of the Jews *at the time of the Coming of our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt.*

IT would be an eaſie matter for me here to ſhew that the Idea's of the Meſſiah were lively in the Minds of the *Jews* before the coming of Jeſus

Christ. This appears from the Fable which the Rabbies told *Origen*, concerning *Zedechiah*, and *Ahiab*, whom the King of *Babylon* burnt, for perswading the Jewish women, that they were the persons that were to conceive the Messiah. But I intend to make use of proofs of a different nature.

Now to prove that the Notion of the Messiah was very fresh in the minds of the *Jews*, we need only take notice, that the promise of God concerning him, was the first, the most important, and repeated with the greatest assiduity in the Books of the Prophets, and consequently it employed them the most: God having for this reason obliged them to read the Books of *Moses* every Sabbath, to sing the *Psalms* of *David*, and to examine the Writings of the Prophets, where the promise of the Messiah was a thousand times repeated.

We may add a great deal of light to this Observation, if we consider that the Circumstances of the *Jews* at that time, engaged them to give more diligent heed to what the Prophets had declared; and by weighing several Matters of Fact set down in the Gospel, to shew the Universal effect of the lively impression of this Notion of the Messiah on the minds of the *Jews*.

Without doubt the Estate of the *Jews* at that time, being equally oppress't by the power of the *Romans*, and that of *Herod*, could not but put them upon a careful examining of the promises, which God had so often vouchsafed them concerning the Messiah; and the rather because God had often represented to them the Kingdom of the

the Messiah as a Temporal Kingdom, which was to deliver them from the power of their Enemies.

This appears very evident in the Gospel on several occasions. We find that the people of *Jerusalem* and *Herod* were troubled at the News of the Birth of Jesus, as that which would probably cause great Troubles and Desolations before the Kingdom of the Messiah could subdue the *Romans* as well as *Herod*: One see's that the Multitudes would have taken Christ and proclaimed him their King, and submitted themselves to him as the true Messiah: One see's that Christ's own Disciples, both before and after his Death, talked agreeably to these popular Idea's. What else can we make of that passage of the Mother of *James* and *John*, when she begs for them the chief places in his Kingdom? When the Apostles dispute which of them should be the greatest, was it not an effect of the same cause? Did not the Apostles, when they went to *Emaus*, discourse at the same rate? did not they express themselves with much grief and trouble, before they were instructed in the most sublime Truths of the Gospel? *But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed* Israel.

It is also very observable, That *John the Baptist* appears and administers the Sacrament of Baptism at this time: This his practice gave the *Jews* occasion to take him for the Messiah; but what ground had they to think so? surely from what they had read in *Ezechiel*, *Chap.* XXXVI. *verse* 25. And indeed, when the great Councel of the *Jews* deputed some persons to him, they charged

charged them to know of him whether he were the Meſſiah, or no; and if not, why he exerciſed a Function, which that Prophecy ſeem'd to appropriate to the Meſſiah himſelf, in calling him the Angel of the Covenant.

The ſame Truth may alſo be collected from what is related to us concerning the Opinions of the *Jews* about the Perſon of Chriſt; *whom*, ſaith our Saviour, *do people ſay I am?* And the Apoſtles anſwer, That ſome ſaid he was *John the Baptiſt*, others *Jeremiah*, others *Elias*, and others again *that Prophet*, that is to ſay the Meſſiah, who is ſo called by way of Excellence in the XVIII. of *Deuteronomy*. And we find that when Jeſus Chriſt ſtil'd himſelf *the Son of Man*, the Multitudes eaſily conceived that he alluded to the Seventh of *Daniel*, where the Meſſiah is ſo called.

We perceive alſo from many other places in the Goſpel, That the Multitudes were very well acquainted with thoſe paſſages in the *Old Teſtament*, which were commonly applyed to the Meſſiah: *The Meſſiah, when he appears*, ſay they, *will he do greater ſigns than this Man doth?* Others are offended becauſe Jeſus Chriſt was of *Nazareth*, arguing from thence that he could not be the Meſſiah: Others maintain that when the Meſſiah ſhould come, it would not be known whence he was; and others again aſſerted, that the Meſſiah was to continue for ever. All which is an evident ſign that the Idea's of the Meſſiah were very familiar among the *Jews*.

This muſt have been ſo of neceſſity, becauſe the *Samaritans* themſelves were poſſeſt with the ſame Idea's, tho' they had not ſo great an extent of

of Light as the *Jews* had. They did not indeed altogether reject the Writings of the Prophets, but rather ſtudied them with care, their Animoſity againſt the *Jews*, and their Jealouſie upon account of the promiſe, of the place of the Temple, and other things in queſtion, do manifeſtly ſhew that the Characters of the Meſſiah were known to them, and that they were exactly informed in that whole Matter.

One ought alſo to take notice, That as the Apoſtles call that *the fulneſs of time*, becauſe the times ſet down by the Prophets were almoſt expired, and the Scepter was already departed from *Judah*, the Weeks of *Daniel* were ended, and the Kingdoms of *Syria* and *Egypt* were overturn'd; ſo there were ſeveral good men, who were filled with an expectation of the Meſſiah. *Anna* and *Simeon* are repreſented to us, as thoſe who by their ſtudy of the Holy Scriptures, had diſcover'd that the time of the coming of the Meſſiah was near at hand, much in the ſame manner as *Daniel* is repreſented to us to have learnt from the Prophecy of *Jeremiah*, that the Captivity was almoſt expired.

I ſhall add one Argument more which ſeems beyond exception, That many perſons were found about the time of Jeſus Chriſt, who were either drawn by others into an opinion of their being the Meſſiah, or who of themſelves deſired to be accounted ſo. Thus we are told that the Flatterers of *Herod* the Great gave him the Title of *Meſſiah*. Of this number were *Theudas* and *Judas Gaulonites*, with ſome others: Thus alſo ſoon after ſome applyed the Prophecies concerning the Meſſiah

Messiah to *Vespasian* the Emperour, because he had been chosen in the East. This is attested by *Josephus*, *Tacitus*, and *Suetonius*, who assure us, that the Notion of the promised Messiah, as of a great King, was very common in the East, and not unknown in the West.

We know that under the Emperour *Adrian* *Barchochab* was the cause of a terrible Sedition, by making the *Jews* believe that he was the Messiah: And we cannot be ignorant how many such like Impostors have been since, who have abused the Credulity of the *Jews*, even until *Sabatai Sevi*, who deluded them about One and twenty years since.

Rycaut. Turk. Hist. Vol. 2. p. 174. &c.

Lastly, We cannot but think that this Idea of the Messiah was always fresh among the *Jews*, because we find that from that time they have continually disputed with the Christians about this Matter; because they tell us of two Messiah's, one the Son of *Judah*, and the other the Son of *Joseph*; and because in all places of the World whither they are scattered, they speak of the Messiah in their Commentaries on the Scriptures, in their Sermons, in their publick Prayers, and their common Conversation.

Surely if any time can be supposed, wherein they might have lost their knowledge and distinct hope of the Messiah, it must be since the time appointed for his coming is expired, when by the Christians insulting over their vain Expectations, they have been oblig'd (finding themselves disappointed by Prophetical Calculations) to set up that rash Maxim, *Cursed is he that computes the times.* And therefore it is evident, that these

these Notions were much more lively in them, when their hopes were well grounded, and when they might pretend to see them accomplished.

It is no less certain, that the Model appointed by God, by means of which the Messiah might be certainly known, did still subsist in the same manner as God at first had formed it: but that I may give a full light to this Capital Truth; I shall tye my self to consider the several Arguments for it distinctly; and shall begin with those which shew that the Common-wealth of the *Jews* did subsist according to the Divine Model; and then proceed to others which demonstrate, that God had therein preserved all the Distinctions necessary to his design.

CHAP. III.

That the Common wealth of the Jews *did still subsist, and follow the Model which God had formed, in order to the certain knowing of the Messiah.*

THere are two things which seem to contradict this Proposition; the one is the overturning of the Jewish State, the other is the corruption of their Religion; but it is easie to remove both these Difficulties.

For,

For, the overturning of the State of the *Jews*, did not draw along with it that of the Scripture, and the Laws on which it was founded, and afterwards governed. Wherefore the case of this Republick is not the same with that of *Athens* or *Lacedemon*, which at present subsist no where, but in Books, because there are no people now that follow the Laws of the ancient Legislators of *Sparta* or *Athens*.

But on the contrary, we find the *Jews* in all parts of the World, keeping these Laws with great carefulness, studying them with the greatest application, and flattering themselves that God will one day re-establish them in *Judea*, which they expect by means of the Messiah, whom God at first promised to them.

'Tis now above 1600 years that they have been scattered throughout the World, and yet we find not that their condition has made them change their Measures or Hopes; and thô they have already been deceived by a great number of false Messiahs, yet do not they for all that look upon the condition of their Common-wealth as irrecoverable.

Now, if during so long a Series of Ages, they have kept their Laws with so much carefulness, if they still religiously observe all those Laws which could be kept without the Bounds of the Holy Land; who sees not but that in all probability they must have kept them more exactly at the time of Jesus Christ, and before his coming, when they could keep them with much more ease than since that time, and that for many considerable Reasons.

For

For first, Their Dispersion then was in one only Nation, whereas now they are scattered amongst Heathens, Christians, and Mahometans.

2. They had then Prophets who exhorted them to the observance of these Laws, which now they have wanted for so many Ages.

3. They had often Princes that were very favourable to them, such as *Cyrus* and *Darius*, who ordered that Sacrifices should be offered for themselves, in the Temple at *Jerusalem*; and *Pompey* afterwards had the same inclinations for them; whereas since the time of their Dispersion, they have scarcely met with any one Prince that has been favourable to them, if we except *Julian* the Apostate, who from an effect of his hatred against the Christians, did vainly strive to re-establish them.

4. They had a Temple to which the whole state of their Republick was fixed. *Herod* about the time of our Saviour had most magnificently repaired it, whereas now for so many Ages they have neither Temple nor Altar.

5. They had High-Priests amongst them, that were entrusted with the Soveraign Power, and were Kings of their Nation, whereas now they have neither King nor Prince of their Faith.

6. Their Laws being translated into *Greek* since the time of *Ptolemy Philadelphus*, it gave occasion to an extraordinary Jealousie between the *Jews* of *Egypt*, who had the Text of the Scripture in *Greek*, and between those of *Jerusalem*, who had it in *Hebrew*, whereas now all this is altogether ceased, all the *Jews* now for many Ages making use only of the *Hebrew* Text.

Since

Since therefore we find that they without Prophets, without King, out of their own Country, *&c.* have observed these Laws for so many Ages, notwithstanding their dispersion throughout all places, and amongst all sorts of people; how much rather may we conceive they did so since the time of *Ezra*, who placed the Books of the *Old Testament* in the order in which we have them at this day? There are only 542 years, from the time of the return of their Captivity, which happened in the year 3468, to the Birth of Christ; and but 259 years from their return, to the translation of the 70, and we know that above 1600 years are past since their general Dispersion.

Moreover, it appears that the *Romans* had so well preserved the form of the Jewish Government from *Pompey's* time, as well as that of their Religion, that a *Roman* General sent to demand a kind of permission of the *Jews*, to let him pass with the *Roman* Eagles through *Syria*. We know that those Eagles were never set up at *Jerusalem*, but it was at a time when a *Roman* Commander intended to stir up the *Jews* to Sedition, and by that means to make the Emperour their Enemy. Yea, we find that tho' the *Romans* reserved to themselves the power of the Sword, yet they permitted to the *Jews* the Judgment of Zeal, against those whom they called Hereticks, whom they tore to pieces, to execute the rigour of the Law.

If we find that a *Roman* Proconsul would not concern himself with Questions of their Law arising without the Bounds of their own Country, how much rather may we judge that they enjoy'd an

an entire liberty within *Judea*? And indeed we find the Priests sending their Commissioners to *Damascus* against the Christians, without doubt with design to execute the Law against Impostors. S. *Paul* was beaten several times with forty stripes save one, which could not be upon any other pretence, but to obey the Law in that matter. Acts IX. 4.

These proofs are sufficient to make out that the Commonwealth of the *Jews* subsisted still in the same manner as God instituted it.

And as for what concerns the overthrow of their Religion, as God had interwoven the Laws that regulated it, with those of their Government, so that their Religion was nothing else but a Religious Policy; it is evident that their Government continuing at the time of Jesus Christ, we cannot doubt, but that their Religion, notwithstanding the corruption which the Pharisees and Traditionary *Jews*, whom Christ continually censures, had introduced, did still continue pure enough, to answer the Model which God had framed.

They rejected the *Samaritans*, as appears from the IV of S. *John*, and looked upon them as Hereticks, having no Commerce with them.

They lived in a perfect Alienation from the Heathen; 'tis with this S. *Peter* begins his Discourse to the Assembly at the House of *Cornelius*, *Acts* X. 28.

They lived in an exact Observance of the Solemn Feasts which God had prescribed them, *viz.* the Passover, Pentecost, the Feast of Expiation and of Tabernacles.

They observed the Feasts which their Ance-

ſtors had joyn'd to theſe upon extraordinary Occaſions, as that of the Dedication, that of *Lots*, and ſome Faſts which they kept then, as they do to this day. This appears by the Hiſtory of the Goſpel, and by the Acts of the Apoſtles.

They aſſiſted at theſe ſolemn Feſtivals with much regularity.

They did not till their Ground in the Seventh year, according to God's Command, which made the Heathen Princes which were over them, to releaſe them from paying any Tribute that year, as may be ſeen in *Joſephus* and other Authors.

They taught the Law in their Synagogues, and that every Sabbath day.

They were ſo ſcrupulous in their obſervation of the Sabbath, that they accuſed our Saviour for healing the Sick on that day.

It appears that Lepers were ſequeſtred, and that they obſerved the diſtinction of the ſeveral kinds of Leproſie, according to the Law of *Moſes*.

We find by the Hiſtory of the *Gadarenes*, that Swine were looked upon as unclean Beaſts.

It is certain that they paid the Tribute which was appointed for the uſe of the Temple, according to the Law of *Moſes*, and the re-eſtabliſhment of that Cuſtom, which we find II *Chron.* XXIV. 5. *Joſephus* tells us that this practiſe was continued till the deſtruction of the Temple. We meet with the ſame in *Tacitus*, and other Heathen Authors of that time.

Antiq. XVIII. Ch. XII.

I acknowledge that at the ſame time they were extreamly corrupt in their Doctrines, with which Chriſt upbraids the Phariſees and Saduces: but this corruption reſpected rather their Morals, than

than the Externals of their Religion; as appears plainly from hence, that Jeſus Chriſt upbraids the Phariſees with their tithing Mint and Cummin, that is, with their obſervance of outward Niceties, whilſt they neglected the very Eſſentials of Piety.

They held that Heathens could not paſs for their Neighbours, from whence it would follow, that God did not forbid them to bear falſe witneſs againſt a Heathen. Hence alſo they concluded that it was lawful for them to kill their Enemies, and this fomented their hatred and animoſity againſt all other Nations. It was on this account that the Diſciples of Jeſus Chriſt marvelled that he talked with a *Samaritan* Woman.

Their Deciſions concerning Adultery were no leſs corrupt, which they declared to be no ſin, ſo long as it did not proceed to the outward Act; which Opinion of theirs was more groſs than that of many Heathens, who had a truer Idea of the Purity of Heart which God requires of us, as well as that of the Body. But yet this did not altogether deſtroy their Religion, tho' it obſcured the Excellency and Sublimity thereof.

As for the Saduces, beſides that their Errours were only ſpeculative, amongſt the greateſt part of them, it is certain that what the Goſpel ſaith of their denying the Exiſtence of Souls and Spirits, and the Doctrine of the Reſurrection, muſt be underſtood with ſome qualification, as the Learned have ſolidly proved, and amongſt others Dr *Lightfoot* on the Goſpels.

And without repeating thoſe things which ſecur'd the preſervation of their State, and which

alſo viſibly tended to the preſerving of their Religion, I ſhall only obſerve, That the *Jews* at this day, with very little difference, are found in the ſame practices and opinions, as to their Religion, which they had at the time of our Saviour.

Seeing then, that after ſo long a time of Sixteen hundred years, we find no greater change in their Belief (though their Traditions are conſiderably encreaſed, the Rules whereof they have infinitely multiplyed, and thereby encreaſed this Corruption) how can it be imagin'd that the Religion of the *Jews* was wholly loſt, or had no being at the time of our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt.

Let this therefore be eſtabliſhed as a certain Truth, That the Common-wealth of the *Jews* ſubſiſting entirely, it was eaſie to know, whether the diſtinctions which were neceſſary to diſcover and make known the Meſſiah, were ſtill found in the ſtate of the *Jews* and their Religion. This is that I am now going to make out.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

That all the Diſtinctions neceſſary for diſcovering of the Meſſiah, ſtill continued in the State of the Jews *at the time of our Lord.*

I Do not know whether any man can deny that Circumciſion, which is one of the principal Marks of the *Jews*, was practiſed at that time; if any one ſhould dare to diſpute this Truth, we need only to repreſent to him, that the main Diſpute between the firſt Diſciples of Jeſus Chriſt and the *Jews*, was about the Obſervation of this Ceremony.

Neither were the *Jews* only obſtinate in this Belief, but we find alſo that thoſe who firſt embraced the Chriſtian Religion, maintained that the Heathens themſelves ought to ſubmit to the Yoke of Circumciſion, before they could enter into the Divine Covenant, and enjoy the Priviledges of Gods People, whom Circumciſion diſtinguiſhed from the reſt of the World.

One ſee's that tho' God ſcattered the Ten Tribes, yet ſome of them ſtill remained in *Paleſtine*, and were diſtinctly known as ſuch. This appears from the *Acts of the Apoſtles*, where mention is made of a Widow of the Tribe of *Aſher*, and S. *Paul* boaſts of his being a *Benjamite*.

They upbraided *Herod*, notwithſtanding he was their King, with his being an *Edomite*, and not originally a *Jew*.

One see's that about *Tyre* and *Sidon* there remained still a distinct knowledge of the *Canaanites*.

It is known that *Galilee* was less esteemed than *Judea*, because many of the *Gentiles* were settled there, by which means the *Jews* of that Province were obliged to some Commerce with them, from which those who lived more distinct, thought that they had a right to undervalue those that were settled in *Galilee*.

One may also boldly assert, That all places were still distinctly known to what Tribe they did belong. Thus it is observed, that *Capernaum* was in the Borders of *Naphthali* and *Zebulun*, that *Bethlehem* was in the Tribe of *Juda*, which is related as a thing publickly known.

It is known that the Priests still possess the Cities which *Joshua* had assigned to them. *Zacharias* the Father of *John the Baptist* dwelt at *Hebron*, a City belonging to the Priests in the Tribe of *Juda*.

Josh. XXI. 10,11.

One see's that even the *Samaritan* Woman had a distinct knowledge of some famous places in the Holy Land, as *Jacob*'s Well, and the Possession which he gave to his Son *Joseph*, and that those of her Religion, took a Prejudice against the *Jews*, because *Jacob* had built an Altar at *Sichem*.

One see's that they kept up the Practise of Redeeming their First-born, which at this day is still observed by the *Jews*.

As also the practise of Polygamy, which was so common amongst them, that S. *Paul* thought himself obliged to forbid the same to the Pastors of the Christian Church, that he might abolish it by little and little amongst those that embraced the Doctrine of Jesus Christ.

One see's from the Nineteenth of S. *Matthew*, that Divorces were publickly practised amongst them, as they are to this day.

If one makes any Reflexion upon the Objection the Sadduces made to our Saviour concerning the Woman that successively had seven Brothers for her Husbands, we shall perceive that the desire of Posterity being predominant amongst them, was the cause of the continuance of this Custom, which began in the time of the Patriarch *Judah*.

We have elsewhere taken notice of the extream carefulness of the *Jews*, in preserving the marks of their Daughters Virginity, which has constantly continued down since the coming of our Saviour Jesus Christ.

The Gospel, which informs us that the *Jews* were deprived of the power of the Sword, doth notwithstanding sufficiently signifie to us, not only the extream horrour which the *Jews* had conceived against Adultery; (thus we find Jesus Christ upbraiding the Pharisees, that Adulterers, that is the greatest of sinners, entred into the Kingdom of Heaven before them;) but also that the Laws against Adulterers and Adulteresses were severely executed.

In short, one see's that by a Judgment of Zeal, as they call it, they brought a Woman to our Saviour which was taken in Adultery, before they went about to stone her; for one ought to know that the Law only subjected young Women, who were

were defiled after a Contract, to that ſort of Puniſhment, becauſe after they were once contracted they were reputed the Wives of thoſe to whom they were betrothed; and ſuch an one was ſhe of whom we read in the Eighth Ch. of S. *John*, and not a perſon actually married, whoſe puniſhment, according to the Law, was to be ſtrangled.

One ſee's that S. *Paul* ſuppoſeth, That the Law which ſubjected a Virgin to the Will of her Father, and gave him power to make void her Vows at pleaſure, was ſtill in force.

I will not mention here what the Ancients tell us of the diſtinction which they ſay was made between Virgins and married Women, as well in the Temple, as in their Synagogues; I ſhall only ſay, that this their Tradition is not without ground.

It is known that the order eſtabliſhed by *David* for exerciſing the Prieſtly Functions was exactly obſerved by them: *Zacharias* was of the Courſe of *Abia*, which was the Eighth in order, as is mentioned I *Chron.* XXIV. 11. and he offered Incenſe according to the Law, ſet down *Exod.* XXX. *verſ.* 7, 8.

One ſee's that the *Jews* would not ſuffer the dead Bodies to hang upon the Croſs after Sunſet, according to what we find was practis'd at the time of *Joſhua*, in purſuance of that Law which we find *Deut.* XXI. *verſe* 23.

I only mention theſe Particulars now, intending hereafter, that I may avoid tedious Repetitions, to enlarge more expreſly, when I ſhall come to ſhew, as to every Article, the exact accompliſhment

pliſhment of the ancient Oracles concerning the Meſſiah, in the perſon of our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt; together with the uſe of theſe diſtinctions which bar any other, except Jeſus Chriſt, from attributing that Title to himſelf, and from abuſing the credulity of the *Jews*.

It would be an eaſie matter for me to make a numerous Liſt of theſe Characters, according to all the different Oracles which God gave to the *Jews* on this ſubject, and to juſtifie the exact fulfilling of them in the perſon of Jeſus Chriſt. And indeed it was not without cauſe that God furniſhed his People with ſo great a number of Prophecies upon this Head, his deſign being thereby to give us ſuch ſolid Grounds for our Faith, by granting to it all theſe ſupports, that nothing might be able to ſhake it.

But becauſe all of them may be referred to certain Heads, and that an explication of the chief of them is ſufficient to illuſtrate the reſt, I ſhall ſtop there now.

I begin therefore with the Character of the time in which the Meſſiah was to appear, and in which Jeſus Chriſt did actually come into the World. And it being utterly impoſſible for any man to chooſe the time of his Birth, any more than to chooſe an illuſtrious Fore-runner, or a certain place where, or a certain Family of which he is to be born, and much leſs of a Virgin for his Mother; theſe Characters may ſatisfie us, That all thoſe that ever pretended to the Title of the Meſſiah, could not reaſonably do it.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

That the time pointed out by the Prophets for the coming of the Meſſiah, is the very time in which Jeſus Chriſt appeared to the World.

I Have made it appear in the Third Part of theſe Reflexions, That the Oracle of *Jacob*, Gen. XLIX. 10. *The Scepter ſhall not depart from* Judah, *nor a Lawgiver from between his feet, until* Shiloh *come*, contains a formal Character of the time in which our Saviour was to appear. I am therefore at preſent to ſhew that the *Jews* at that time had wholly loſt the Authority of which they had been poſſeſſed for ſo many Ages, which will moſt evidently appear from theſe four Reflexions on the Hiſtory of the Goſpel it ſelf.

The firſt is on the Birth of Jeſus Chriſt, which happened preciſely at the time when *Auguſtus* had ordered that all the Subjects of the *Roman* Empire ſhould be enrolled; when we find that *Joſeph* and the Bleſſed Virgin went to *Bethlehem*, their own City, to liſt their Names in the Regiſter of the *Roman* Magiſtrate, which is an authentick proof of the Servitude of that People to the *Romans*.

It will not be amiſs here to take notice, Firſt, Of *Moſes* his numbring the People by Divine Authority: Secondly, Of the numbring which *David* undertook, and for which he was exemplarily

plarily puniſhed by God. Now as God cauſed the People to be numbred, to ſhew that they were all his Subjects, and as *David* numbred them with the ſame reſpect, ſo we muſt conſider this action of *Auguſtus*, was a publick Teſtimony of his Soveraignty over the *Jews*, who were ſubdued by *Pompey*.

When *Tertullian* appealed to the Publick Regiſters of the *Roman* Empire, in his Apologetick addreſſed to the *Roman* Magiſtrate, who reſided at *Carthage*, he gave a ſufficient evidence that we have no reaſon to ſuſpect the relation of the Evangeliſts. One may joyn to this the manner of the Relation of theſe Facts which the Evangeliſts give us; as for inſtance in the Baptiſm of our Lord, they determine the years in which they were done, not only by the year of the High Prieſt, but alſo by thoſe of *Auguſtus* and *Tiberius*, &c.

The ſecond Reflexion may be made upon the Character of one of the Apoſtles of Jeſus Chriſt, *Levi* or *Matthew*; who before our Saviour made choice of him was a Publican, and it ſeems as if our Saviour had on purpoſe taken him from that Employ, to be one of his Diſciples, to give a real inſtance, and ſuch a one as went every where along with him, that the *Jews* by paying Tribute to the *Roman* Empire, had wholly loſt their Temporal Authority, which was to continue till the coming of the Meſſiah.

Here alſo may be made a third Reflexion, which is very natural, upon a paſſage related by the Evangeliſts. They come and ask our Saviour, Whether it were lawful to yield Obedience to

to the *Romans*? For since God had chosen this People, and had given them Judges and Princes of his own chooſing, they had always an extream averſion for any Foreign Domination: Of this we have an illuſtrious Example at the time of the Siege of *Jeruſalem*, when notwithſtanding the Remonſtrances by *Jeremy*, yet they could not conſent to ſubmit. This is that with which they are upbraided, *Ezra* IV. *verſe* 19. neither were they more content with this their ſtate of Bondage, at the time of our Saviour; and ſome of their Zealots took this occaſion to tempt our Saviour, that they might make him odious, which ſide ſoever he ſhould take. Their queſtion is, *Whether it be lawful to pay Tribute to* Ceſar; to which he anſwers with a Divine Wiſdom; *Render to* Ceſar *the things which are* Ceſars, *and unto God the things that are Gods*; which words being joyned with the Money that he made them produce, which was ſtampt with the Emperours Image, do evidently ſhew that the *Romans* were Soveraign Lords in *Judea*: It is known that the coyning of Money is the undoubted Mark of the Soveraignty of that Prince who makes it paſs for Current.

But if we muſt give ſome further light to the foregoing Reflexions, we need only obſerve the manner of our Saviour's ſuffering, as it is deſcribed to us. The *Jews* do agree, as may be ſeen in the *Jeruſalem Talmud*, that Criminal Judgment was taken away from them Forty years before the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*; and the Goſpel ſuppoſeth the ſame thing; the *Jews* did not put Jeſus Chriſt to death, but they carried him to *Pilate*,

Sanhedr. fol. 24. 2.

late, and demanded that he might be crucified. When *Pilate* ſaid, *Shall I crucifie your King*; they anſwer, *We have no other King but* Ceſar, which Confeſſion was the Confeſſion of the whole Jewiſh Nation, who were aſſembled at the Feaſt of Paſſover. In ſhort, One ſees that accordingly the *Roman* Magiſtrate paſt Sentence upon him. He was ſcourged before they led him to be crucified, which was a puniſhment amongſt the *Romans*. His Body is not taken from the Croſs, but by permiſſion from *Pilate*; and the *Roman* Souldiers are thoſe Dogs, that is, prophane Heathens who encloſed him, and tormented him, according to the Deſcription which *David* has made, *Pſalm* XXII.

The *Jews* have here but one Anſwer to make, which God's former dealing with that People ſeems ſomewhat to countenance; which is, That as their Seventy years Captivity under the *Babylonian* Empire did not hinder the differring of the accompliſhment of that Prophecy of the *Scepters not departing from* Judah, for ſome Centuries after the ſaid Captivity; ſo neither is it neceſſary to ſuppoſe that the Meſſiah was to ſucceed immediately upon the ending of the Kingdom of the *Maccabee's*, and upon the loſs of their Liberty under *Pompey*.

But here is a very great difference: For firſt, during the Babyloniſh Captivity, God ſtill preſerved amongſt them ſome form of Government, the great Lords of the Country being chiefly carried away Captives, whilſt the pooreſt and moſt miſerable were left behind.

Secondly, The Captivity laſted only 70 years, whereas this laſt Diſperſion hath laſted above 1600.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, The first Captivity did not at all abolish those necessary Marks whereby the lawful Lords of *Judea* might be distinguished: those that were of the Tribe of *Juda*, as well as those of other Tribes, were very well known, tho' they were not in possession of the Kingdom; whereas now every thing is confounded amongst them; and if one looks into Christian Records, he may find that many of the Kindred of Jesus Christ were put to death, because they could pretend to the Throne of *Judea*.

Moreover, during the Captivity of *Babylon*, they had Prophets amongst them who expresly foretold the end of it, whereas nothing of that kind has yet been seen since the last destruction of *Jerusalem*, since which time no Prophet has appeared amongst them, that advantage being transferred to the Christians, some of which, who next succeeded our Saviour, did foretel the most remarkable Events that were to follow to the end of the World.

But if any one should be so nice as to call in question the Reasons of the difference here alledged; at least the *Jews* will find nothing to object against the Prophecy of *Daniel*, concerning the Weeks at the end of which the Messiah was to appear, and afterwards to be cut off. In short, if it be true that Jesus Christ was born under the Empire of *Augustus*, it is no less certain that he entred upon his Ministry in the fifteenth year of *Tiberius*, and was crucified the Nineteenth year of his Reign, that is in the midst of the Four hundred eighty seventh year from the Twentieth year of *Artaxerxes*, that is [illegible]

even in troublous times. Verse 26. *And after the Threescore and two weeks shall* MESSIAH *be cut off, but not for himself. And the People of the Prince that shall come, shall destroy the City and the Sanctuary, and the end thereof shall be with a Flood, and unto the end of the War desolations are determined.* Verse 27. *And he shall confirm the Covenant with many for one week, and in the midst of the week he shall cause the Sacrifice and Oblation to cease, and for the over-spreading of Abomination, he shall make it desolate, even until the Consummation, and that determined shall be poured on the desolate.*

For the understanding of this Prophecy which is so exact, and all the Events it refers to, so particularized, it is to be observed:

1. That by the Weeks *Daniel* here speaks of, Seven Years are designed, according to the Stile of the Law, *Levit.* XXV. 8. when it speaks of the Year of Jubilee; so that Seventy Weeks make out 490 Years, which is acknowledged by the most Learned amongst the *Jews*, *Jachiades*, *Abarbanel*, and *Manasseh Ben Israel.*

2. That the Prophet writing in *Chaldea*, followed the Account of the *Chaldean* Year, which consists of 360 days, as appears clearly from other passages of this Book, where he resolves the Years into Days, without regarding the several Days which in a just Calculation were to be intercalated.

3. That the Prophet expresses a certain *Epocha*, from whence the counting of these Weeks is to begin, *viz.* an Order to rebuild the Temple, which cannot be applyed to that of *Cyrus*, which was in a manner of none effect; nor to the

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All theſe Facts were ſo illuſtrious, and ſo well known, that S. *John* conſtantly paſſed for a great Prophet amongſt the *Jews*, the Phariſees themſelves not daring to queſtion it: He received publick Deputations from the *Jews*, who demanded the Reaſon of his Miniſtry, and he himſelf ſent

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It appears afterwards that S. *John* was look'd upon as the Forerunner of the Messiah; Jesus Christ saith he was the greatest of all the Prophets; and when *Herod* heard of the Reputation of Jesus Christ, he supposed that S. *John* was raised from the dead.

The *Jews* not conceiving that *John the Baptist* was the Forerunner of the Messiah, because they understood the Prophecy of *Malachy* literally, which also made the LXX add to the Text the word *Thisbite*, in the passage of *Malachy*; therefore Jesus Christ declares that it was indeed he of whom *Malachy* had spoken.

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2. He gave a second Oracle, tho' not so plain as the former, concerning the destruction of *Jerusalem*; *Whose fan is in his hand, and he will throughly purge his floor, and will burn up the Chaff with Fire.*

These two Oracles contain the end of the old Dispensation, and the beginning of the new; the miraculous Gifts of the Spirit were given to facilitate the publishing of the Gospel among the *Gentiles*; and the destruction of *Jerusalem*, and of the Temple, happened as well to punish the Crime which the *Jews* had committed when they put the Messiah to death; as to take away all their pretences of believing that the Messiah was not come, who was to appear whilst that Temple stood.

But before I conclude this Chapter, I must observe three or four things, which are very necessary to confirm the Authority of the Testimony which this Forerunner of the Messiah hath given to Jesus Christ.

It is a Maxim amongst the *Jews*, That he who is acknowledg'd for a Prophet, may confirm the Authority of another, by attesting him to be a true Prophet. And this is that which S. *John* did to Christ; he was generally accounted a Prophet, and he attested that Jesus Christ was so. This was that which confounded the Elders of the *Jews*, when they demanded of our Saviour by what Authority *John* acted; Jesus Christ answered their question with another, Whether S. *John* had a call from God?

Maimonid. de fundam. legis.

The first Observation therefore is, That we cannot accuse him of acting underhand with Jesus Christ, for we do not find any correspondence kept up between them; one of them was the Son of a Priest, the other of a Carpenter's

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Mal. IV. 5.

I acknowledge that *John the Baptist* did not do any Miracle; but then he uttered 1. So plain an Oracle concerning the miraculous effusion of the Gifts of the Holy Ghost upon the Disciples, that we find nothing so great or so clear in all the ancient Prophecies; *He that comes after me*, saith he, *shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with Fire.*

2. He gave a second Oracle, tho' not so plain as the former, concerning the destruction of *Jerusalem*; *Whose fan is in his hand, and he will throughly*

ly purge his floor, and will burn up the Chaff with Fire.

These two Oracles contain the end of the old Dispensation, and the beginning of the new; the miraculous Gifts of the Spirit were given to facilitate the publishing of the Gospel among the *Gentiles*; and the destruction of *Jerusalem*, and of the Temple, happened as well to punish the Crime which the *Jews* had committed when they put the Messiah to death; as to take away all their pretences of believing that the Messiah was not come, who was to appear whilst that Temple stood.

But before I conclude this Chapter, I must observe three or four things, which are very necessary to confirm the Authority of the Testimony which this Forerunner of the Messiah hath given to Jesus Christ.

It is a Maxim amongst the *Jews*, That he who is acknowledg'd for a Prophet, may confirm the Authority of another, by attesting him to be a true Prophet. And this is that which S. *John* did to Christ; he was generally accounted a Prophet, and he attested that Jesus Christ was so. This was that which confounded the Elders of the *Jews*, when they demanded of our Saviour by what Authority *John* acted; Jesus Christ answered their question with another, Whether S. *John* had a call from God?

Maimonid. de fundam. legis.

The first Observation therefore is, That we cannot accuse him of acting underhand with Jesus Christ, for we do not find any correspondence kept up between them; one of them was the Son of a Priest, the other of a Carpenter's

Wife; the one dwelt in *Judea*, the other in *Galilee*; the one concealed himself, whilst the others Reputation had got him a great many Disciples. The Disciples of the one were very jealous of the Disciples of the other, and endeavoured to inspire their Master with the jealousie that possessed themselves.

The second is, That the Disciples of Jesus are the persons that wrote the History of *John the Baptist*, which they do as those who were concern'd for his Glory and Reputation, tho' at first they did not stand in the least by him, but rather by that means inflamed *Herod*'s hatred against them, who contributed to the death of S. *John*, as well as of Jesus Christ.

The third is, That when S. *John* was beheaded, who never had any correspondence with Jesus Christ, it is extravagant to conceive, that the Disciples of Jesus Christ should have forged the Testimony which they say this great man gave to Christ, because this would have been to employ the Authority of a Man, who never having wrought any Miracles, and being long since beheaded by the order of *Herod*, seem'd to be quite forgotten.

The fourth is, That it is not probable that they could ever entertain a design of imposing on the World in such a matter as this, which related to publick Facts known to all *Judea*, to all the Priests, yea to the whole Nation assembled at their publick Feasts, to *Herod* the King, and to the Disciples of *John* themselves, who would not have been wanting to refute and convince them, whereas on the contrary we see, that by the disposition which

which S. *John* had wrought in them, they were easily won to the Faith of Christ. This is evident from the Example of *Apollos* a Disciple of *John the Baptist*'s Disciples, who became afterwards so excellent a Preacher of the Christian Religion.

CHAP. VII.

That Jesus Christ was born of the Family of David, *then reduced to a mean Condition, as had been already foretold by the Prophets.*

WE have considered the time in which our Saviour was to be born; let us now speak of the Family from whence he was to proceed. It has been proved already, that this promise was made to the Family of *David* by *Nathan* the Prophet; 2 *Sam.* VII. 12. I *Chron.* XVII. 11. in the Year of the World 2959. *David* repeats this his hope, *Psalm* LXXXIX. 4. and *Psalm* CXXXII. 11. And about the Year of the World 3292 the Prophet *Isaiah* adds further, that the Messiah should be in a despicable condition.

There are four things which fully confirm this Truth.

The first is the Kindred which was between *Elizabeth* and the Blessed Virgin, whence it appear'd that her Relations were of the Tribe of *Juda*, and that she was known to be of the Family of *David*.

One ought to observe here a thing, which tho' at first sight seems to be of small importance, yet we cannot but think that S. *Luke* wrote it without design, and that is the Journey of the Blessed Virgin to one of the Cities of *Judah*, after her Conception, to visit *Elizabeth* her Kinswoman, the Wife of *Zachariah*, and the Mother of *John the Baptist*; I shall not mention at present any other Reasons of this Journey, which may seem to be worthy of the Divine Wisdom, and so I shall only observe at present, that this visit was made to *Elizabeth* in a City of *Judah*, which is a demonstrative proof that Jesus Christ was of the Family of *David*, and consequently of that of *Judah*; so that this is far from being made use of as an Objection against it, as some have done.

It is well known that the Priests had leave to take a Wife of what Tribe they pleased; But who see's not at first sight that it was natural for a Priest, dwelling in one of the Cities of *Judah*, to marry in that Tribe amongst whom he lived; besides that, the Priests had of a long time affected to make Alliances with that Tribe before any other.

The second thing which ought to be joyned to this, is, the manner of *Elizabeths* expressing her self to the Blessed Virgin, considering her as bearing the Messiah in her Womb; and upon this account she called her *the Mother of my Lord*, alluding to *Psalm* CX.

The third is, That the Blessed Virgin in her Song, where she speaks of her self as the Person in whom the Promise made to *Abraham*, was accomplished,

complished, *Luke* I. *vers.* 54, 55. which Promise concerned the Messiah; she sets forth her self, as Heiress to the Kings of *Judah*, and chosen before any her Ancestors, notwithstanding all their Glory; *He hath put down*, saith she, *the Mighty from their Seats, and hath exalted them of low Degree.*

The fourth is, That *Zachariah* the Priest, who was well acquainted with the Blessed Virgin, at whose House she had been during the first three Months of her being with Child, and who could not be ignorant of her lineage, alwayes owned her to be of the Family of *David*. It is evident that he look'd upon the Blessed Virgin as the Mother of the Messiah, as well as *Elizabeth* his Wife. He seems to have considered the Infant that was to be born of her, as the Redeemer promised to *Abraham*, and the Blessed Virgin as the Heiress of *David*; and therefore saith, *That God had raised up an Horn of Salvation for us in the House of his Servant David*: There can be nothing more convincing than this Observation; for first, *Zachariah* was a Priest, that is, one of those to whom the care of the Genealogies of the *Jews* was committed. 2. He appears to have been very well versed in the Prophecies which fixed the Messiah to the Family of *David*. 3. He consider'd his Son as the Forerunner of the Messiah, when he proposed that the Oracle of *Malachy* should be fulfilled in that Son, whom God had so miraculously bestowed upon him. 4. He needed only have examined the Agreements of her Marriage, and he would then certainly know whether the Blessed Virgin was not of another Tribe; which would

have cured him of any poſſible illuſion.

In ſhort, S. *Luke* obſerves very exactly, that this Journey of the Virgin to her Kinſwoman, and all the Circumſtances which prove the Bleſſed Virgin to have been of the Family of *David*, were things well known throughout all the Hill-Country of *Judea*, that it might not be pretended that this important Fact was any ways obſcure.

But ſecondly, this Genealogy of Jeſus Chriſt is carried up to *David* and *Judah*; and it is viſible that this was a thing exactly known, eſpecially ſince Jeſus Chriſt always paſſed for the Son of *David*, blind men themſelves calling him ſo.

A third thing to be conſidered is, the Bleſſed Virgins going to *Bethlehem* to be there enrolled, according to the Decree of *Auguſtus Ceſar*. There had been ſeveral numbrings of the people; the firſt was at the appointment of God himſelf; the ſecond was by an order from *David*; and in both an exact diſtinction was made between the Tribes themſelves, and the Families of each Tribe: And one ſee's that the ſame was obſerved in this laſt Regiſter which was made by *Auguſtus*'s Decree in the 4000 year of the World.

Joſeph and *Mary* went up to *Bethlehem*, which was the Seat of *David*'s Family: nothing appears here of deſign or affectation; they made no ſtay at *Bethlehem*, and the occaſion that brought them thither, was abſolutely ſtrange and unlook'd for; and yet it was certainly an accompliſhment of that Prophecy of *Micah*, *Chap.* V. *verſe* 2. *But thou* Bethlehem Ephratah, *&c.*

This Remark upon the Decree of *Auguſtus* is of great

great moment, becauſe thereby the Virgins being of the Family of *David* appears to be the moſt indiſputable Truth in the World, as having been owned firſt by the whole Family of *Judah* for three Months. Secondly, By the Genealogy which ſubſiſted entire, as the *Talmudiſts* themſelves grant in the Treatiſe *de Sponſal. Chap.* IV. *Sect.* 5. where they teſtifie that the Genealogy of the Royal Family was without difficulty. 3. By the publick teſtimony of all their Kindred, who met in a body before the *Roman* Magiſtrate.

The fourth Remark is, That when *Herod* knew of the Birth of the Meſſiah at *Bethlehem*, where by the confeſſion of the *Jews* he was to be born, he would have envolved Jeſus Chriſt in the Maſſacre which ſwept away the innocent Children, if the ſame Providence which brought him to *Bethlehem*, to demonſtrate that he was of the Houſe of *David*, had not withdrawn him from thence to preſerve him from that Tyrant, who was afraid of being caſt from his Throne by one of *David*'s Heirs.

The fifth is, That Jeſus Chriſt did not only often allude to the place of his Birth, in calling himſelf *the Bread come down from Heaven*, the word *Bethlehem* ſignifying the Houſe of Bread; but he conſtantly own'd himſelf for the Son of *David*. Upon this it is that he grounds the Objection which he makes to the *Jews*; *How is it that* David *calls the Meſſiah his Lord?* And indeed this Fact was ſo conſtantly owned by all, that even perſons who were poſſeſſed with Devils, did not diſpute it, as may be ſeen in the Evangeliſts.

The

The sixth is, That tho' two of the Evangelists set down the Genealogy of our Saviour with some difference, yet the *Jews* never took occasion from thence to question Jesus Christ's descent from *David*; his Apostles always building on that Foundation; which may be seen as a thing taken for granted in S. *Peter*'s Sermon, *Acts* II. and in the Epistles of S. *Paul*, where we find our Saviour always stiled *the Son of* David according to the Flesh.

To these already mentioned we may add the three following Observations; the first is, That if the Genealogy of our Saviour had not been distinctly known, the Apostles would never have troubled themselves to have set it down; much less would they have plac'd it in the front of their Books, as knowing that the beginnings of Books are always more examined than the ends, and would certainly be so by a people who always stick very close to their Genealogies. In short, either the Genealogies of the *Jews* were at that time as confused as they are at present, and so they could not have served as Characters to discover the Messiah by; in which case the Apostles would have contented themselves to have hinted, that Jesus Christ always past for the Son of *David*, as they have done in several places of their Writings, without giving us the whole Series of his Pedigree; or else they were at that time distinctly known, in which case it was the easiest thing in the world to have confuted them.

The 2d is, That the differences which are found between the Genealogy of Jesus Christ set down by S. *Matthew*, and that by S. *Luke*, is so far from giving us an occasion to doubt of the Apostles faithfulness in this matter, that indeed it is a new proof of their exactness in a matter of so great importance. For it can scarcely be imagined but that in so long a Series of Ages, there must have been some of the Ancestors of our Saviour, in whom that Law took place, which obliged the younger Brother to marry the Widow of his elder Brother deceased without Issue, and so to raise up Seed to him, which gave occasion to a Genealogy not natural, but legal, the Children bearing the name of the deceased elder Brother, and possessing his Estate. Now the Evangelists have set down both these Genealogies exactly, which is an invincible Argument of their care and fidelity.

The third is, That it was so much the more necessary to make this remark in the Genealogy of the Messiah, because as we have observed elsewhere, it was with relation of the desire of giving Birth to the Messiah, or of having Children which might live under his Empire, that God at first permitted this kind of Incest, with the Widow of a deceased Brother, which otherwise was so severely prohibited by the Law.

As to the low Estate to which the Family of *David* was then reduced, it is visible that *David* and *Solomon* reigned with great glory, but *Roboam* succeeding them, Ten Tribes fell from him to *Jeroboam*, in the Year of the World 3029. and the Posterity of *Roboam* was afterwards dethroned by *Nebuchadnezzar*, who carried *Zedechiah* the King into Captivity in the Year 3416.

After their return from Captivity, they were entirely

entirely thrust from the Throne: the Priests at first governing that Nation; the *Maccabees*, who were of the Family of *Levi*, reigning in *Judea*, from the return of the Captivity of *Babylon*, until *Herod* the *Edomite*, who was made Master of *Judea* by the favour of the *Romans*.

2. The Family of *David* was at that time removed from their ancient Seat, and was now fixed at *Nazareth*, where Providence seems to have removed them from *Bethlehem*, to take away that object of *Herod*'s jealousie, which would have offended him, as we see it did when the Wise men acquainted him with the Birth of Jesus; which obliged him to make a diligent enquiry after the place where the Messiah was to be born, that Messiah whom he conceived to be a Prince, who would rob him of the Soveraignty to which he was raised.

In the third place, the Blessed Virgin was betrothed to a Carpenter. *Justin Martyr* tells us that Jesus Christ made Ploughs. See what the Heirs of the Kings of *Judah* were reduced to.

Fourthly, When she came to *Bethlehem*, she lodged in an Inn, her Kindred being not in a condition to afford her better Accommodation.

It appears that the Divine Providence was very careful in executing this Design. There were some Decays of the Family of *David*, which the Blessed Virgin expresses in her Song. She was descended from the younger Brothers of deposed Princes, and reduced to private state, she speaks of nothing but of lowness and meanness, not only

ly in a way of Humility, but to demonstrate the fulfilling of the Prophecy concerning the Throne of *Jesse*.

But that this might appear more evidently, and confirm'd by the Law, as it was her Duty to present her Son in the Temple, after the Seventh day, with an Offering; so she does not offer what is prescribed to the Rich and Wealthy, but an Offering which is appropriated by God in the Law to poor people, as appears *Lev.* XII.

One see's by the Marriage Feast at *Cana* in *Galilee*, that the Kindred of Jesus Christ were not very Rich, their wanting of Wine on such an Occasion, was no great Mark of Plenty.

One see's also, That Jesus Christ frequently represents himself, as not having where to rest his Head: On the Cross he recommends his Mother to one of his Disciples, and was himself maintained by those who followed him.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

That Jesus Christ was conceived by the Virgin Mary, *without any Operation of Man.*

AS this Article is one of the most important of our Religion, so it is well worth our attentive consideration. We may take notice here, that according to the Observation of *Justin Martyr*, that the Fable of *Perseus*, took its rise from the Prophecy of *Isaiah*. However, that Prophecy being very expres according to the Translation of the LXX. we are to consider how it was accomplished. It will not be enough here to say, That ordinarily extream Poverty is a sufficient bar against the suspicion of Adultery; and therefore we desire the Reader only to call to mind the Observations set down in the Second Chapter of the second Part of these Reflexions on the Books of the Law of *Moses*. For

Dial. cum Tryph p. 297. *Isai.* 5.

1. Polygamy and Divorces were very frequent in the time of Jesus Christ, as appears from several passages of the Gospel, where God was pleased to give us Examples thereof.

2. God was willing to give us Instances of his Severity against Adulteresses, amongst which those were reckoned who suffered themselves to be defiled after they were betrothed. We have an Example hereof in the Eighth *Chapter* of the Gospel according to S. *John*, which I have illustrated in the Fourth Chapter of this Fourth Part.

3. It appears that the same Laws which engaged Parents to preserve the Virginity of their Daughters, did continue, and were still observed by the *Jews*, as well as those other Laws which constituted the Body of their Religion: When Jesus Christ upbraids the *Jews* for having changed the true sense of the Law, yet he never reproaches them upon this account.

4. The Relation set down in the Eighth *Chapter* of S. *John*, makes it appear that the Waters of Jealousie still retained their virtue; that which Jesus Christ writ on the Ground being probably nothing else but the Curses which the Law denounced against the Woman that should violate her Honour.

I have made it very evident in the Twentieth Chapter of my Second Part, what was the use of those Laws concerning the Marks of Virginity, to prevent any Doubts that might arise concerning the same: It remains now to consider the several passages of the Evangelists, and to see what proofs we can find there to confirm this Point, That *Mary* was indeed a Virgin when she conceived Jesus Christ, and how we may answer the Objections which the Enemies of Christianity make against this Truth.

The Evangelists tell us that this remarkable Fact was declared by the Angel *Gabriel*, who had before foretold to *Daniel* the coming of the Messiah, and signified the exact time thereof. The Conception of *Isaac* by a barren Mother, as well as that of *Samuel* and *John the Baptist*, had been already declared in the same manner; and one Miracle

Miracle ought to ſerve as a preparation for the belief of a greater.

When the Diſciples of Jeſus Chriſt ſpeak of the Fact, they ſpeak of it as a thing known throughout all *Jeruſalem*, and which had no Relation to their Maſter. Beſides, we know the Jealouſie that was between the Diſciples of S. *John*, and thoſe of our Saviour.

But we have a further account beſides of the Meſſage of an Angel to *Joſeph*, after he had perceived that his betrothed Wife was with Child; for when he was ready to divorce her, either by expoſing her to the rigour of the Divine Law, *Deut.* XXII. 23. or elſe by exempting her from that extremity, he is diverted from his intention by this warning from Heaven. In all which we meet with nothing but what is very probable; for *Joſeph* expreſſes his hatred and diſlike, as conceiving her to be debauched, and was reſolved not to receive her, but by an Order from Heaven.

Moreover it is very remarkable, That we find all things recited in ſuch a manner, as it was neceſſary they ſhould come to paſs, on ſuppoſition that the Meſſiah was to be born of a Virgin of the Houſe of *David*.

For firſt, We find this event appeared incredible to the perſon her ſelf, who was deſigned to effect it; becauſe ſhe could not eaſily make the Application at firſt.

2. It caus'd exceeding joy to the perſon who ſaw her ſelf choſen by God to fulfil ſo glorious a promiſe, whereby the Family of *David* was to be reſtor'd to its ancient Luſtre. This is evident from

from the Hymn of the Bleſſed Virgin: which if we compare with the *Pſalms* of *David*, we ſhall ſee that that Family ſtill retained all the Piety of their Anceſtors, with all thoſe ſigns of acknowledgment which an event of ſuch a nature did juſtly require.

3. It appears that *Joſeph* acquieſced in this Truth, he who otherwiſe did not ſeem very credulous, till he was inſtructed from Heaven concerning a matter ſo rare and difficult to be conceived. He retires for ſome time into *Egypt*, and affords *Mary* and her Son all the ſervice they could reaſonably expect from him.

S. *Jerome* alledges three Reaſons why it was needful for the Bleſſed Virgin to be betrothed to *Joſeph*. Contr. *Helvidium.*

1. That the Original of the Bleſſed Virgin might be proved by the Pedigree of *Joſeph*, to whom ſhe was related.

2. That according to the Law of *Moſes*, ſhe might not be ſtoned as an Adultereſs.

3. That in her Flight into *Egypt* ſhe might have the comfort of a Guardian rather than of a Huſband.

Neither can any thing be oppoſed to the belief of theſe matters, but ſome very weak Conjectures: The firſt is, That her being contracted doth ſomething obſcure the diſtinct Notion of Virginity; and ſecondly, That the Bleſſed Virgin did always paſs for the Wife of *Joſeph*, even according to the ſtyle of Jeſus Chriſt himſelf. And laſtly, That the Relation which the Evangeliſts give of this matter, was not known till long after the death of Jeſus Chriſt.

But it is an eaſie matter to ſatisfie the mind of any reaſonable Reader in this thing. It was neceſſary that the Bleſſed Virgin ſhould be betrothed:

1. To ſecure her Life, which would have been in danger, if ſhe had been delivered whilſt ſhe was reputed to be a Virgin; for ſhe would have been accuſed of Whoredom, and conſequently have been put to death.

2. It was neceſſary ſhe ſhould be betrothed, and paſs for the lawful Wife of *Joſeph*, that her Son might not be baniſh'd from the Congregation of *Iſrael*, as a Baſtard in the Rigour of the Law.

As for the other Objection, I eaſily grant that the Bleſſed Virgin always paſs'd for the Wife of *Joſeph*; ſhe her ſelf ſaith, *I and thy Father ſought thee.* But withal, at that very time Jeſus Chriſt unvailed that Myſtery in the Preſence of all the *Jews*, maintaining that he was the Son of God, in whoſe Houſe he was at that time; it was at a ſolemn Feaſt of the *Jews*, where the whole Nation was aſſembled, and in the midſt of an Aſſembly of their Doctors, that he declared the Temple to be the Houſe of his Father, as he afterwards conſtantly called it.

We find him at another time declaring the ſame in the preſence of his Family at *Cana* in *Galilee*, *Woman, what have I to do with thee?* ſaith he to the Bleſſed Virgin; to put her in mind of ſome paſſages which could not but preſerve in her a very particular reſpect for him. John II. 4.

He gives yet a further degree of light into this matter, when, his Mother ſeeking to come at him, he ſaith, *Who is my Mother, and who are my Brethren*, that is, Kinſmen. 'Tis probable that *Joſeph* was dead, before our Saviour entred upon his Miniſtry; however his making no mention of his reputed Father, ſhews how careful he was to avoid any thing that might obſcure his miraculous Birth.

Laſt of all, it is very conſiderable, that this paſſage being not the only Character which was to diſtinguiſh the Meſſiah from all others, but was to be confirmed by the Miracles of Jeſus Chriſt, by his Reſurrection, and thoſe other proofs of his Divine Nature, it was at firſt not much inſiſted on, becauſe there was a neceſſity that it ſhould continue vailed for ſome time, upon the account of the frequent Apparitions of Angels, and of God himſelf in a Human form, that ſo the truth of his Humanity ſhould be eſtabliſhed by his Life and Death, before the publication of his miraculous Conception.

For it is certain that the Apoſtles preached up this Truth, and that the Evangeliſts had put it in writing before the deſtruction of the Jewiſh Common-wealth; and yet we do not find that it was ever conteſted. The Evangeliſts deſcribe the Methods which the *Jews* took to make the Reſurrection of Chriſt to be doubted of, and to ſlight his Miracles; and do we think they would not as well have given us the Objections of the *Jews* againſt a thing, of which till then never any Inſtance had been known in the World?

I know very well that ſome of the Ancients have told us that the *Jews* were offended, that the Bleſſed Virgin, after ſhe was delivered of

our Saviour, ſhould ſeat her ſelf in the place appointed for Virgins, and that becauſe *Zacharias* the Prieſt maintained her in ſo doing, he was thereupon kill'd by them between the Temple and the Altar, with which our Saviour upbraids the *Jews*. I know alſo that they affirm that ſhe was forced to confirm the truth of her Virginity, by ſubmitting her ſelf to a ſearch of Matrons: yet I cannot believe that ſhe ever underwent any ſuch Examination, of which the ſilence of the Evangeliſts, and S. *Luke*'s in particular, fully convinces me, and therefore am inclined to think that no ſuch Objection was ever made againſt her.

In the mean time it is well worth our noting,

1. That the Bleſſed Virgin had *Zachariah* the Prieſt as an Examiner and Witneſs of her behaviour from the beginning, at whoſe houſe ſhe abode during the firſt months of her being with Child, and who publickly divulged the miraculous Birth of his own Son, and his leaping in his Mother's Womb at the Salutation of the Bleſſed Virgin.

2. That the Bleſſed Virgin lived many years after the Paſſion of our Saviour, that ſhe might undergo and anſwer any Accuſations of that nature.

3. That ſhe alſo had for Witneſſes of the Miracles which attended her Conception, all the Diſciples of S. *John*, as well as thoſe of Jeſus Chriſt, tho' the Diſciples of S. *John* did not agree with the Diſciples of Jeſus Chriſt.

4. That what ſhe declared of her ſelf, was not a Fact which had no traces whereby it might be examined in the *Old Teſtament*.

5. That the *Jews* had thirty years to examin the ſeveral particulars which had relation to the Meſſiah, and the miraculous manner of his Birth, at the time when ſhe publiſhed this particular paſſage of her life.

6. That we cannot call in queſtion the veracity of the Bleſſed Virgin in the account which ſhe gives us of what concern'd her ſelf, of which no witneſs could be produced, foraſmuch as the accompliſhment of that part of her Prophecy, That *all Nations ſhould call her bleſſed*, clearly ſhews that ſhe had received the Spirit of Prophecy; no more than we can ſuſpect any Forgeries in the Relations of other Prophets, tho' we have no other Teſtimony concerning them, but that of the Prophets themſelves.

CHAP. IX.

That Jeſus Chriſt lived and preached after the ſame manner as the Prophets had foretold the Meſſiah ſhould do.

I Have clearly ſhewn that Jeſus Chriſt was born of the Poſterity of *Adam*, by *Seth*, by *Noah*, by *Abraham*, by *Iſaac*, by *Jacob*, by *Judah*, by *David*, as it was foretold of the Meſſiah by the moſt ancient Oracles, the encreaſe of which I have already taken notice of in my third part.

I have afterwards shewed, That Jesus Christ was born of a Virgin, whereby those Oracles, *The Seed of the Woman shall bruise thy head*, and *a Virgin shall conceive and bear a Son*, seem'd to be clearly accomplished. Let us now see, according to those Oracles, what kind of Person the Messiah was to be, from his Birth to his Death, according to those Idea's which the Prophets have given us.

Gen. III. 15 Isai. VII. 14.

Moses expresly tells us, *Deut.* 18. that the Messiah was to resemble him; *The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet like unto me*: which place, as I have observed before, has been so constantly applyed to the Messiah, that it appears that not only *John the Baptist*, when he sent his Disciples to Jesus Christ, *Philip* speaking to *Nathanael*, and the Disciples when they were asked by our Saviour who he was, but also the *Samaritan* woman understood it so without the least hesitation, and said, that when the Messiah should come, he would tell them all things.

Deut. XVIII. 15.

In short; one see's an exact proportion between *Moses* and Jesus Christ. Not only because our Saviour was saved in his Infancy from the hand of *Herod*, and from a River of Blood, like another *Moses*, or because *Egypt* serv'd for a Retreat to him, as *Moses* had hid himself in *Arabia*: or because he was rejected by his Brethren, those of *Nazareth*, who would have thrown him headlong from a Rock, because he declared himself to be the promised Deliverer and Messiah, by applying to himself the words of *Isaiah*, *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me*, &c.

Neither shall I now take notice of his being despised and disown'd by his Brethren, and called

led a *Galilean*, whereas indeed he was of *Judea*; For indeed the Messiah was to be treated as a *Nazarene*, that is, a contemptible person, and a Man of no consideration; for we may find that because our Saviour was brought up at *Nazareth*, tho' he was born at *Bethlehem*, he was therefore look'd upon as a person incapable of any thing that was great; *Can any good thing come out of* Nazareth? said *Nathanael* to *Philip*; and the Pharisees to the Officers whom they had sent to take Jesus, *Search and look, for out of* Galilee *ariseth no Prophet*, much less the great Prophet, the Messiah, who by way of Eminence is so called. 'Tis upon this account that he was called a *Galilean*, not only by the Heathens, but by his own Disciples too; For the word *Galilean* seems to have been a name for one of an impure Extraction, because many of other Nations dwelt among the *Jews* in *Galilee*. But I shall take notice of several other more important Resemblances between them, and such as have Relation to the Ministry of *Moses* rather than his Person, by referring all to his Preaching, his Miracles, his Predictions, and some other Heads of that Nature.

John I. 46

First then, Jesus Christ that he might at first maintain the Character of the Messiah, appears in the Temple. *John the Baptist* had heard him called the Son of God, by a very peculiar witness, a Voice from Heaven. Wherefore we see that at his first Entry upon his Ministry, he drives out those that prophaned the House of God, whom he called his Father, with a Scourge; and this he did at the Feast of the Passover, before the whole Nation of the *Jews*.

John II. 13, 14, 15, &c.

Here is another Character of the Meſſiah; He was to begin the Exerciſe of his Miniſterial Functions, in the Tribes of *Naphthali* and *Zebulon*, ac-
Iſai IX. 1. cording to the Prophecy of *Iſaiah*; and this our Saviour exactly accompliſhed by his beginning to preach at *Nazareth*, which was in the Tribe of *Zebulon*, and he converſed much at *Capernaum*, which was in the Tribe of *Naphthali*, according to the obſervation of the Evangeliſts.

But I proceed to conſider ſome Circumſtances of his Miniſtry. *Iſaiah* had foretold, that the Meſſiah was to preach the Goſpel to the poor; which Jeſus applies to himſelf in the Synagogue at *Nazareth*, declaring that in his perſon
Iſai. LXI. 1. that Prophecy was fulfilled; *viz. The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, wherefore the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek*, &c.

The choice which he made of his Diſciples from among the meaneſt of the people, and the baſeſt of the crowd which follow'd him wherever he went, ought to paſs for a ſufficient accompliſhment of this Prophecy.

The Meſſiah, according to the repreſentation which *Iſaiah* gives us of him, was to publiſh the Tidings of the Remiſſion of Sins; and was not this that which Jeſus Chriſt did during the courſe of his Miniſtry?

The Meſſiah was to preach the Remiſſion of Sin, in ſuch a manner, as that he might dry up the Fountain of it, at the ſame time, in calling men to the ſtudy of Sanctification; this was admirably performed by Jeſus Chriſt, 1. In correcting thoſe Abuſes which the Jewiſh Doctors had introduced into the Law. Secondly, In declaring

ring that the Effect of Sanctification was to be look'd for in the heart, rather than in the eyes or hands.

One may ſee afterwards, 1. That he knew the heart of man; which proved that he made it. This he teſtifies upon ſeveral occaſions, in the anſwers which he made to thoſe that ſpoke to him, and indeed in all his Diſcourſes which were ſuited to the diſpoſitions of the heart of thoſe to whom he addreſt them.

2. That he made uſe of Parables, which are Moral Leſſons very eaſie indeed, but withal fitter for the ſubject than Fables, and more worthy of God: Parables alſo, which were ſo ordinary and familiar amongſt the *Jews*, that we find moſt of them at this day in the Writings of the *Jews*, tho' they apply them to another uſe.

3. That he deſcended to Particulars, without uſing any thing mean, which men are apt to do when they divide things minutely.

4. That he forgot no one Precept of Morality.

5. That he examined all the Duties of Religion, and made them infinitely recommendable by ſuggeſting ſuch excellent Motives.

After all, we are to conſider four things in the preaching of our Saviour, which will fully prove that he was the Meſſiah.

1. That his Doctrine appeared to be wholly Divine; he had never been brought up at the feet of any Doctor; but had his breeding in a Carpenter's Shop.

2. That no Crime was ever objected to him, notwithſtanding that he upbraided the Phariſees with

with theirs; but he supported his Doctrine by the Holiness of his Conversation.

3. That he insensibly disposed the People to receive him as the Messiah, by the Characters which God had given of him in the Prophets.

4. He prepar'd his Disciples and his Auditors to expect that one day the *Gentiles* should enter into the Church.

In short, Can any thing be so surprizing, as to see a Man who had lived Thirty years as the Son of a Carpenter, to declare himself all at once a Doctor, to preach publickly, to censure the Doctors of his Nation; to speak of the Law and Prophets with more depth and authority than all that ever went before him. Who can without surprize, conceive that a man of the lowest quality, should from a Carpenters Shop, come and determine Questions about the Law, and tread under his feet the Authority of all the great Rabbins every where, only by an *I say unto you*, so that none was able to contradict him. Certainly when one see's our Saviour upon the Mount explaining and defending the Moral part of the Law from the Corruptions into which it was fallen, he appears not only as great as *Moses* on Mount *Sinai*, but even as God himself, when he published his Laws to that his ancient People.

Neither ought any one to have less admiration for that perfect Innocence which shone through the whole course of his life: What Crime had they to charge him with when they put him to death, he who accused his Enemies of so many? *Who of you*, saith he, *accuseth me of sin?* We find him

him only accused of words ill understood, which they were resolved to misinterpret: His saying, *That if they destroy'd that Temple, he would rebuild it in three days*, was laid to his Charge as a Crime; And yet these words could not have been heightned into Crimes, if they had been spoken in the same sense which they put upon them. This was an essential Character of the Messiah, who was to be the Restorer of Holiness, according to the Idea which the Prophets gave of him.

I should take notice afterwards that our Saviour in his Sermons did by little and little dispose the Minds of his Auditors and Disciples, to conceive and believe him to be the promised Messiah. The first act of his publick Ministry was an effect of his zeal for the Holiness of a Temple consecrated to his Father: He drove the Buyers and Sellers out of the Temple, at the Feast of the Passover, which action of his was a solemn profession that he was the Son of God. Soon after at *Nazareth* he applies to himself that Prophecy of *Isaiah*, *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me*, &c. He explains himself yet more distinctly in *Jerusalem* at the second Passover which he celebrated during the time of his Ministry, that they might understand that he was the Messiah, according to the account which the Evangelists give us; and he explains himself yet more particularly upon *John the Baptist's* Message to him. By which means this Truth became already so illustrious, that the Multitudes would proclaim him King, that is, publickly own him for the Messiah, and obey him as their rightful Soveraign. And lastly, He explains himself in this matter by a Question, When he asked

Matt. XVI. asked his Disciples, What Censures were past upon him in *Judea*, and what they themselves thought of him.

In short, It is certain that Jesus prepared the Minds of his Disciples to look for the Calling of the *Gentiles*, which also was the Character of the Messiah. *Jacob* had propheſied of old, *To him shall the gathering of the People be.* But I shall pass by the Oracles which foretel this matter. What signifies the History of the Prodigal, unless it be the Calling and the Return of the *Gentiles*; the eldest Son (the *Jew*) being extreamly troubled at it. What means that saying of our Saviour, That *he had other Sheep*, &c. or his Prediction, That *many should come from the East and West, and sit down with* Abraham, *when the Children of the Kingdom should be cast forth.* I shall take notice in another place, of the frequent Repetition of such like Oracles, and their exact accomplishment. These are sufficient at present to justifie the solidity of this last Reflexion, and the truth of this Conclusion at the same time, that if one examines the Life and Preaching of our Saviour, he may find all those Characters by which the promised Messiah might be known. Let us now proceed to the Consideration of his Miracles.

Gen. XLIX. 10.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

That the Miracles wrought by our Saviour, clearly prove that he is the Messiah.

AS the Messiah was to be very clearly distinguished from all others by his Miracles, and as the Prophet *Isaiah, Chap.* XXXV. sets down the power of working Miracles, as one of those Characters by which he was to be known, so it is of great importance to us, to examine the Miracles of our Saviour with great attention, whether they have the Character of Truth, and whether they come up to the Idea which the Prophets give us of those wonders which the Messiah was to do.

The Evangelists, who tell us that he wrought almost an infinite number of them, have described more than Thirty several sorts of them. He changed Water into Wine at the Wedding at *Cana*; he healed the sick Son of a Courtier; he delivered one that was possessed in the Synagogue at *Capernaum*; he healed S. *Peter*'s Mother in Law; he caused a vast number of Fish to be caught; he cured a Leper with a word, and with a touch he healed one sick of the Palsey; he cured a Woman of an inveterate Issue of Blood, and raised the Daughter of a Ruler of the Synagogue from the Dead; he cured the impotent Man at the Pool of *Bethesda*; he cured him that had a wither'd hand; he deliver'd a possessed person that was

was blind and dumb; he recover'd the Centurion's Servant, and rais'd to life the Son of the Widow of *Naim*.

Neither are these that follow any less considerable; he restores sight to two blind men, he casts forth a dumb Devil, he assuages a Tempest by his word, he delivers two possessed persons, and permits the Devil to go into the Herd of Swine of the *Gadarenes*; he feeds above Five thousand persons with two Loaves and five Fishes; he walks upon the Sea, and calmeth a second Tempest; he casts forth a Devil from a Daughter of a Woman of a *Canaan*, who was possessed; he cures one deaf and dumb; he feeds Four thousand persons with seven Loaves; he restores sight to a blind man of *Bethsaida*; he casts out a Devil, after his Disciples had in vain attempted it; he restores sight to one born blind; he cured a crooked woman; he cures one of the Dropsie on the Sabbath day; he raises *Lazarus* from the Grave, after he had been dead four days; he heals ten Lepers afterwards; he restores sight to a blind man at his entring into *Jericho*; and cures the lame and blind in the Temple it self.

There are several Characters which assure us of the faithfulness of the Evangelists in these their Relations: 1. They wrote these things to convert the *Jews* before the destruction of *Jerusalem*. 2. They markt the Circumstances very exactly, and none could be ignorant of them, since they all went thrice a year up to *Jerusalem*. 3. The Facts which they relate were lasting, and such as might be examined. 4. They speak of Facts which they suppose that Jesus Christ was willing should

should be beyond all contest, that they might be the better examined. 5. They speak of those Facts which they maintain to be the accomplishment of the Oracles concerning the Messiah whom the *Jews* expected.

But there are not fewer Characters of Truth in the Miracles of our Saviour to buoy them up: The first is, That most of the Diseases, which Jesus Christ cured, are described as absolutely incurable; this Observation is of great moment, as well to discover to us the infinite power exerted by Jesus Christ, as to make known the extaordinary wisdom of the Apostles, who being men without learning, did notwithstanding set down the symptomes of the Diseases which their Master cured, far beyond what might be expected from their Natural Capacities.

The second Reflexion belongs to the Subjects upon whom these Miracles were wrought; for we scarce find any of them, except his curing S. *Peter's* Mother in Law, to be wrought upon persons who had least relation to Jesus Christ: He heals the Servant of the High Priest, the Son of the Ruler of a Synagogue, the Son of a *Roman* Centurion, and several others.

A third Reflexion may be drawn from the places where they were done, and from the witnesses that were present. In short, They were wrought in publick places, in the midst of Cities and Synagogues; some in *Judea*, some in *Galilee*, some at *Jerusalem*, at *Naim*, *Sidon*, &c. they were submitted to the examination of the most implacable Enemies of Jesus Christ, the People of the *Jews*, the *Samaritans*, and the *Gentiles*, who dwelt in *Palestina*. One

One may add alſo, That theſe Miracles were of very different kinds, wrought in ſeveral places, and with very conſiderable Circumſtances, at the moſt ſolemn Feaſts, the *Paſſover* and *Pentecoſt*.

One ought to conſider alſo, That *Paleſtine* was full of thoſe whom our Saviour had cured; and that all the *Jews* who came up three times in a year to *Jeruſalem*, could not but take notice of them.

One ought afterwards to obſerve, That Jeſus Chriſt communicated to his Diſciples the power of working Miracles in the ſecond year of his Miniſtry, which none elſe had ever done before.

And laſtly, it muſt be obſerved, That theſe Miracles were laſting; The three dead men, whom our Saviour raiſed to life again, were very young, and who in all probability lived longer than decrepit old men, were in the ſight of all *Judea*; and other ſick and infirm perſons, that he had healed, enjoyed life and health. 2. In ſhort, the Relation of Chriſt's Miracles which *Pilate* ſent to *Tiberius*, ſufficiently teſtifies that they were Facts generally known. And 3. That the certainty of them could ſo little be conteſted, that the *Jews* rather choſe to accuſe him of doing them by ſome Magical ſecret, than to diſpute the truth of them.

Theſe Reflexions ſufficiently confirm the truth of the Evangeliſts relation, and of the Miracles of Jeſus Chriſt. To agree to what has been ſaid, we need not refute the folly of thoſe, who have compared the Miracles falſly attributed to *Apollonius Tyanæus*, with thoſe of Jeſus Chriſt. One hardly knows at this day whether ever there was ſuch

ſuch a man as *Apollonius*; whereas ever ſince the Apoſtles there have been Chriſtians, who have read the Hiſtory of the Miracles of Jeſus Chriſt, and who have believed them after a due examination. Which of *Apollonius*'s his Diſciples was ever ſo bold as to ſay to Heathens, as *Tertullian* did in the ſecond Century, in his Apologetick, *Bring to us what poſſeſſed perſons you pleaſe, and we will heal them in the Name of Jeſus Chriſt?*

But we ought alſo to add one thing more, That theſe Miracles of Jeſus Chriſt were exactly ſuch as ought to have been made to prove him to be the Meſſiah.

1. They were exactly ſuch as *Iſaiah* had foretold concerning the Meſſiah, *Chap.* XXXV. as may be ſeen by comparing them with the Text.

One ought only to obſerve, That this Character is ſo peculiar that it diſtinguiſhes the Meſſiah from all the other Prophets, who went before him; for none of thoſe to whom God had given power to work Miracles, had either given ſight to the blind, or power to the lame to walk.

2. They perfectly came up to the end of his Miniſtry, as he was the Meſſiah; For it was his deſign to aſſure his Diſciples of the immortality which he promiſed to them; and theſe Cures, and theſe Reſurrections which were wrought only by his word, were ſufficient to convince them, as well of the Soveraign power he had to execute his Promiſes, as of his goodneſs which was neceſſary to confirm the Faith of his Followers.

3. Some of his Miracles were ſuch as evinced his likeneſs to *Moſes*; he changes Water into Wine at *Cana*, he feeds many thouſands in the Deſert,

he walks on the Water, and makes one of his Disciples to walk with him; as *Moses* changed the Waters to Blood, and had caused Manna to rain down upon the *Israelites*, and had opened the Sea for their passage.

4. One ought to observe here, That if Jesus Christ's Miracles were not like those of *Moses*, two only excepted, *viz.* his cursing of the barren Fig-tree, and the drowning of the Swine; this was to shew that he was not come like *Moses* to execute the Judgments of God, but to exercise Acts of Grace and Mercy; those now mentioned being sufficient to evince it was not for want of power.

If the *Samaritan* Woman argued very rationally when she said concerning Christ, *When the Messiah shall come, will he do greater signs than these*; we may with more reason urge it now, since we know not only that Jesus Christ hath wrought such great Miracles, but also conferr'd upon his Disciples a power of doing greater Miracles than himself ever did.

CHAP. XI.

That the Predictions of our Lord Jesus Christ, clearly prove him to be the Messiah.

ONe might have observ'd, That *John the Baptist* foretold many things concerning the person of our Lord, and the glory of his Ministry;

stry; that *Simeon* foretold that he was to be *a sign which should be spoken against*; and it is known how exactly these things were fulfilled. But it will be more for our purpose to examine those Prophesies which were pronounced by Christ himself.

I pretend not to repeat them all here, nor to shew by how many ways, and upon how many occasions Jesus Christ did reiterate them: this would take up too much time; I shall only set down the chief of them, and add some few Reflexions.

When Jesus Christ calls the Fishers to follow him, he foretels that he would make them Teachers of the World; *I will make you*, saith he, *Fishers of Men*. He promises to make them famous by Miracles, and to send them the Gifts of his Holy Spirit, which the People of *Israel* had now for above 400 years been deprived of.

He promised to give them an Authority over the consciences of men, so that what they should forbid us on Earth, should be forbidden in Heaven.

He foretels the Calling of the *Gentiles* to his Religion; *Many*, saith he, *shall come from the East and West, and shall sit down with* Abraham, Isaac, *and* Jacob *in the Kingdom of Heaven*. Which is the more considerable, because he seemed himself unwilling to shew any favour to the *Gentiles*, whom he called *Dogs*, according to the Language of the *Jews*.

He foretels the Rejection of the *Jews*; *The Children of the Kingdom*, saith he, *shall be cast out into outer darkness*.

He foretels the Persecutions which were to

happen to his Disciples from the *Jews*, as well as from the *Roman* Governours; *They shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the Synagogues, and into Prisons, being brought before Kings*, &c.

He foretels that notwithstanding all these Persecutions, yet his Church should not only continue, assuring them that *the Gates of Hell should never prevail against her*; but also should greatly flourish and encrease, according to what *David* had foretold; *Psalm* CX. *verse* 3. alluding to the sudden fruitfulness which is caused by Dew.

He above thirty times foretels his Suffering and Death.

He foretels his Resurrection the third day.

He foretels that *Judas* should betray him, S. *Peter* deny him, that his Apostles should be scattered, as soon as they should see him smitten. He foretels the Martyrdom of S. *Peter*, which he was to suffer for his sake, and to S. *John*, that he was to survive the destruction of *Jerusalem*. He foretels that after his Ascension to *Heaven*, he should begin the Call of all the Nations of the Earth; *When I shall be lifted up from the Earth*, saith he, *I shall draw all men unto me.*

He often foretels the destruction of *Jerusalem* and the Temple; *Behold*, saith he, *your House is left unto you desolate.*

He foretels that many false Messiah's should come after him, whom the *Jews* should receive, tho' they had rejected him as an Impostor.

Several Reflexions may be made upon these Predictions of our Lord. In short, one may observe at first, That there are three sorts of them in the

the *New Testament*; some of them were fulfilled soon after they were pronounced, as those concerning the Ass which he sent his Disciples for, those of his Death and Resurrection, of S. *Peter*'s denying him, and the flight of his Apostles, *&c.*

The Design of these was to establish the belief of those which were further off, which is the Method of God himself the Father of our Lord in the *Old Testament*, as I have observed.

Some of them related to matters which were more remote, as the Wars for instance, which Christ foretold, the destruction of *Jerusalem*, and the dispersion of the *Jews*.

Lastly, There were some whose accomplishment was at a very great distance, after many Ages, some of them reaching to the end of the World.

One see's plainly that this mixture of our Saviour's Predictions, which are of so very different sorts, is of use to confirm the belief, and ascertain the truth of them, the exact fulfilling of the first Oracle making way for the belief and expectation of the second, and so on, till all be fulfilled.

One may observe afterwards, That Jesus Christ and his Apostles, on whom he (according to his promise) after his Ascension, poured forth the Spirit of Prophecy, did ordinarily follow the same Notions and Expressions which the Prophets of the *Old Testament* made use of.

Thus we find Jesus Christ makes use of *Daniel*'s Notions, where he speaks of the destruction of *Jerusalem*; thus we see that he imitates the most

illuſtrious Actions of the Prophets, and to make his Predictions the more obſerved, in accompliſhing the Prophecy of *Zachariah* on *Palm-Sunday*; in the midſt of the acclamations of the People he weeps over *Jeruſalem*, as if its deſtruction were already come. Thus Jeſus Chriſt ſaith to S. *Peter*, Joh. XXI. 18. *When thou ſhalt be old, another ſhall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldeſt not*; thus foretelling his death; Thus he inſtructs him in the Calling of the *Gentiles* under a repreſentation of all ſorts of Beaſts, commanding him alſo, even as to the impure Animals, *Slay and eat*. All the *Revelations* are full of ſuch Prophetical Idea's taken from the *Old Teſtament*, from *Geneſis*, *Iſaiah*, *Ezechiel*, *Zachariah*, &c.

But here are other Reflexions of as great importance as the former.

The firſt is, That the greateſt part of theſe Predictions are nothing but a continuance and more diſtinct explication of the Oracles of the *Old Teſtament*, concerning the Sufferings of the Meſſiah, the Calling of the *Gentiles*, the deſtruction of the Commonwealth of the *Jews*; and beſides, they are continued to the laſt day of the World, which is the end of Prophecy.

The ſecond is, That theſe Predictions had not the leaſt probability upon which they might rationally have been grounded. What likelyhood was there, that Jeſus Chriſt ſhould be crucified, he who raiſed the dead, who commanded the Sea and Winds, he whom they would have taken by force to make him their King? What likelyhood was there, that the Apoſtles, a company of poor miſerable *Jews*, ſhould bring over the *Gentiles* to the

the Religion of a man who was accurſed by the Synagogue of the *Jews*, and crucified like a Slave, by the Authority of the *Roman* Magiſtrate? What probability was there of the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, whilſt the *Jews*, accuſtom'd to the *Roman* yoke, made it their buſineſs to avoid all manner of occaſions that might ſtir up the indignation of their Maſters againſt them. *It is expedient*, ſay they, *rather that one man periſh* (meaning Jeſus) *than to hazard the welfare of the whole Nation.*

The third is, That theſe Oracles were written by the Apoſtles, not only amongſt Diſcourſes of another nature, but alſo linked together in ſuch a Chain, that their connexion will not permit us to believe that they were contrived after the matters which they relate to, were paſt, and alſo that they are conſtantly related by three Evangeliſts, long time before the things came to paſs, S. *John* being the only Witneſs of the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*.

The fourth is, That theſe Oracles gave the Apoſtles as much grounds to expect Calamities and violent Deaths, as to Jeſus Chriſt himſelf, ſo that there is no pretence of doubting that they were not faithfully recorded by the Evangeliſts, and that therefore ſeeing the Accompliſhment has exactly anſwered to the Oracle, we ought to look upon them as Divine Oracles.

I confeſs that theſe Oracles, no more than the Books of the *New Teſtament*, were ever committed to the publick cuſtody of the *Jews*, as formerly the Oracles of the Prophets of old were, but this cannot really diminiſh their Authority.

I will not obſerve at preſent, that becauſe the

Temple was to be burnt, it was not proper to depose them there; and 'twas for this reason God thought fit to cause the Oracles of the *Old Testament* to be translated long before.

Nor yet, that it was very proper that these Predictions, as well as the Books of the *New Testament*, should be put into the hands of the *Gentiles*, who thence-forward were to be the People of God, and his Temple.

But this I observe, that nothing can be imagined more solemn than these Prophecies of our Saviour and his Disciples, as well as never any thing was more exactly fulfilled.

Jesus Christ was born at *Bethlehem* according to the Oracles Now as no man is Master of the place of his Birth, so it is plain that here is no room left for imposture; neither is a man any more the Master of his Death; wherefore to give a certain Character to his Prophecy, he foretells his dying at *Jerusalem*; which accordingly was accomplished in all its Circumstances; can any thing be more exact?

But one may say, That it was easie for the Disciples to forge Predictions suitable to the Event, in like manner as *Virgil* hath done in the sixth of his *Æneids* of *Marcellus*. One may indeed contrive an imposture which shall be possible, and which may answer to some few Oracles; but I shall hereafter shew the folly of that thought, when I come to prove the faithfulness of the Apostles and Evangelists.

But can we conceive such a suspicion concerning the Conversion of the *Gentiles*, the ruin of Paganism, the Victory of Christianity after Ten Per-

Persecutions. 'Tis now above 1600 years that the Christian Religion subsists, whereas, who could have assured the Disciples of Jesus Christ that their Doctrine would have had so much as one or two followers after their Death? The greatest Empires, that of the *Chaldeans*, of the *Persians*, of the *Grecians*, and that of the *Romans*; have been overturned, and none of them singly have been of so long continuance as the Kingdom of Jesus Christ, which nevertheless was attack'd by all that was great and powerful in the World. Who see's not that this is the Empire whereof *Daniel* speaks in the seventh of his Revelations, *which was never to have end.*

Jesus Christ foretold, as it is set down by his Disciples, according to the Prophecy of *Daniel*, that the Temple of *Jerusalem* should be destroyed, and never built again: who could tell the Apostles, if they had forged this Oracle themselves, that the endeavours of *Julian* to confound this Prophecy, when he began to rebuild the Temple, would be in vain, as indeed they proved by an effect of the Divine vengeance against the *Jews*, who were engaged in the rebuilding of it, under the Authority of that Emperour. *Ammian. Marcellin.* Lib. 23.

Indeed if one reflects on the Oracles of Jesus Christ, one shall find them a thousand times more known than those of the *Jews*.

1. The greatest part of them were penn'd at one and the same time.

2. They were writ by several Authors, who lived in different places.

3. They were read over the whole Earth every Lord's day, they have been explained and commented

mented upon ſoon after, every one endeavouring to take notice of their Accompliſhment.

4. They have been alledged in Diſputes againſt *Jews* and *Gentiles*, and have ſerved for a Foundation to the Faith of the Chriſtian Church, whoſe Teachers have made it their buſineſs to ſhew their uniformity with the Oracles of the *Old Teſtament*, which are in the hands of the *Jews*, tho' the *Jews* have always conſidered the Chriſtians as their moſt mortal Enemies.

But one may alſo find that theſe Oracles, being for the moſt part much more clear and expreſs, their Accompliſhment alſo hath been ſo much the more eaſily diſcernible: from whence it evidently follows, That Jeſus Chriſt ought to be acknowledged *as the Prophet that was like unto* Moſes, as is mentioned in the Eighteenth of *Deuteronomy*, that is indeed the *true Meſſiah*.

CHAP. XII.

That Jeſus Chriſt died preciſely in the ſame manner as it was foretold that the Meſſiah ſhould dye.

I Have ſhewed in my third part, that God had given to his Church ſeveral Oracles to explain diſtinctly this great Truth concerning the Meſſiah.

1. He had ſet this up for a Rule by *Moſes*, *Curſed is he that hangeth on a Tree.*

2. He

2. He had propoſed by *David* the Idea of the Meſſiah, as having his hands and feet pierced; the *Gentiles* and *Jews* uniting themſelves againſt him.

3. He had foretold by *Iſaiah* that the Meſſiah was to be accounted a Malefactor, and put to death.

4. He had repeated the ſame Idea's by the Prophet *Zechariah*, who deſcribes the manner of his being pierced, which has a natural reference to the notion of Crucifixion.

I have alſo ſet down the Reaſons for which God ſeparated the ſeveral parts of thoſe Prophetical Deſcriptions of ſo ſurprizing an Event; the difficulty there was on the one hand to make theſe Idea's to be received, which ſeem full of Contradictions; the Meſſiah having been at firſt ſet forth as the Fountain of Bleſſing: and on the other hand, their ſeeming incompatibility with the Glory which God had promiſed to the Meſſiah, and by him to the *Iſraelites*.

And at laſt, I have ſhewed that theſe Oracles do exactly and clearly deſcribe the things which were to happen to the Meſſiah, which was to be ſo, becauſe of the nature of theſe Events, which were ſo ſtrange, and at ſuch a diſtance from the common Idea's which men have for the moſt part of ſuch things.

Our buſineſs therefore only is to conſider at preſent, whether indeed Jeſus Chriſt died in the ſame manner as the Prophets had foretold that the Meſſiah ſhould.

This Character is a very illuſtrious one to confirm that Jeſus Chriſt is the Meſſiah. For it is well known

known that a Prisoner is no longer Master of the things that happen to him, neither of the kind of his Death, nor of the manner of his Burial.

In short, nothing can be imagin'd more foolish than to suppose that the Disciples of Jesus Christ should apply to their Master, that he might pass for the Messiah, such Oracles as had not usually been applyed to the Messiah by the *Jews*, amongst whom they lived, and whom they endeavoured to dispose for the receiving of Jesus Christ as the promised Messiah.

Now we cannot conceive any thing more exact than the Agreement which we find between the Prophecies and the Event.

1. When Jesus Christ by his triumphant entry into *Jerusalem*, riding on an Ass, had put his Disciples in mind of one passage in *Zachary*, he obliged them also to cast their eyes upon another, when he foretold his death, and their flight, as the accomplishment of this Oracle, *I will smite the Shepherd, and the flock shall be scattered*, Zach. XIII. 7. Matth. XXVI. 31.

2. He was beset with a Band of *Roman* Souldiers, and the Servants of the principal men amongst the *Jews*, who apprehended him, under the conduct of *Judas*; which exactly answers, 1. To the Description which we find *Psal.* XXII. *Dogs*, that is Heathens, whom the *Jews* treated as such, *and strong Bulls*, that is *Jews*, represented by clean Beasts, *have beset me round.* And secondly, to that other Prophecy, *He that eats bread with me hath lift up his heel against me.*

3. He offers himself freely to death, according to that of *Isaiah*, That he *gave his Soul an offering for sin.* This appears not only by his going into the

the Garden, where he knew that he should be taken; but also by his telling the Souldiers that he was the man they looked for; he oppos'd S. *Peter's* attempts towards his Rescue, and declares that he did not fly from death, but was willing to satisfie the intent of the Prophecies.

4. He is forsaken by his Disciples, as he himself had testified of it as foretold by the Prophets, *Zach.* XIII. 7.

5. He is struck on the face before *Annas*, as *Jeremiah* had foretold *Lament.* III. 30. *He giveth his Cheek to him that smiteth him.*

6. He appears before *Caiaphas*, surrounded by every thing that was great amongst the *Jews*, whether Lawyers or Church-men, according to *Psalm* II.

7. He is silent before his unjust Judges, and neglects to answer the Accusations which the false Witnesses deposed against him, according to the Prophecy of *Isaiah*, *As a Sheep before his shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth*, Isaiah LIII. 7. and the description which *David* gives of him. *Ps.* XXXI. and XXXIX.

8. They opened their mouths against him, in accusing him of Blasphemy, as *David* had figuratively expressed it, *Psal.* XXII. 13.

9. They spit in his face, they buffetted and abused him the whole night, according to that Oracle of *Isaiah* XLIX. 6.

10. When *Judas* saw that Jesus Christ was delivered to *Pilate* by the *Jews*, who demanded his Crucifixion, he returned the thirty pieces of Silver, wherewith they purchased the Potters field, afterwards called the Field of Blood, and set apart by the

the *Jews* for the burial of Strangers, as was foretold by *Zachariah* XI.12. and by *Jeremiah* XXXII. 25.

11. He is accused before *Pilate*, and brought before *Herod*, without justifying himself of the Crimes laid to his charge, as it is *Psalm* XXXVIII. and XXVII.12.

12. *Pilate* and *Herod* agree in conspiring the death of Jesus Christ, according to the description of *Psalm* II.

13. *Pilate* desiring to save Jesus, the *Jews* demand *Barabbas* might be released, and Jesus punished, as *David* had foretold *Psalm* XXII. 14.

14. Jesus Christ was scourged by *Pilate*'s order, which was foretold *Psalm* XXXVIII. and LXIX. *Isaiah* LIII. *vers.*5. and *Chap.* LXIII.

15. He is brought forth by *Pilate* to the People with an *Ecce Homo, Behold the Man*, which was foretold by *Isaiah, When we shall see him, there is no Beauty that we should desire him, he is despised and rejected of men, we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted.*

16. He is afterwards delivered to the Souldiers, who before they crucified him, insulted over him with a thousand Indignities, and scourged him again, according to the Prophecies so often before alledged.

17. They Crucifie him with two Robbers, which answers to that Prophecy *Isaiah* LIII. 12. *He was numbred with Transgressors.*

18. They give him Gall and Vinegar to drink, as was foretold *Psalm* LXIX.

19. They pierce his hands and feet in nailing him

him to the Cross, which answers to *Psalm* XXII. 17, 18.

20. They part his Garments, which is represented in the same *Psalm, verse* 19. and cast Lots on his Vesture, according to the same *Psalm* in the very same place.

21. He suffers a thousand Reproaches upon the Cross, according to what we find *Psalm* XXII. *verse* 8. and *Psalm* LXIX. *ver.* 8, 10.

22. And in particular the *Jews* and *Scribes* reproach him in the very words of *Psalm* XXII. *verse* 8.

23. Jesus Christ cries out, applying to himself the beginning of *Psalm* XXII. *My God! My God! why hast thou forsaken me?* as he had before applied to himself the Prophecy concerning the Messiah in the third of *Daniel.*

24. He commends his Soul into the hands of God, in the very words which we read *Psalm* XVI.

These are the principal Circumstances of the Death of Jesus Christ, which one see's to be exactly agreeable to the Prophecies going before concerning them: let us now consider those which followed his death, which we shall not find to be less particular.

1. The Bones of Jesus Christ were not broken, as those of the two Thieves, which one may see foretold *Psalm* XXXIV. *verse* 21.

2. They open'd his side with a Spear, according to the Idea of *Zechariah, Chap.* X. *verse* 12. *They shall look upon him whom they have pierced.*

3. His Body is buried by *Joseph* of *Arimathea*, in a new Sepulchre, which answers to the Prophecy of *Isaiah, Chap.* LIII. These

These Remarks do, in my judgment, clearly prove, that in the death of Christ all the Characters by which the Prophets have distinguished the death of the Messiah, are actually found.

But that we may yet be more sensible how justly these Oracles are applyed to Jesus Christ; here are some Reflexions upon the application which the Apostles make of these particular Facts which happened to Christ, to those Oracles which I have now mentioned.

The first is, That the relation of these Facts is joyned with an account of the weakness whereinto they all fell: They relate their own flight, and forsaking their Master, with S. *Peter*'s denying of him, whilst they set down the courage of those women, and that entire love which they shewed to the person of Jesus.

The second is, That the account of the Accomplishment of these ancient Oracles is interwoven with the Accomplishment of those which were uttered by Jesus Christ, which alone are sufficient to make good his claim.

The third is, That our Saviour did never on any occasion more openly stand to his pretension of being the Messiah, than when he applyed to himself those Oracles which by their publick consent were referred to the Messiah, which the *Jews* at that time more obstinately contested, than ever.

The fourth is, That there never was a more exact description of all Circumstances which might assure us of the truth of any Relation, than that which the Evangelists have given us of the death of Jesus Christ, in which we find the places, the

the time, the persons, their discourses, and other things of that nature, set down with extream care.

The fifth is, That as this Fact, with all its Circumstances, is the most exactly described of any thing that ever was, so it was a matter, concerning which it was scarce possible to impose upon any one. All was done in the face of the whole Nation, who were met together at their most solemn Festival: All was done in the presence of the Soveraign Heathen Magistrate, of the Council of the *Jews*, of *Herod*, and of those who followed him to *Jerusalem*.

The sixth is, That we find an account of some Miracles interwoven with this Relation of the Evangelists concerning the death of Christ, and those Miracles as publick, and as little subject to suspicion, as the death it self of Jesus Christ, if we take the pains to examine them.

They who come to take Jesus fall down backward to the ground; Jesus Christ restores the ear of the High Priest's Servant which was cut off: there was darkness over all the Land from Nine a Clock in the Morning till Noon; the vail of the Temple is rent. These are miraculous actions, and such as the *Jews* might easily have refuted, wheresoever they had been proposed, if the truth of them had not been beyond all question.

From all these Remarks it evidently follows, That it is impossible to dispute the Application which the Apostles make of these Oracles which are so particular to the person of Jesus Christ, as the true Messiah: We find every part of their Relation exactly answering to the Prophesies; how

then can any one doubt of their being fulfilled in him? especially seeing it is evident by so many other proofs that he was indeed the Messiah, and that God has been pleased so many other ways to confirm the same truth.

CHAP. XIII.

That Jesus Christ was raised again the third day according to the Prophets, and afterwards ascended into Heaven.

HAving shewed in the foregoing *Chapter* that Jesus Christ was crucified under *Pontius Pilate*, for maintaining that he was the promised Messiah, I am now to shew, that according to the Prophecies set down in my third part, he rose again the third day, and afterwards ascended into Heaven. As these two Facts are the most important of all that are contained in the Gospel, because if they be denied, all the Divine Worship given to Jesus Christ, by the Apostles, and a great number of *Jews* and *Gentiles*, who received him for their Master in matters of Religion, is absolutely unlawful; so we ought solidly to prove that they are indisputably true. Of which we shall be fully convinced by making some Observations upon the Relation which the Evangelists give us concerning them, and we shall easily find therein all the Characters of Truth.

There

There is no necessity of observing, that a Resurrection from the dead, is a Fact which can hardly be believed; and that tho the *Jews* did not all of them look upon it as an impossible thing, yet there were *Sadduces* amongst them, whose Doctrine was publickly taught. It is certain, that tho the Disciples had seen Jesus Christ, raising three persons from the dead, and amongst others *Lazarus*, a little before his death, yet we find that they were not thereby more disposed to believe that Christ was to rise from the dead.

In short, tho the Evangelists tells us, that Jesus Christ himself had foretold, that he was to rise again the third day, which was a thing so commonly known, that the Priests to elude the Prophesie, desired of *Pilate*, that a Guard might be set on Jesus his Grave, yet they expresly tell us, that the Disciples, none excepted, were in such a Consternation at the death of Jesus Christ, that they had entirely lost the hopes of seeing the accomplishment of that Propheſie. Some pious Women, who had accompanied him to the Cross, and were desirous to shew some Marks of their Veneration after his death, came indeed to his Sepulchre, but with Spices to embalm his dead Body, so far were they from expecting to find him risen from the dead. Tho these Holy Women were convinced of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, by the Apparition of an Angel, by the Discourse of our Saviour himself, and by the repetition of his order, that they should go to *Galilee*, where they should see him, yet the Relation which they give of these things, is accounted fabulous, so that two only of all the Apostles had the curiosity

to go to the Grave and inform themſelves. Here is a great unbelief amongſt the Apoſtles, which was to be cured: This was a condition wholly inconſiſtent, if we ſuppoſe them Impoſtors, and that they intended to impoſe upon the World.

A Second thing we may obſerve is, That as the Incredulity of our Saviour's own Diſciples was extraordinary, ſo we cannot imagine any more efficacious means than were employed to overcome this their doubtfulneſs. If one joyns the Relations of the Evangeliſts together, one may find ſeveral degrees of evidence, in thoſe proofs which confirm the truth of the Reſurrection of our Saviour.

The Firſt is the manner of their being informed of the Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt; Angels at firſt declare his Reſurrection to ſome Women; Jeſus Chriſt afterwards appears to *Mary Magdalen*, all alone; afterwards he appears only to two of his Diſciples, then to St. *Peter*, afterwards he appears to ſeven of them at once, then to all his Diſciples except *Thomas*, and ſoon after to the eleven, *Thomas* being one of them. After all this, he appears to a greater number of his Followers, till at laſt, having been ſeveral times ſeen of them all, he appears to them all aſſembled together, and is taken up into Heaven in their ſight. It is evident, that as they were informed of this truth one after another, ſo they were more obliged to examine the Fact more attentively when Jeſus Chriſt appeared to them.

The ſecond degree has relation to thoſe Marks and Characters, by which they were aſſured, that it was Jeſus Chriſt himſelf. The Angels repeat to the

the Women the command which Jeſus Chriſt before his death had given to his Diſciples to go into *Galilee*; Jeſus Chriſt appearing to *Mary Magdalen* repeats the ſame to her, and gives her a particular Commiſſion for S. *Peter*, to comfort him in his Affliction, for having denied his Maſter. Appearing to his Diſciples as they went to *Emmaus*, he refers them to the Prophecies, which ſpoke of his Death and Reſurrection; and moreover, when he broke Bread with them, they hear the ſame Prayers which he ordinarily uſed at the bleſſing of it. He appears to them the ſame day the fifth time, and ſhews them his feet and his hands; he repeats the Grant of the Authority which the Father had given him; he breathes upon them, ſaying, *Receive the Holy Ghoſt*; a week after he lets *Thomas* touch him; he appears afterward to ſeven of his Apoſtles upon the Lake of *Tiberias*, where he confirms S. *Peter* in his charge, from which his denying of Chriſt might ſeem to have excluded him, after he had wrought a Miracle in the draught of the Fiſhes, which was like ſome Miracles which he had wrought before his death. Afterwards he appears upon the ſame Mountain in *Galilee*, where in all probability he had been tranſfigured before, and is there ſeen of Five hundred of his Diſciples at once. And laſt of all he appears to them at *Jeruſalem*, after their return from *Galilee*, and from thence goes with them to *Bethany*, where after he had told them of the abſolute power which God had given them, he commands them to go and Baptize in his Name, he foretels the Miracles which they ſhould work, and the Gifts which they ſhould receive at *Jeruſalem*. All

these so very different Circumstances were only design'd to assure their Eyes, their Hands, their Minds, their Consciences, that it was the same Jesus whom they had always followed.

It is worth our taking notice of the diversity of these Circumstances for the certainty of this Fact, which absolutely prevent all pretences of doubtfulness. Jesus Christ appears ten several times after his death; he appears five times on the very day of his Resurrection; he appears at several hours, to different persons, in several places, but always to persons to whom he was familiarly known, to those who were not at all credulous; the first news they had of his Resurrection seem'd only to raise their Scruples, if the testimony of their Senses, which saw him and touched him, had not removed all suspicions. Jesus Christ appears to them in places where he had wrought many Miracles, and where he had often before conversed with them.

But one may make another more important Reflexion, upon the time and the day wherein our Saviour rose again. Of the ten several times in which he appeared to his Disciples, he appeared five times on the day of his Resurrection; he appeared to them eight days after, and after that, the eighth day, which he signalized by his frequent appearing to his Disciples, was consecrated to celebrate the memory of this Event every week: One finds certain tokens hereof in the Writings of the Apostles, and it is known that all Christians after them did inviolably observe this Law. Now let any one consider whether it would have been possible to introduce this Custom in the time of the

the Apostles, if the Resurrection of Christ had not been a Fact confessed of all hands. Can any one conceive that the Apostles and their Disciples, who were witnesses of the death of Jesus Christ, and who celebrated the memory thereof by a Sacrament, could have been so stupid to establish a Custom which would put People upon examining the Fact, and have convinced them in a little time, since none of those that followed them would have submitted to this practise, if they had not been convinced by their Eyes, and their other Senses, and by a thousand other proofs of the truth of so capital a Fact, which was so much disputed by the *Jews*, of which they were obliged to make a solemn commemoration two and fifty times every year, as long as they liv'd.

Let us add to this Remark, which we have elsewhere urged, with reference to the Creation, another Reflexion upon a Fact which the Evangelists tell us: They tell us that tho' the Resurrection of Christ was accompanied with very peculiar Circumstances, sufficient to convince both *Jews* and *Gentiles* of the truth of it, being usher'd in with an Earthquake, with Apparitions of Angels to the Souldiers that guarded the Sepulchre of Jesus, and were frighted thereby, yet the Council of the *Jews* contrived, with the Souldiers, a most impudent lye to out-face it, and accordingly the Souldiers coming before *Pilate*, tell him that the Disciples had stoln away the Body of Jesus whilst they slept, and his Disciples tell us, that since this hath been the common Opinion of the *Jews*.

I will not so much as take notice here of the palpable falsity of this Deposition; for if the Soul-

diers were asleep, how could they depose concerning a Fact which was done at that time: If they were not asleep, why did not they hinder the Disciples from taking the Body of their Master away? How could they affirm that Thieves had taken him away, when the Linnen Clothes wherein his Body was shrouded, being left in the Grave, and the Napkin that was about his head, being folded up in a place by it self, do absolutely evince that he was not taken away by persons that were in fear of a surprize? What probability is there, in short, to suspect that his Disciples, who forsook Jesus Christ whilst he was yet alive, who fled from him at that time, should undertake such a hazardous Attempt to have his Body only?

Neither will I insist upon a Representation of the Apostles sincerity, which made them give us in their Histories a plain account of the report which was spread against the belief of the Resurrection of Jesus, before ever that the Disciples had attested the same.

But I observe another very particular Character in their Relation, which is, that it was impossible for them to establish this Fact of the Resurrection, without accusing thereby the whole Council of the *Jews*, of the most shameful and crying imposture that ever was; to write a thing of this nature against the Heads of that Religion, was to sacrifice themselves to the hatred of the Publick, and to expose themselves to inevitable ruin. In short, let us imagine whether after a charge of this nature, it was easie for the Apostles to publish their Books, and preach publickly that Jesus Christ was risen from the dead? And yet this was what they

they did with a surprizing diligence when they inserted this terrible Accusation into their Books and Sermons; which alone is sufficient to demonstrate that they were infinitely convinced of the Resurrection, and also in a condition to convince all Gainsayers, as we shall shew hereafter.

One may add to this proof the Conversion of S. *Paul*, and the care which he afterwards took to confirm this truth of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. He was a declared Enemy of Jesus Christ, and of the Christian Religion, and yet soon after the Death of Christ he preaches him up for the Messiah: How came this suddain change? He asserts that he had seen in Heaven this Jesus who was risen from the dead, and received from him the Apostleship; accordingly we find him preaching by these Orders, without any communication had with the first Disciples of Jesus Christ. He relates these matters in a manner so little affected to advance his Ministry in the minds of the *Galatians*, who preferred S. *Peter*, and the other Apostles before him, that there is no ground left to doubt of them.

One ought to make a like Reflexion upon the Conversion of *Cornelius* the Centurion; he was a Proselyte, that is, a *Gentile* by Birth, but a *Jew* by Profession, and by the Imployment he was in, he had occasion of being more particularly informed of the deposition of the Souldiers, who probably were not unknown to him, for he was in the Garrison at *Cæsarea*, which was not far from *Jerusalem*. Yet however this *Cornelius*, after he had a vision which commanded him to send to

Joppa,

Joppa, a place made famous, because *Jonah* the Prophet set Sail from thence, who was a Type of the Messiah in his Death and Resurrection; this *Cornelius*, I say, embraced the Christian Religion, becomes the first Bishop of *Cæsarea*, and dyed a Martyr for the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The great affection which S. *Luke* had for S. *Paul* confirms the same truth. S. *Luke* had never seen our Saviour, he was born at *Antioch*, where in all probability he exercis'd his Profession of Physick, yet he was converted to Christianity, and follow'd S. *Paul* in all places, and writ the History of his Miracles and Preaching: who doubts but that the reason hereof was, because he had seen the Dead whom Christ had raised to life, and had seen S. *Paul*, whom Jesus Christ had dignified with the Apostleship, raise others also from the dead.

It is certain that those who were first convinced by the Relation of the Apostles, must needs have had very evident proofs of the truth of it. The *Jews* had *Sadducees* amongst them, who denied the possibility of the Resurrection in general; the Council of the *Jews* especially had made it their business to decry the Conduct, the Doctrine, and the Miracles of Jesus Christ, and in particular to make the belief of his Resurrection suspected; and so much the more because Jesus Christ had foretold it, and his Apostles maintained that it was come to pass accordingly. If in opposition to these strong prejudices, there had only been the deposition of two or three persons to confirm this Fact, there would have been reason to doubt of it; but we find that this thing, which of it self

self seems hard to be believed, and was otherwise so much contested, is, 1. Proved by ten several Apparitions; 2. It is attested by above five hundred Disciples; 3. It was publickly preached by the Disciples of Christ at *Jerusalem* it self, and throughout all *Judea*, where it was most of all disputed: 4. It was received by the very Enemies of Jesus Christ, as S. *Paul* and *Cornelius*, and by thousands of those, who having demanded his Death, were converted by the preaching of the Apostles: 5. It was confirmed by the Martyrdom of the greatest part of them; and 6. It was not not only authoriz'd by the presence of the three persons whom Christ had raised to life, and who lived one of them at *Bethany*, fifteen furlongs from *Jerusalem*, where Jesus ascended to Heaven; another at *Naim*, *&c.* But it was further verified by several Resurrections wrought by the Apostles, to whom Christ had vouchsafed that astonishing power.

It was also a very considerable thing that the Commonwealth of the *Jews* continued near forty years after the time that the Apostles undertook openly to preach up the Resurrection of Jesus Christ as the capital Article of their Religion; and yet in all that time it was never opposed by any publick Writing either of the *Jews* or *Gentiles*. If the *Jews* in their unjust intrigues against Jesus Christ and his Religion, endeavoured to abuse the World in this matter, with calumniating Stories, neither have the Apostles been wanting to accuse the principal Men of their Nation of imposture, and they have despised the most cruel of their Punishments, to maintain the Justice

ſtice of their Charge; and yet none of them would undertake to juſtifie the Calumnies of their Council, tho' they ſaw Chriſtianity ſpreading it ſelf not only over all *Judea*, but in all parts of the World. To ſpeak of it, as it is, this Conduct of theirs was a manifeſt betraying of their Cauſe, or rather an open acknowledgment that what they had publiſhed againſt the innocency of the Diſciples, and the truth of the Reſurrection of Jeſus was without all ground.

I foreſee only one probable difficulty which can be oppoſed to the ſolidity of theſe Reflexions. A *Jew* may demand, why Jeſus Chriſt after his Reſurrection did not converſe as openly amongſt the *Jews* as before, that ſo he might have been known by thoſe who had crucified him, which would have put the truth of the Reſurrection out of doubt?

But to ſpeak truth, this Objection is not reaſonable; for 1. Jeſus Chriſt had threatned the unbelieving *Jews*, they ſhould ſee him no more, and he ought to make good his threatning. 2. Who ſees not that they would have looked upon his appearing amongſt them as a phantaſtick Apparition, after they had ſeen him work ſo many Miracles, and had attributed them to the Devil. 3. I ſay that ſuch an Apparition was not agreeable to our Saviour's Doctrine in the Parable of the Rich man; *They have* Moſes *and the Prophets, if they hear not them, neither will they be perſwaded tho' one roſe from the dead.* 4. Jeſus Chriſt having for the moſt part converſed in *Galilee*, at *Nazareth* and *Capernaum*, it was to the *Galileans* and his Diſciples that he was chiefly to ſhew himſelf,

Luke XVI. 29, 31.

ſelf, to be acknowledged by them, as being the perſons who were particularly to bear witneſs of this truth. After ſo ſtrong a preſumption as the Governours of that People had of Chriſt's Reſurrection, founded upon the Earthquake which accompanied it, and upon the Depoſition of the Souldiers to whom the Angels had appeared, had not they all the reaſon in the World to believe the teſtimony of the Apoſtles concerning this truth, which they heard ſeveral times atteſted by them in full Council, and ſaw confirm'd by miraculous Cures which they could not queſtion in the leaſt.

Laſtly, Is not this Objection the moſt ridiculous thing in the World? For let us ſuppoſe that theſe Conſiderations are not ſtrong enough to juſtifie our Saviour's conduct when he gave theſe proofs of his Reſurrection, doth it follow that becauſe he did not make choice of means (in order to perſwade the *Jews*) which they preferr'd before others uſed by him, without any ſolid Reaſon, that therefore we muſt reject the depoſition of ſo many Witneſſes who unanimouſly atteſt it? Since Jeſus Chriſt had raiſed three perſons to life again, which then lived in *Judea*; ſince *Jeruſalem* had continued fourty years after the death of Chriſt; ſince ſixty ſolemn Feaſts were celebrated in that time, where all the *Jews* had an occaſion to examine the truth of theſe Facts, and the truth or falſity of the Accuſation charged upon the Apoſtles by the Council of the *Jews*, and that multitudes of *Jews* and *Gentiles* were converted at the preaching of the Apoſtles, who reduced all to this Queſtion of the Fact of the Reſurrection

of

of our Saviour, is not this an invincible proof against all the Accusations and Suspicions of the Synagogue.

Forasmuch as the Witnesses who maintain the Resurrection of Christ, are the very same that attest his Ascension into Heaven, and that they assert it with the same proofs, and the same zeal, the Reflexions here set down may serve for that also, and the rather because I am next to consider the sending of the Gifts of the Holy Ghost, which is an undeniable proof, both of the Resurrection of Christ and his Ascension; and that these very Gifts of the Holy Spirit enabled the *Jews* to write, preach, and publish throughout all the World the truths of that Christianity which we now profess.

CHAP. XIV.

That Jesus Christ sent to his Apostles, and to the Primitive Christians, the miraculous Gifts of his Holy Spirit, as he had promised in the Ancient Prophecies.

I Have shewn that the Prophecies of the *Old Testament* speak very plainly of this sending of the Spirit, as a Preliminary to the Calling of the *Gentiles*, which was the great design of God. The Prophet *Joel* speaks of it as such, and makes this wonder to precede the destruction of *Jerusalem*, as S.

S. *Peter* observes in the second of the *Acts*. *Isaiah* speaks very particularly of it as such, in the eleventh *Chapter* of his Prophecy, where he sufficiently intimates that the Spirit of Prophecy should from thence forward so rest upon Jesus Christ, that it would not be found any longer among the *Jews*, whose City and Temple should be destroyed.

At present my business is to shew that this thing has been exactly fulfilled, according to the design which God had laid down in the Prophets. To be convinc'd of this, we need only make some Reflexions upon the Relation which S. *Luke* gives us of it in the *Acts*.

He tells us therefore, that fifty days only after the death of Jesus Christ, the Apostles having continued at *Jerusalem*, and being assembled there, they received the miraculous Gifts of the Holy Ghost, that is, the power of speaking all sorts of Languages, to make them fit to preach the Gospel to all Nations, and to explain the most sublime Mysteries of our Saviour's Religion.

Every thing is considerable in this Relation of S. *Luke*; 1. That he relates this Fact as happening fifty days only after the Jewish Passover, when Christ was crucified; the whole Nation of the *Jews* having been witnesses of his death. 2. That he relates it as happening in the same City where Jesus Christ was condemned, that the same Multitude, who after fifty days were again assembled there at this Feast, might be Witnesses of this miraculous Event. In short, it plainly appears that this new Law from Mount *Sion*, was solemnly promulg'd in the presence of all the *Jews*, who were assembled

bled from all parts of the World, as the old Law was, when all the People assisted at the foot of Mount *Sinai*. 3. That these Gifts were granted to all the Disciples of our Saviour; Gifts, which till that time had been wholly unheard of, and whereof some part only had been granted to some Prophets, and to some Priests, and of which none had been made partakers since the time of *Malachi*; God having so ordered it, that the desires of the *Jews* might be the more inflamed for the Messiah's coming, as also that upon his coming he might the more easily be discerned. 4. That this was a Fact openly known amongst the *Jews*, and differently interpreted by them; some saying, *They they were full of new Wine.* 5. That the Apostles asserted by the mouth of S. *Peter*, that this was an Accomplishment of the ancient Oracles, as well as of the Promises of Jesus Christ. 6. That they declared that the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, his Ascension into Heaven, and this miraculous Donative, had been foretold by *David* and *Joel*. 'Tis certainly therefore very natural to make these following Reflexions upon the Relation of so considerable an Event.

The first will confirm the truth of this miraculous Fact, if we consider that it is absurd to suppose that S. *Luke*, a wise man, should be so rash, as to relate a matter of this nature, if he had not been fully convinc'd of it; and if it had not been an easie thing to have convinc'd his Readers thereof also; nothing more being required for their conviction, but the presence of one of those first Christians, and to make a trial of this supernatural vertue bestowed on them, for which there were frequent occasions. Se-

2. We must observe that this Relation of S. *Luke* is as it were the foundation which he lays down, to make his Book of the *Acts* to appear just and reasonable, and to justifie the Apostles conduct in preaching the Gospel to the *Gentiles*, not only contrary to the opinion of the *Jews*, who looked upon them as wholly excluded from the Priviledges of the Covenant; but also contrary to the seeming Maxim of Jesus Christ, who acted only as the Minister of Circumcision; and contrary to the pretensions of many Christians, who after the Mission of the Holy Ghost, took it very ill that S. *Peter* had preached to the *Gentiles*.

3. S. *Luke* supposes that this Fact came to pass in such a manner, that it was followed by Consequences as illustrious as they were incredible. Twelve poor Fishermen undertook to go and preach to all the World, that their Master, who fifty days before was crucified at *Jerusalem*, at the prosecution of the whole Synagogue, and by order of one of the Magistrates of the *Roman* Empire, was not only living, not only ascended into Heaven, but that he also had given them the power of speaking all sorts of Languages, of curing all Diseases, and even of raising the Dead.

4. They go yet further, they boldly maintain that Jesus Christ had given them a priviledge of communicating the same power to all those who would believe that he was the promised Messiah, and this without any other mystery but the bare laying on of their hands, after they had received them by Baptism into the Profession of Christianity.

Nothing could have been more eaſie than to convince them of the contrary, unleſs they had confirmed the truth of their Aſſertion by the miraculous Conſequences of that firſt Miracle. The Fact was publickly acknowledged; *Simon Magus* is convinced thereof, and he who had made himſelf ſo famous by his Sorceries, becomes a Diſciple. S. *Luke* in a Hiſtory of the Actions of thirty years, relates the continual Miracles wrought by the Apoſtles, and particularly by S. *Paul*, whom he conſtantly followed.

It ſeems to me, that if one conſiders the Hiſtory it ſelf, and the perſon who made it, that it will appear to be a true and faithful Relation; however there are other teſtimonies which invincibly eſtabliſh the ſame Truth.

1. The Goſpel was in effect eſtabliſhed in moſt of the Provinces and great Cities of the *Roman* Empire. S. *Paul* writes to the Chriſtians of *Theſſalonica*, *Corinth*, and *Epheſus*, to the *Galatians*, *Coloſſians*, *&c.* which is an evident Argument that there were Chriſtians every where, that is, Diſciples of theſe twelve Fiſhermen, who underſtood nothing but their native *Syriack* Language; How then were all theſe Nations converted, without ſuppoſing the truth of the Miracle at the *Pentecoſt*?

2. The Apoſtles ſpeak to them of theſe miraculous Gifts as of a common thing; S. *Paul* employing ſome part of his firſt Epiſtle to the *Corinthians* to regulate thoſe diſorders which aroſe in the Church, by reaſon of the abuſe of thoſe Gifts. S. *James* ſpeaks of the power that the Prieſts had to cure the ſick; and S. *Paul* wiſhes for an opportunity

tunity of going to *Rome*, to communicate thoſe Gifts to the *Romans*.

3. They take occaſion to raiſe the Dignity of the Goſpel above that of the Law, in calling it the Miniſtry of the Spirit, in oppoſition to the Letter of the Law, notwithſtanding the Tables of the Law had been given to *Moſes* in ſo very illuſtrious a manner.

It is of great moment here to conſider Three things, which alone are ſufficient to confirm the truth of the Chriſtian Religion.

The firſt is, That this Miſſion of the Spirit is alone ſufficient to convince Mankind of the Divinity of Jeſus Chriſt. God gave to *Adam* a power of ſpeaking one Language, and afterwards he divided the ſame to make a confuſion amongſt the Builders of *Babel*; and Jeſus Chriſt doth the ſame thing to confirm the Glory and Belief of his Divinity. God vouchſafes the power of Miracles to ſome, Jeſus Chriſt communicates it to a far greater number; Miracles not having been ſo generally wrought, becauſe no People ever had that power in all the foregoing Ages. The Father wrought ſo few Miracles, that he might leave to the Son this means of making himſelf known. The Son had the glory of pouring forth the Holy Ghoſt, in a greater abundance than the Father, thereby to ſupply the ſhame of his humiliation. This is the true Reaſon why the Scripture ſaith, That *the Spirit was not yet given, becauſe Jeſus Chriſt was not yet glorified.*

The ſecond is, That from this Miracle one ought to infer theſe two Concluſions; The firſt is, That God was fully pacified by the Sacrifice

of Jesus Christ, the Apostles constantly representing the Passion of our Saviour as a Sacrifice offer'd by him. The other is, That from that time forward Mankind was consecrated to God as his Temple. Jesus Christ in his prayer before his Death expresses himself much in the same manner as *Solomon* did at his Dedication of the first Temple, and Fire from Heaven falls down on his Sacrifice: Jesus Christ consecrates his Apostles to be the living Stones of his Temple, and causes the heavenly Flames to fall down upon them, as had formerly been granted at *Solomon*'s Dedication of the first Temple.

The third is, That the *Jews* themselves cannot conceive a more glorious or magnificent Accomplishment of the ancient Oracles concerning the effusion of the Holy Spirit at the time of the Messiah, than what we find related by S. *Luke*, whereof the whole World may see the visible Effects, in the Calling of the *Gentiles* to the Christian Religion: from whence one may rationally conclude, That Jesus Christ must be acknowledged for the Messiah whom God had promised.

CHAP.

CHAP. XV.

That according to the Prophecies, the Apostles of Jesus Christ have called the Gentiles *to the profession of the Christian Religion.*

WE have already seen what was the design of God, and that the distinction which he made of the *Jews* from other Nations, was only that the Messiah might by that means be the more certainly known, in whom all Mankind had a right, as being promised to *Adam*.

God renew'd the Idea of this truth in a very lively manner, when he assured *Abraham*, before he gave him the Law of Circumcision, *That in his Seed all Nations should be blessed*. *Jacob* enlightned by the Spirit of Prophecy on his Death-bed, plainly takes this truth for granted, when he says that the Messiah, whom he calls *Shiloh*, was to be the expectation of the *Gentiles*, *Gen.* XLIX. Why doth he not say, That he was to be the expectation of the *Jews*? but because he supposeth that they were to be rejected, and the *Gentiles* called in their stead.

One see's in the *Psalms*, and in the Prophets until *Malachi* inclusively, a thousand Declarations of this future Calling of the *Gentiles* to the Faith of the Messiah, and tho' the most part of the Idea's which the Prophets make use of, seem to be very figurative, describing the Messiah as a Conquerour, who was to subdue the whole

World to his Dominion by the force of Arms; yet we find a great many others interwoven with them which only relate to the Profeſſion of the Religion of the Meſſiah, and which, not being capable of any other Senſe, ſufficiently determine the others, ſo as not to perplex the Reader with thoſe ſeeming Obſcurities. But Jeſus Chriſt very diſtinctly declares this in divers places, and above all in the XXIV. of S. *Matthew*, *This Goſpel*, ſaith he, *ſhall be preached throughout all the World.*

Now nothing could ever be more exactly fulfilled than theſe ancient Oracles have been; let the *Jews* cavil as long as they pleaſe about our application of many of the Prophecies of the *Old Teſtament* to our Saviour; let them put a ſenſe upon the Scriptures which treat of this Subject, contrary to what the *Jews*, who were contemporary with Jeſus Chriſt ever did, and to the moſt of thoſe with whom the firſt Chriſtians, as *Juſtin*, *Tertullian*, and others, from time to time diſputed, yet at leaſt they cannot deny but that the thing has been exactly fulfilled.

It is clearer than the day, that nothing could be more exact: All Chriſtians, from one end of the World to another, worſhip the God of *Iſrael*, according to the Prophecy of *Malachi*. Jeſus Chriſt ſubjected them to the Moral part of the Law of *Moſes*: The *Mahometans* themſelves have learnt of the Chriſtians to acknowledge no other God but the God of *Iſrael*. The multitude of falſe Gods which the World worſhipped, are vaniſhed from all places where Chriſtianity has been planted; and very few are left in compariſon of thoſe which are already deſtroy'd, ſo that we

we muſt conſider the thing as already gone very far. In truth, while things continue thus, one may reaſonably maintain againſt the *Jews*, that our Jeſus and his Diſciples have taken away all the Glory which could be reſerved for that Meſſiah whom they expect. They muſt, if they be jealous for the Glory of him whom they look for, endeavour to make the World forſake the worſhip of the God of *Iſrael*, to make way for the accompliſhment of thoſe Oracles which can have no place in that ſtate wherein the World is at preſent.

But tho' this Reflexion upon the exact accompliſhment of the Oracles concerning the Call of the *Gentiles* to the Religion of the Meſſiah may ſuffice; yet I think my ſelf bound to make ſome further Obſervations upon this Subject. In ſhort, every thing deſerves to be conſidered in this Calling of the *Gentiles* to the knowledge of the Goſpel.

I do not take notice at preſent that the perſon firſt employ'd in Calling of the *Gentiles* is S. *Peter*, to whom Jeſus Chriſt had promiſed the honour of founding his Church amongſt the Nations, and who himſelf at firſt thought that the thing was unlawful, and who after a Viſion given him for that very purpoſe, obſerves the Jewiſh Cuſtoms, and obliges the *Gentiles* to do the ſame. Neither do I obſerve that the firſt who was called was *Cornelius*, a *Roman* Officer who reſided at *Cæſarea*, where he became a Proſelyte. Behold here a man engaged to examine that, which he had a better opportunity to do than any one elſe, by reaſon of the nature of his charge, whether what

the Souldiers had depoſed concerning the Diſciples ſtealing away the Body of our Saviour, were true or no.

I am obliged to confine my ſelf to ſome general Reflexions upon this matter. I conſider firſt the difficulty which was upon all accounts in this deſign of the Calling of the *Gentiles*, and the prodigious Succeſs which this Call of the *Gentiles* met with according to the Prophets.

To make us underſtand this difficulty better, we need only conſider 1. What were the Prejudices of the *Jews*, even thoſe who were become Chriſtians. 2. What was the ſtate of the World at the time of Jeſus Chriſt. The Heathens enjoyed each their ſeveral Religions for a longer time than any Hiſtory could trace it. They attributed the happineſs of their States and Families to their Gods. 3. We muſt obſerve the nature of that preaching, by which the *Gentiles* were converted: Its Subject was the ſtrangeſt thing in the World; if the Croſs of Jeſus Chriſt had prov'd the Scandal of the *Jews*, who looked upon the Meſſiah as the Fountain of Bleſſing, and the Croſs as an accurſed Puniſhment; it was look'd upon no otherwiſe than as an heap of Follies by the *Greeks*, (who boaſted themſelves to be the wiſeſt men of the World) as well as by the other *Gentiles*.

Yet after all this, one ſee's a prodigious Succeſs, and a ſurprizing Extent of this Call. Within a little time the World was fill'd with Chriſtians: S. *Paul* writes to thoſe that were in *Aſia*, *Greece*, and *Italy*; S. *Peter* to thoſe of *Pontus*; S. *John* to thoſe who were among the *Parthians*. There were not wanting ſome in the very Emperour's Court, even that

that of *Nero*, who put S. *Peter* and S. *Paul* to death in the Sixty ſeventh Year of our Lord.

One cannot attend to a Succeſs of this nature, without being extreamly ſurpriz'd; let us conceive of a dozen, or thereabouts, of poor Beggars, a dozen of unlearned Men coming out of *Judea*, who ſhould accuſe the whole World of Folly and Impiety; every one oppoſing them, eſpecially the *Jews*, who were incenſed to ſee them go about to eſtabliſh the belief of the Croſs in the World, as a Doctrine which would explain the accompliſhment of the Promiſes of God concerning the Meſſiah, of thoſe Promiſes wherewith the *Jews* had filled all the *Eaſt*, and which had rendred them at this time doubly ridiculous.

When inſtead of perſecuting the Apoſtles, they hearken unto them; or even when in the midſt of Chains and Priſons they are examined, they declare that true Godlineſs conſiſts in knowing Jeſus Chriſt, even the ſame Jeſus who was crucified in *Judea*, for whoſe Name's ſake they had been publickly ſcourged by order of the Council of the *Jews*. Thus we find S. *Paul* boaſting of his ſevere uſage.

If perſons queſtion them more particularly about the Actions of this Jeſus, they anſwer coldly, That the Son of God came down from Heaven; that he took upon him our Fleſh in the Womb of a Virgin; that when he was become Man, and yet an Infant, *Herod* ſought to kill him, to avoid which he was carried into *Egypt*; that after having lived thirty years obſcurely in a Carpenter's Shop, he was taken by the *Jews*, ſcourged, mocked, crowned with Thorns, nailed to the Croſs, where they

they gave him Vinegar to drink; that there he cried out, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* that he died, was buried, and rose again the third day, as he had promised before his Death.

But what is it that this JESUS teaches to those that would follow him? His Apostles in his Name require all Men to renounce the Pleasures of this Life, to abhor Polygamy and Fornication, and instead of revenging an Affront, to turn the other Cheek to him that smites us, and to leave our Cloak also with him who takes our Coat from us; to go two miles with him who constrains us to guide him one; to love our Enemies, and to wish well, and pray for those that despitefully use us, and persecute us.

But what Rewards will he give to his Servants? The Apostles answer, That he promises nothing that is considerable in this Life, but an everlasting Happiness in the World to come.

It is visible that nothing seems to be worse contrived to gain credit than this Story. The weakness of Jesus Christ is visible, he was crucified; what ground is here to believe that he was able to perform his Promises? The Service he prescribes is very rough, the Reward he proposes is at a great distance, and moreover, it is such as appears very doubtful to those who are not furnished with strong impressions of the immortality of the Soul, and of a life to come.

But on the other hand, the Apostles solidly demonstrate that he is GOD, and not a meer Man,

Man, that he can raise the Dead, and that he can perform his Promises. Tho' they do not say, Bring hither the Blind, the Lame, and the Deaf, and we will heal them in his Name; present your Dead to us, and we will raise them in the Name of that Jesus who is born of *Mary*, of that Jesus who died, and cried out on the Cross, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me.* (For I acknowledge that this miraculous power which they had received, was only exerted upon certain occasions, which the Spirit of God made choice of.) Yet they did that which was equivalent, for when blind men were brought to them, they said, Ye blind, in the Name of Jesus, recover your sight; and in like manner to the Lepers, to possessed Persons, to the sick of the Palsey, to the Dead. Upon this all were converted, and the Cross of Jesus Christ triumphs.

There are three sorts of People in the World, Wise men, Men of a middle sort, and such as are of a lower capacity; and several of these three Orders of Men made profession of the Christian Religion, as well amongst the *Jews* as *Heathens.*

CHAP.

CHAP. XVII.

That the Christian Religion is founded on Proofs of Fact, and that consequently nothing in the World so certain as the truth of it.

THis Reflexion ought to be made more than once, because there is nothing so proper to establish the truth of the Christian Religion beyond all contest, or that will confound Atheists, prophane Persons, and *Jews*, who endeavour to oppose it more effectually.

I say then, that the chief Articles on which the whole Christian Religion is grounded, are confirm'd by proofs of Fact, that is, by Witnesses whose Evidence cannot be questioned, without shaking all the certainty which we can have of any thing in this World, and without rejecting all the means whereby we can assure our selves of the knowledge which we enjoy.

Many particular Events which were perfectly Divine, happened at the Birth of *John the Baptist*, the Forerunner of the Messiah; they were known throughout all the Hill Country of *Judea*; they happened to a Priest, that is, a publick Person; and it was when he was employ'd in his publick Function in the Temple; they are seconded by Miracles which were known to the whole Nation of the *Jews*; they are follow'd by the publick Ministry of *John the Baptist*, a man who censures

sures all *Judea*, who openly declares himself the Forerunner of the Messiah, and who hath a great number of Disciples, who are distinguish'd from those of our Saviour, who were spread throughout all *Judea*, and who continued after the death of our Saviour; these were Disciples of a Man, who besides all this, doth not keep up any correspondence with our Saviour, and who at last falls by the hand of *Herod* for censuring his Incest and Lusts.

JESUS CHRIST is born in *Bethlehem* under *Augustus*, a Fact of which the *Roman* Commissioners were Witnesses, and which the Records of that Empire preserv'd as long as they were in being.

That the Angels testified their Joy at his Birth, is a Fact which was confirm'd by the Shepherds of *Bethlehem*, long before Jesus Christ had any Disciples.

That a new Star conducted the Wise men of the *East* to *Bethlehem*, was an illustrious Fact, and of which *Herod*, and the Priests, and great men amongst the *Jews*, were exactly informed; and the Apostles would have found it a very difficult matter to impose this upon them, if the thing had not been distinctly known.

That the Birth of Jesus Christ, and the arrival of the Wise men affrighted *Herod*, was a publick thing, confirmed by the murther of the Infants of *Bethlehem*, and reported to *Augustus*, together with the death of *Antipater*; whereof *Macrobius* a Heathen, who was qualified for the knowledge of such a Story, hath preserved the memory. Neither can this Fact be called in question, be-

because *Josephus* makes no mention of it, since so famous a Heathen attests it. *Augustus*, saith he, *having heard that amongst the Infants which* Herod *the King of the* Jews *had caused to be kill'd in* Syria, *under two years of age, he had kill'd his own Son, said that it was better to be* Herod's *Hog than his Son.*

That Jesus Christ was in *Egypt*, and that he returned from thence, is a Fact with which the *Jews* to this day reproach our Saviour, as if he had learnt there the secret of working Miracles.

That he confounded the Doctors at twelve years of Age, is a Fact of which the whole Nation of the *Jews* were informed, because it happened at one of those three solemn Feasts which brought up the whole Nation to *Jerusalem.*

That Jesus Christ was baptized by S. *John*, and that he received a most glorious testimony from him, is a Fact of which all those *Jews* whom the Ministry of S. *John* had drawn to the River *Jordan* were Witnesses.

That Jesus Christ chose for his Apostles men without Learning, and of the meanest of the People, that he lived with them three years and an half, preaching his Doctrine, correcting the Traditions of the *Jews*, working Miracles, and foretelling things to come, are Facts of which the whole People of the *Jews* were Witnesses, and all the *Romans* that were in *Judea* were fully informed of them; yea, they were known to all the World. The *Jews* could not be ignorant of them, who came up to *Jerusalem* from all parts of the World to celebrate ten solemn Feasts according to the Law, during the time in which these things were

were acting, and from thence carried the report of them into several parts of the World where they were dispers'd.

It is evident also that Jesus Christ laboured to perswade men that he was the promised Messiah; this was the most considerable Fact in the World to the *Jews*, and which had relation to the most important point of their Religion, and touched them the neerest: a Fact which happened at a time when all were in expectation of the Messiah, as appears by the consultation of *Herod*, when the *Jews*, who were oppressed by the *Romans*, did most earnestly sigh for his appearance; a Fact confirm'd by publick Oracles, and known to the whole Nation, yea to the Heathen themselves, for near Three hundred years.

That Jesus Christ, notwithstanding all his Miracles, was crucified at the pursuit of the *Jews*, and by the order of *Pontius Pilate*, is a Fact of which the whole People of the *Jews* were Witnesses, because it happened at the Feast of the Passover, that is, at a Solemnity where the whole Nation of the *Jews* was assembled; it is a Fact which no Heathens ever went about to deny, they reproached the Christians with it, who are so little asham'd of it, that according to the orders of the same Jesus, they celebrate the memorial of it in the Sacrament of the Eucharist.

That there was thick darkness over all the Land at the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ from the third hour till the sixth, that is, from nine of the clock till twelve, according to our way of computing the time, was a Fact of that nature, that the whole Nation of the *Jews* might easily have convin'ed

vinc'd the Apoſtles of this impoſture, if it had not been as confeſſed a truth as the darkneſs in *Egypt*, before the departure of the *Iſraelites*.

That Jeſus Chriſt was raiſed the third day, is a Fact atteſted by a great number of Witneſſes, the memorial whereof they celebrated every eighth day as long as they liv'd, by a conſtant Law, becauſe they conſidered this Reſurrection as the Seal of thoſe Truths which Jeſus Chriſt had taught them. 'Tis a Fact, the truth whereof they have maintained before Magiſtrates, before the People, in all parts of the World. 'Tis a Fact which they have publickly preached up, notwithſtanding all Prohibitions which have been made: In ſhort, it is a Fact which they have aſſerted in the midſt of the moſt cruel Torments, and even until Death.

That Jeſus Chriſt ſent down upon his Apoſtles the miraculous Gifts of the Holy Spirit, is a Fact of which all *Jeruſalem* was a witneſs fifty days after the Feaſt of the Paſſover, when Jeſus Chriſt was crucified; it is as remarkable a Fact as ever happened; twelve Fiſhermen of *Galilee*, maintain in the face of the whole Jewiſh Nation, that the ſame Jeſus whom the whole Nation had demanded to be crucified but fifty days before, and who did actually ſuffer upon an infamous Croſs, is riſen from the dead, and aſcended into Heaven, after he had eaten and drunk with them, and had appeared ſeveral times to them after his Reſurrection, and that he had given them the power of ſpeaking all ſorts of Languages, and of healing all manner of Diſeaſes.

That they ſpoke divers Languages is a Fact moſt

moſt notorious, the truth whereof appears from the Converſion of the World, which was found to be fill'd with their Diſciples, but a few years after this Fact was done.

That they had the power of healing all Diſeaſes as well as their Maſter, is a Fact the truth whereof is eſtabliſh'd upon indiſputable teſtimonies, inſomuch as their Succeſſors received the ſame Gift by the laying on of their Hands. Two hundred years after *Tertullian* mentions this Gift, as being at that time well known amongſt Chriſtians.

That the Apoſtles, after they were rejected by the *Jews*, preached the Goſpel to the *Gentiles*, who alſo received it, is a Fact of which there are ſo many proofs in the World, that it cannot be called in queſtion.

That the converted *Jews* ſtrongly oppoſed themſelves againſt the preaching of the Goſpel to the *Gentiles*, pretending, as the *Jews* now do, that the Meſſiah with his Gifts and Graces was confin'd to their Nation, is a Fact ſo well atteſted, that it cannot be called in queſtion, if we conſider the firſt diſpute, which gave occaſion to the firſt Council of the Apoſtles, and to the conteſts of S. *Paul* with thoſe of his own Nation.

That ſince that time the Apoſtles and their Diſciples have maintained by their Writings and Diſputes, and finally by their Martyrdom, that Jeſus was the Meſſiah; that they have conſtantly ſtood to this claim, alledging the Facts which the Goſpel propoſes, and maintaining that the matters there related were exact Accompliſhments of the Promiſes of God, and of the ancient Prophecies:

That all this is unqueſtionable, one needs only read their Sermons and Speeches ſet down by S. *Luke*, and their Epiſtles; one needs only peruſe the Heathen Hiſtory, and the Works of thoſe that ſucceeded the Apoſtles, who followed their footſteps in eſtabliſhing the truth of the Chriſtian Religion.

That the Apoſtles diſcharged their followers from the Ceremonies which *Moſes* preſcribed, obliging them only to the Eſſentials of Morality: That they annul'd the Law which permitted Divorces without ſufficient cauſe, and Polygamy; theſe are things which none, who have read their Writings, or thoſe of their firſt Diſciples, can in the leaſt queſtion.

Laſtly, That they foretold many things, as well as their Maſter; that they publiſhed their Predictions, which they have extended to the end of the World, and the return of Jeſus from Heaven to judge the World; and that they have recorded the particulars of many conſiderable Events, obſerved by the Chriſtians, which have happened from time to time; theſe are Facts as well known, and as inconteſtable, as any thing can be in the World of ſuch a nature. Whole Nations are Witneſſes of it, differing Sects, Interpreters who have ſeveral Opinions concerning theſe Prophecies, the Conteſts of the *Jews*, the Oppoſition of Atheiſts, the Cavils of Hereticks, the Cruelty of Tyrants, all theſe concur to prove clearly that the Chriſtians received theſe Prophecies from the Apoſtles, as well as the truth of them, ſince even theſe Oppoſitions were foretold as well as the Perſecutions.

Thus I have given you a view of the greateſt part of the moſt important Articles which are contained in the Chriſtian Religion; and I think that they are ſo ſolidly grounded upon proofs of Fact, that I can aſſert with reaſon, That no Facts in the World can be produced, ſo well eſtabliſhed as theſe are, which are the Fundamentals of our Religion.

What Facts are there which are atteſted by whole Nations, as the Miracles of Jeſus Chriſt were? What Facts are there about which men were ſo careful to inform themſelves, as when a Man pretends to the Title of the Meſſiah? What thing can we ſuppoſe that requires a ſtronger conviction, becauſe of the difficulties it involves, than that of the Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt? for thoſe who were Eye-witneſſes of his Crucifixion, that is, who had ſeen him puniſhed by the Magiſtrate, the horrour of all his own People, and in all appearance forſaken of Heaven.

To ſpeak the truth, as there cannot be a greater inſtance of fanatical folly, than to attribute to twelve poor Fiſhermen, whoſe Maſter was crucified at *Jeruſalem*, by publick order, and by an effect of the hatred of the whole Nation, I ſay, to attribute to them the deſign of perſwading that People, and the *Gentiles* alſo, that this man was raiſed again from the dead, that he rules in Heaven; that he has beſtowed upon them the miraculous Gifts of ſpeaking all ſorts of Languages, and healing all manner of Diſeaſes; if this Jeſus had been never raiſed from the dead, nor had beſtowed ſuch Gifts upon them, the mind of Man not being capable of ſo great folly: So we have

all the reaſon in the World to conclude, That ſince they have atteſted this Fact, and confirmed it by all the proofs which might convince thoſe, who tho' they were not prejudic'd, yet were aſtoniſh'd at the difficulty of the things themſelves, ſo that nothing can be more certain than Facts ſo confirmed, as we pretend that theſe actually were.

CHAP. XVII.

That it cannot be queſtioned, whether the Books of the New Teſtament *were written by the Apoſtles.*

BEfore we alledge thoſe Arguments which will invincibly confirm the truth of the Books of the *New Teſtament*, I deſire the Reader to make theſe three or four Reflexions, which ſeem to be very important to our preſent deſign.

The firſt is, That we can ſcarcely conceive a more ſimple and ſtrong way of proving a Fact, than what we find in the Books here mention'd. The deſign of the four Evangeliſts, for inſtance, is to prove that Jeſus, the Son of *Mary*, is the promiſed Meſſiah, and that in his Birth, his Life, his Doctrine, his Death, and Reſurrection, we meet with all the Characters which the Prophets attributed to the Meſſiah. How do the Evangeliſts execute this their deſign? In the moſt proper way imaginable to convince others, and moſt proportionable to their deſign. They ſimply relate the Facts; and Facts ſo clear, that if we do not queſtion the truth of them, we cannot doubt that Jeſus is the Meſſiah. They relate the moſt important of theſe Facts, as things that happened in the face of the whole Nation of the *Jews*, as I have ſhewed in the precedent *Chapter*: They relate them as Facts for the moſt part owned by the *Jews*, from which the Malice of the *Jews* extorted other Conſequences: They give us an account of the Judgment which the *Jews* made concerning the Miracles that he wrought on the Sabbath day, upon the Diſciples gathering the Ears of Corn, of the anſwer which the *Jews* made to *Pilate, We have no other King but* Ceſar.

The ſecond is, That the Apoſtles ſuppoſing a general expectation of the Meſſiah, when Jeſus Chriſt appeared, ſhew that there was a very great knowledge of the Prophecies that reſpected the Meſſiah, and a great impoſſibility of applying thoſe Oracles to particular Facts, if the truth of thoſe Facts had not been beyond conteſt. Now we find very few Oracles of which they did not make an application to the Life and Actions of our Saviour. Wee'l ſuppoſe the Apoſtles to have been Men of great Abilities, and who had long ſtudied the Books of the Prophets, that they might tear out ſuch ſmall paſſages as they fancied might be applicable to Jeſus Chriſt: However it cannot be denied, that it does not appear by their Writings that they had ſuch an exact knowledge of the Prophecies, whence it might follow that they judged them to be applicable to Chriſt,

by comparing them with the Facts which they relate. 2. That they had this knowledge in common with the reſt of the *Jews*, who at this day apply the ſame Texts to the Meſſiah, if they are not conſtrained by their clearneſs to wreſt them ſome other way.

The third Reflexion is, That in the Relation of theſe Facts, they give us all the Marks of an extraordinary ſincerity; they repreſent indeed whatſoever was for their Maſter's Glory; but they do as well relate thoſe things which ſeem to be ſhameful to his memory. They tell us of the Angels that aſſiſted at his Birth, and at his Death; but tell us withal, That he was tempted of the Devil, and in all appearance forſaken by God at his death. They tell us, That the multitudes were reſolved to take him by force, and make him their King, as acknowledging him for the Meſſiah; and they tell us, That the ſame multitude ſome time after demanded him to be crucified.

The fourth is, That they repreſent very naturally all the Judgments of the Synagogue againſt Jeſus: They repreſent him as excommunicated and crucified by them; they deſcribe the reports that were current among the *Jews*, That the Diſciples had taken away his Body out of the Sepulchre; that the Souldiers had depoſed the ſame in the forms of Law before *Pilate*. From all which it appears that they were faithful Hiſtorians, and not at all prepoſſeſſed, and that they uſed no Invectives againſt the Authors of theſe falſe Reports, contenting themſelves to eſtabliſh the truth of the matter, by ſpecifying the places, the time, the witneſſes, and other circumſtances which are pro-

proper to eſtabliſh the truth of the Facts they relate.

Theſe four Reflexions being once ſuppoſed, I ſay, it is impoſſible to diſpute the truth of theſe Books, or to call their Authority in queſtion: To be convinc'd of which, one needs only conſider theſe two things; the firſt is, That the Apoſtles are the Authors of the Books which paſs under their Names; the other is, That their faithfulneſs is not to be ſuſpected by us.

The former of theſe is ſo univerſally received, that nothing will be certain in matters of this nature, if this be queſtioned.

The four Evangeliſts have publiſhed their Writings in populous Cities, where they have been conſtantly read every Lord's day in Chriſtian Aſſemblies, as S. *Juſtin Martyr* aſſures us in his Apology, which was writ about the middle of the ſecond Century.

The Apoſtles writ their Epiſtles to numerous Churches, to whom their hand, as well as the perſons by whom they ſent them, were well known. Can we inſtance in any Writing in the World that hath been preſerved with the like carefulneſs? Let the *Jews* tell us what they pleaſe, concerning the care and faithfulneſs of their Anceſtors to preſerve the Books of the *Old Teſtament*, they can alledge nothing, but we can alledge the ſame in favour of the Books of the *New Teſtament*. They tells us that *Moſes*, under the penalty of a Curſe, had forbid the adding any thing thereto; and do not we read the ſame threatning in the laſt Book of the *New Teſtament*? The Philoſophers of each Sect, have nothing of this weight to alledge as an

Argument that the Books which they aſcribe to their Maſters are really theirs; we find only a few men in every Age, who made it their buſineſs to ſtudy the Books of the Philoſophers, Phyſicians, and Lawyers; but ever ſince the Apoſtles there have been Chriſtians who made it their buſineſs to peruſe and preſerve their Writings, as conſidering that they are the Fountains of Eternal Life.

One may upon this occaſion take notice of two things which deſerve ſome attention: The one is, That the deſign of ſome Hereticks, as of *Marcion* for inſtance, to corrupt the Copies of the Writings of the *New Teſtament*, which were found in the hands of thoſe of his Sect, is a good Argument to prove that they could not be corrupted. In ſhort, we find all the World oppoſed themſelves againſt this Corruption, and confuted them by the agreement of all the other Copies in the World which were exempt from this corruption.

The other is, That if there are ſome Books whoſe Authority was doubtful for ſome time, by thoſe who otherwiſe were accounted Orthodox, yet this cannot juſtly prejudice the truth of the *New Teſtament*; the reaſon is, becauſe this happened only to ſome few Epiſtles which were written, not to particular Churches, but to whole Nations. And indeed it is plain from common ſenſe, that when Writings are ſent to whole Bodies (as the Epiſtle of S. *Jude*) without communicating the Copy to particular men, that they may with more juſtice be ſuſpected, than thoſe whoſe hand was known by many, and particularly

ly by thoſe to whom the Epiſtles were ſent.

Moreover, The account which the ancient Fathers of the Church give us of the uncertainties of this nature, ſufficiently ſhew that they were very careful in examining theſe things; and when at any time ſome particular men did not uſe care enough in examining theſe Books, as it once happened in the Church of *Roſs*, where a Book which was falſly attributed to S. *Peter* was preſerved, ſuppoſing it to have been his, the other Churches not conſenting to it, that Abuſe was ſoon remedied, the Writings aboliſhed, that there is ſcarce a weak remembrance left of them. *Euſeb.* Lib. VI. cap. 12.

One ſee's that theſe Remarks are ſufficient to aſſure us that the Apoſtles are the Authors of thoſe Books which bear their Names: And if this way of confirming a matter of this nature, be accounted good and ſolid, when we ſpeak of the Books of *Ariſtotle* or *Hippocrates*, it muſt be infinitely ſtronger when it is applyed to the Writings of the Apoſtles.

In ſhort, Theſe Books were written to be read by perſons of the meaneſt Capacities, by Women, by Children as well as by Doctors: And they treat of matters of which the whole World hath reaſon to be informed. If ſome *Jews* ſuffer'd Martyrdom under *Antiochus*, to preſerve the Books of the *Old Teſtament*, we have like examples, and as numerous, of thoſe who have done as much for the preſervation of the Books of the *New Teſtament*. Laſtly, If the *Jews* have looked upon thoſe as Traitors and Apoſtates, who gave up thoſe Books to the fury of their Perſecutors, the Chriſtians have teſtified no leſs averſion for thoſe who delivered

vered the Books of the Apoſtles to the fury of Heathens, even to the ſubjecting of them to the utmoſt rigour of Eccleſiaſtical Diſcipline, in the third Century and before.

CHAP. XVIII.

That one cannot doubt of the faithfulneſs of the witneſs of the Apoſtles concerning thoſe Facts which they relate.

NEither is it more difficult to eſtabliſh this ſecond Truth, That the faithfulneſs of the Apoſtles cannot be reaſonably queſtioned.

To be convinc'd of this, one needs only conſider the Character of the Apoſtles, the Character of their Writings, of their Sermons, of their Sufferings, and of their Martyrdom, and laſt of all the Character of thoſe amongſt whom they wrote theſe things, and preached them to their death.

As to their Sermons; The Apoſtles were contemporaries with Jeſus Chriſt; they ſpoke of things which they had ſeen, and diſtinguiſhed them carefully from thoſe which they had learnt another way. They were honeſt men, ſimple and without Learning, very fit to bear witneſs in matters of Fact. They were Perſons that preached nothing but Love, and the ſtudy of Truth; they proteſted in the midſt of their Sufferings, that they

they could not conceal the things which they had ſeen and heard; they are men without covetouſneſs or ambition; they forſake all that they poſſeſs in the World; S. *Matthew* leaves his Houſe and Goods to follow Jeſus Chriſt. Their Epiſtles ſpeak nothing more than inſtances of Chriſtian Poverty, of the loſs of their Goods, and of mighty inſtances of their Charity.

Theſe witneſſes are ſufficiently numerous, they preach and write in ſeveral places, and yet they agree admirably in their relations of the ſame Facts; it appears they had ſuch lively and diſtinct impreſſions, that they frequently make uſe of the very ſame words. The difference which is found in ſome part of their Books, is a manifeſt argument that nothing but the force of the matter made them agree in their Relations.

And indeed, how is it otherwiſe conceivable that four ſuch Authors as the Evangeliſts, ſhould agree about ſo many Opinions, ſo many Miracles, ſo many Prophecies, ſo many Diſputes, and in a word, about ſo many matters of Fact: ſhall we ſay that the ſecond took his Copy from the firſt, the third from the ſecond, *&c.*? This appears to be evidently falſe by peruſing of their works, and by the difference of their ſtile.

And certainly there appears ſo great ingenuity in their writings, that we cannot accuſe them of having had a deſign to deceive the world; they tell you plainly of the meanneſs of their condition and original; they ſincerely diſcover their own weakneſſes, their ambition, their vanity, their diſputes, their heats, their murmurings. S. *Matthew* tells us that he was a Publican, that is a Ser-

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vant of the *Roman* Power, whom the *Jews* look'd upon as an excommunicated perſon, and as an Enemy of their own Nation. He relates the ridiculous pretenſion of the Sons of *Zebedee*, founded on the carnal Notion of their Mother concerning the Temporal Kingdom of the Meſſiah. They ſet down S. *Peter*'s denying of his Maſter; they do not diſſemble their common ignorance, which made them expect a Temporal King in Jeſus Chriſt; they frankly publiſh their own incredulity, when *Mary Magdalen* brought them the news of our Saviour's Reſurrection; and they deſcribe the obſtinate reſiſtance of S. *Thomas* about this matter, againſt the unanimous teſtimony of all his Companions.

They do not content themſelves with ſaying in general that ſome illuſtrious Facts have happened; but they punctually ſet down all the Circumſtances, ſo that it clearly appears their deſign was to have their writings examined, and that after an exact ſearch men might acquieſce in the concluſions which they draw from thence. For inſtance, they do not tell us that Jeſus Chriſt raiſed a great many from the dead, they only tell us of three, deſcribing the Circumſtances of their Reſurrection, the time, the place, the age, the perſons, the aſſiſtants, and all theſe, with other particulars, which Impoſtors care not to enter upon, leſt they ſhould contradict themſelves, or be eaſily confuted.

I have already ſhewn, That the nature of the things themſelves which the Diſciples of Jeſus Chriſt have written, is ſuch as will not permit us to accuſe them of having had a deſign to impoſe upon

upon the world; they are Facts, and not Diſcourſes, which are left upon Record; and Facts relating to the moſt important matter in the world, than which none was ever more throughly examined; they are Facts which are linked ſo cloſely, and which have ſo ſtrict a dependance one upon the other, and ſo interwoven with the moſt publick Tranſactions, either in Civil or Religious Affairs, that it was impoſſible for them to form the deſign of ſuch an impoſture.

In ſhort, it is very remarkable, that theſe Facts were publickly known to the Kings of *Judea*, to the *Roman* Magiſtrate, to the principal Miniſters of State, and of their Religion, and to the whole Nation of the *Jews* aſſembled ten ſeveral times at their ſolemn Feaſts; to the ſeveral Sects of the Jewiſh Religion, the *Phariſees*, *Sadduces*, and *Eſſens*, who are attack'd, cenſured, and confuted in theſe Books.

One ought to conſider, after all, that the Apoſtles at firſt preached and wrote in *Judea*, where were the witneſſes of thoſe Miracles which they related, the Impotent, the Blind, the Deaf, which Jeſus Chriſt had reſtored, the Dead whom he raiſed, the *Scribes* and *Phariſees* whom he cenſured, the *Sadduces* whom he confuted, the Auditors who had heard him preach, the Towns wherein he had converſed moſt familiarly, the ſame People that followed him, the ſame Enemies that conſpired his death, the ſame Judges, and the ſame Authority which condemned him to death.

S. *Luke* in the relation he gives us of the Speeches and Apologies which the Apoſtles made before Kings, before the great Council of the *Jews*, and

in

in the midſt of their Synagogues, brings them in ſpeaking of the Facts contained in the Goſpel, as of matters publickly known and atteſted by a vaſt number of witneſſes. Thus S. *Peter* ſpeaks of them in the Tenth of the *Acts*, and the other Sacred Writers ſpake of them in the ſame manner in their Epiſtles.

Here is a new Character which we ought carefully to obſerve: we find no Temporal Intereſt which obliged the Diſciples to adhere to Jeſus Chriſt; and we find yet leſs reaſon to ſuppoſe, if Jeſus Chriſt had not been raiſed from the dead, and they had not ſeen him after his death, that they ſhould have had any concern for his Glory; they would certainly have condemned and anathematiz'd him as an Impoſtor, who by means of ſome falſe Miracles, and an affected Holineſs, had abuſed them. Whereas indeed we find that they defended the Glory of Jeſus Chriſt with ſo much heat, and that with ſo conſtant a Teſtimony to his Reſurrection, that they expoſed themſelves to all manner of Reproaches, to all ſorts of Puniſhment, and moſt cruel Deaths, to confirm the belief of that Fact. They deſpiſe the *Anathema*'s of the *Jewiſh* Synagogue, they contemn their publick Obloquies, they value not the hatred of their whole Nation. They preach this crucified Perſon in *Judea*, they preach him alſo in other Countries, that he might be equally adored by *Jews* and *Heathens*. They leave their Employments to follow this *Jeſus*, and after they had accompanied him three years, they depart from *Judea* to go and confound the Idolatry of the world, and within *Rome* it ſelf to decry the Gods they

they worſhipt, obliging them to acknowledge, him whom the men of *Jeruſalem* had crucified, for their God; him, who had been the deteſtation of the *Jews*: him, whom the *Roman* Magiſtrate had given up to their Fury, in making him undergo the puniſhment appointed for Slaves.

Laſtly, One ought to obſerve it as a thing of great weight in this whole Queſtion, That this Teſtimony of the Apoſtles which is ſo uniform, ſo ſolemn, ſo well confirmed by all manner of means, and ſealed with their deaths, is not conteſted or contradicted by any Hiſtorian of that time: There was nothing more eaſie, either for *Jews* or *Gentiles*, than to convince the World of the falſhood of the Facts related in the Goſpel; they had the Books of the Apoſtles in their hands, they were Maſters of the publick Records; it was a matter of general Concernment to the *Jews*, to oppoſe themſelves to an impoſture of ſo terrible a conſequence as the Hiſtory of the Evangeliſts was, if it had been entirely falſe; neither was it leſs the intereſt of the *Romans* to expoſe a Sect, of whom *Pliny* the younger tells us, that all ſorts of People joyned with them, tho' they were perſecuted with incredible violence. In the mean time we find no body that hath contradicted the Relation of the Apoſtles, nor any Author that has writ againſt Jeſus Chriſt or his Apoſtles. A long time after indeed there was a Book ſeen, call'd *The Acts of* Pilate, publiſhed by the Order of the Emperour *Maximian*, which endeavoured to overthrow the truth of the Facts that are related in the Goſpels; but thoſe Acts are

are contradicted by all the Heathen Historians yet remaining that were contemporay with the Apostles. Finally, a vast number of *Jews* and *Gentiles* were immediately convinced by the Authority of the Apostles, and a Belief in the Gospel hath passed from *Judea* to the Ends of the World, according to the Predictions which God gave by the Ministry of the Prophets, and by the mouth of our Saviour.

CHAP. XIX.

More Reasons to manifest the faithfulness of the Apostles.

WHat I have already alledged might be sufficient to establish the faithfulness of the Apostles, but for a fuller conviction of the Reader concerning so weighty a truth of our Religion, I shall superadd some few more Reflexions.

First of all, It cannot be deny'd that the form of the Writings of the *New Testament*, is vastly different from those which may be suspected as Forgeries. When the four Evangelists had related the miraculous Birth of *John the Baptist*, they next set down that of our Saviour Christ, with the Actions of his Life, until his Death, which does not comprehend above four or five years.

S. *Luke*

S. *Luke* writes the History of the Apostles, and in particular that of S. *Paul*, and takes in only the space of about Thirty years: Now let any one judge whether they who confine themselves to so narrow limits in respect of time, place, and persons, have any design to impose.

The remainder of these Books is composed of two sorts of Writings, one Epistolary, and the other Prophetical: For the Prophetical parts, time must prove the truth of the Predictions which are contained in the *Apocalyps*, as well as of those which are found in some of the Epistles of the Apostles.

As for the Epistles, besides some Moral Instructions, they are almost all employ'd in deciding some questions, which the Calling of the *Gentiles* to the Gospel, and the abolishing of the Ceremonial Law had raised in the minds of the *Jews*, who were converted to Christianity. We know that of all Writings, Epistles are the most certain Monuments, and those which men endeavour to forge least.

After all, It is certain that the Sacred Writers have with great care set down the time in which every Event happened, as well according to the stile of the *Jews*, in pointing out to us their solemn Feasts, as that of the *Gentiles*, by setting down the year of the *Roman* Emperour, and the Character of the *Roman* Magistrates.

A second Character which hinders us from accusing these Books as Forgeries, is this, That we cannot deny but that these Books are of a very particular nature; they contain several considerable Oracles which were to be fulfilled in the same

Generation, as that of the destruction of *Jerusalem*; they contain a continued Series of Miracles, of which all *Judea* was witness; they contain a great number of Sermons, preached upon several illustrious Occasions in the Synagogues, in the Temple of *Jerusalem*, and before thousands of People in the Wilderness. Let any one judge whether it would be an easie thing to make these Writings to be received, if we should suppose them to be lately forged.

This third Reflexion is also considerable: It is certain that the Gospel was preached in the greatest Cities of the Empire, by the Apostles, and the Disciples of Jesus: The History of the Apostles, and their Epistles themselves make it evident, that there were numerous Churches at *Rome*, *Corinth*, *Thessalonica*, *Philippi*, *Ephesus*, *Antioch*, and in several other famous places: It is also known that there were *Jewish* Synagogues in the same places; now if this be the Case, what possibility is there of suspecting the least imposture in the Books of the Apostles, if we consider how they were drawn up? The Disciples of Christ did not only preach in the Synagogues the same things which they have put in writing, but they also engaged the *Jews* to examine them, because they affirmed them with a constancy which the *Jews* could not but look upon as incredible obstinacy: First of all, That these were things beyond dispute, and could not be doubted of. Secondly, That they had been long since foretold by the Prophets. Thirdly, That they were an exact accomplishment of other Prophecies which had relation to the promised Messiah. Fourthly, That seeing they could not question the Facts contained in the Gospel, they ought to renounce Judaism, to receive Baptism and become Christians.

'Tis also of great importance to observe further, as I have already done, that the Books of the *New Testament* were penn'd, before the overthrow of the Commonwealth of the *Jews*. There are only some of the works of S. *John*, which were writ after the Destruction of *Jerusalem*. I have before observed that the Divine Providence order'd it so, that all the *Jews* for five and thirty years together, repairing thrice a year to *Jerusalem* at their three solemn Festivals, might have greater opportunities to inform themselves of the truth of the Facts contained in the Gospels, and the Acts of the Apostles.

To this Remark I shall now add two weighty Considerations; The one is, That the Christians for some years submitted themselves to the Ceremonial Law, and repaired with the *Jews* to *Jerusalem*, and by this means were engaged to examine the Facts contained in the Gospel. The other is, That after the Council of *Jerusalem*, they were dispensed with as to that Custom, as well as the observing of all the other parts of the Ceremonial Law, which set the Christians in a greater opposition to the *Jews*, and so encreased the necessity of examining very scrupulously on both sides, whatsoever was for or against them in those matters of Religion.

This Observation leads us naturally to another, That it is absolutely impossible that an imposture of this nature should not be discovered, when

there ariſeth a Difference between thoſe, who may be looked upon as the Authors of the Forgery, and thoſe who after them endeavoured to gain credit to it. Now if we find that one Diſciple of Jeſus Chriſt betrays him, without accuſing him of the leaſt Crime or Impoſture; if we have ſeen the Chriſtians at firſt united in the ſame Aſſemblies with the *Jews*; and that there were ſeveral Conteſts and Diſputes between the Apoſtles and thoſe firſt Chriſtians, yet without calling thoſe Facts which are continued in the Goſpel, in queſtion by either ſide: S. *Paul* takes notice of the Conteſts which happened betwixt him and S. *Peter*; S. *Luke* relates the heats between S. *Paul* and *Barnabas*, upon very ſlight occaſions, he ſets down alſo the Diſpute which aroſe about the diſtribution of Alms to the *Greek* and *Jewiſh* Widows: One ſee's that there aroſe a Diſpute amongſt the Apoſtles themſelves, about the Calling of the *Gentiles* to the Goſpel; one ſee's afterwards the obſtinacy of ſome of the *Jews* of the Sect of the *Phariſees*, who maintained the abſolute neceſſity of ſubmitting to Circumciſion, and S. *Paul*'s oppoſition ſet down in his Epiſtle to the *Galatians*. We need no more to make it evident, that there could be no concert nor colluſion between them, to deceive or impoſe upon thoſe to whom they preached the Goſpel.

Let us go a little further; a Diſpute happens about a Capital Point of Chriſtian Religion, about the Reſurrection; inſomuch that S. *Paul* thinks himſelf obliged to write concerning it to the *Corinthians*, ſo that there was a neceſſity of examining the truth of the Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt again.

again. Now we find that S. *Paul* to confirm this Doctrine in general, chiefly makes uſe of the inſtance of the Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt, which he proves by Arguments taken from the Fact it ſelf, that is, by witneſſes whom he produceth. Whereupon I make this conſiderable Reflexion, That in comparing this Diſpute of S. *Paul* with the Writings of the Evangeliſts, it clearly appears that they did not alledge all the proofs they might have done. None of them relates in particular the number of thoſe who ſaw Jeſus Chriſt in *Galilee* upon the holy Mountain; but S. *Paul*, who had examined the faithfulneſs of their Relations, and knew the witneſſes, ſpecifies the number, and obſerves that many of them were yet alive, if perhaps any of them were already dead.

I ſhall add only two Conſiderations more, which prove that it was even impoſſible for the Apoſtles to impoſe upon the World on this occaſion. The firſt is taken from their State and Condition. They are no great Lords, whoſe Power might terrifie any one from examining their Writings; or whoſe Reputation could not have been called in queſtion without danger: On the contrary, they were men of mean condition, employ'd in baſe Profeſſions, often caſt into Priſons, and from time to time oblig'd to appear before Magiſtrates for the ſame Doctrine and the ſame Facts which they publiſhed to the World. Let us conſider then whether it were an eaſie matter for S. *Paul* for inſtance, I ſay for this S. *Paul*, a maker of Tents, this S. *Paul* without Reputation, without Riches; this S. *Paul*

who was seized at *Jerusalem* after divers Persecutions, this S. *Paul* who was sent a Prisoner to *Rome*, and imprisoned there under the power of the *Roman* Magistrate, and who at last lost his life by *Nero*'s order, to make those blindly believe all he said, who were at liberty to examine, whether all that *Luke* related as happening to him at *Jerusalem*, at *Maltha*, at *Philippi*, at *Athens*, were indeed true, or only a framed Story.

The second thing we ought to observe is, That not only the Books of the Apostles were publickly read every Lord's day, by a constant Law, of which we have most authentick witnesses, in the Writings of the Apostles themselves, and in other ancient Books, which are still extant; but also that they were all of them written, not in *Hebrew*, which at that time was a dead Tongue; nor in *Syriack*, a Language spoken in a very few places; but in *Greek*, which at that time was the Language commonly received throughout all the *Roman* Empire; and besides, was the Language into which the Divine Providence had caused the *Old Testament* to be translated about three Ages before, that men might compare the ancient Oracles and their accomplishment together.

CHAP.

CHAP. XX.

That the whole Model of the Religion and Commonwealth of the Jews *is at this day so entirely destroyed, that the Messiah could no more be known.*

WHat I have before set down to establish the truth of those Facts which serve for a Foundation to the Christian Religion, is certainly sufficient to answer the design which I formed in writing these Reflexions upon the Books of the Holy Scripture; and I believe I may with justice conclude, That as nothing is more unconteſtable than the truth of those Books and of the Facts in them related; so there is nothing more certain than the Truth and Divinity of the Christian Religion. So that now I have only two things to do, with which I conceive it will be necessary to conclude these Reflexions: The one is, to shew the absolute impossibility of conceiving any other accomplishment of the ancient Oracles than what is set down in the Gospel: The other is, that concerning the Divisions amongst Christians, which are a scandal to the *Jews*, and especially concerning the difficulty of the Mysteries which the Gospel proposes, which are as so many stumbling Blocks to them which hinder them from discerning those Characters of Truth in the

Gospel, which by the fulfilling of the ancient Oracles, appear therein with so much lustre. The former of these shall be the Subject of this, and the latter of the next Chapter.

As the pulling down of the Scaffolds which were only set up to build a Palace, is an infallible sign that the Building is finished, so one may say, that the total defacing of the Model, which God had formed in the Law, that the Messiah at his coming might be certainly known, is an unanswerable proof that he is already come. It is worth our pains to make some Reflexions on this overthrow, that we may conclude against the *Jews*, that if the Messiah was yet to appear in the World, it would be impossible to know him, according to the Characters which God had given of him before his appearing.

In the first place therefore, whereas God had confined the *Jews* to the Land of *Canaan*, that they might be visible to all the Posterity of *Noah*, of whom one part, that is, the Off-spring of *Cham*, possessed *Egypt* and *Africa*; the Posterity of *Japhet*, *Europe* and the lesser *Asia*; and those of *Shem* the rest of *Asia*; the *Jews* at present are driven from that Country, and far from being restored to it after Seventy years, as they were by *Cyrus*; they have been for ever banished thence, by a Decree of the Emperour *Adrian*, who forbad them so much as to turn their eyes towards *Judea*, which was in the Year of Christ 135. The Heathen *Celsus* insults over them in these remarkable words, *They have no more*, saith he, *either Land or House remaining to them.*

Secondly,

Secondly, So far were they from having any Remainders of a Temporal Power, that they were then wholly deprived of it. See what *Tertullian* saith of them in the Year of our Saviour 204. *They wander up and down the World like dispersed Vagabonds, banished from their Climate and Country, without Man, without God for their King, and are not permitted, as Strangers, to set foot on their Native Soil.* We read a Decree of *Honorus* the Emperour, which deprives them of the Right of nominating their Patriarchs, or of paying them any Tribute; which shews that their Authority whas wholly extinct.

Dispersi, palabundi & cœli, sui ext. vagant. per orbem, sine homine, sine Deo Rege, quibus nec advenarum jure terram patriam saltem vestigio salutare conceditur. Apolog. cap. 21.

Thirdly, Their Temple at *Jerusalem* being destroyed in the Seventieth Year of our Lord, as that in *Egypt* called *Onion* was the year following, it could never be built again, notwithstanding that *Julian* the Apostate, out of his hatred to the Christians, favoured that Enterprise in the year of our Saviour 363. There is a Letter still extant which *Julian* writ to the *Jews*, to assure them of his Protection, and to encourage them to that work, but it was not so much his death which dashed that undertaking, as a very memorable opposition from Heaven.

Marcelinus a Heathen gives us this account of it. *And being desirous to propagate the Memory of his Government by the Greatness of his Works, he with*

Lib. 23. *Imperiique sui memoriam magnitudine operum gestiens propagare, ambitiosum quondam apud Hierosolymam Templum quod post multa & interneciva certamina, obsidente Vespasiano posteaq; Tito, ægre est expugnatum, instaurare sumptibus cogitabat immodicis: Negotiumq; maturandum Alypio dederat Antiochensi, qui olim Britannias curaverat pro-Præfectis. Cum itaq; rei idem fortiter instaret Alypius, juvaretq; provinciæ Rector, metuendi globi flammarum prope fundamenta crebris assultibus erumpentes, fecere locum exustis aliquoties operatibus inaccessum: hocq; modo elemento destinatius repellente, cessavit inceptum.*

vast

vaſt expence deſigned to rebuild the ſplendid Temple which was formerly at Jeruſalem, *which after many and bloody Battels, being beſieged by* Veſpaſian, *and afterwards by* Titus, *was at laſt taken with difficulty: he committed the care of haſtning the Buſineſs to* Alypius *of* Antioch, *who had formerly been Pro-præfect of* Britain. *As therefore this* Alypius *was vigorouſly proſecuting the Work, being aſſiſted by the Lieutenant of the Province, terrible Balls of Fire frequently breaking forth near the foundations, ſometimes burnt the Workmen, and made the place inacceſſible: Thus the deſign was laid aſide, The Element it ſelf beating them back on purpoſe.* *Julian* eaſily apprehended that their Religion would periſh, and that it could never be reſtored without the Temple.

In the fourth place, The obſervation of ſome of their Laws was abſolutely forbidden, as being contrary to thoſe of the *Roman* Empire. Thus they were not ſuffered to have many Wives.

Upon this overthrow many inconveniences followed, which it will be convenient to repreſent at one view.

1. They no longer know thoſe perſons who at the firſt Diviſion of the Land by *Joſhua*, were Owners of the different parts of the Land of *Canaan*.

2. Their Families and Tribes are confounded; their Jubilee, which could not be kept but in the Land of *Canaan*, and which obliged them to ſtudy their Genealogies, having ceaſed long ſince.

3. The Family of *David* is at this day utterly unknown.

4. They

4. They have no more lawful Prieſts to obſerve the Primogeniture, to examine the Tokens of Virginity, tho' it appears, that according to God's deſign, theſe Laws were given on purpoſe to aſcertain the knowledge of the Meſſiah, and to be like Incloſures about this important Truth, in the compaſs of which it might be the better examined.

Certainly if the *Jews* were ſtill in poſſeſſion of *Judea*, if they had their Kings of the Tribe of *Judah*, if they had their Prieſts, if they were aſſured of their Genealogies, if they ſtill enjoyed all the other neceſſary means for eſtabliſhing the certainty of their Deſcents, if their Temple had ſtill ſubſiſted in its former luſtre, and that the Sacrifices appointed by the Laws were ſtill offered there: The *Jews* might boldly anſwer that the *Shiloh* was not yet come, that *is*, they ought not to deſpair of ſeeing the Meſſiah born at *Bethlehem*, of the Seed of *David*, and entring the Temple of *Jeruſalem*. Then the Prophecy of *Daniel*, which determins 490 years for the term in which the Meſſiah was to appear, and be cut off by a violent Death and Puniſhment, would ſeem to be eluded.

But the term of the Meſſiah's coming is paſt, the Commonwealth of the *Jews* is overturned, the Temple of *Jeruſalem* is deſtroyed 1600 years ſince; there are no more Genealogies among the *Jews*, they do not know their Tribes, much leſs their Families: How then can it be ſuppoſed that God ſhould be true in his Oracles (as we muſt acknowledge him to be) if they were never anſwered by the Event.

To

To ſpeak the truth, it is impoſſible to conſider the Arguments we have alledged to prove that Jeſus Chriſt is the Meſſiah, and eſpecially thoſe Demonſtrations which the Apoſtles have given us, without acknowledging theſe two things:

The firſt is, That it was very eaſie at the time of Jeſus Chriſt's appearing, to examine whether he who declared himſelf to be the Meſſiah, were ſo indeed; ſo it is abſolutely impoſſible to examine it, or know it, ſince the deſtruction of that Model, if we ſuppoſe that God at firſt framed it, for the determining of this queſtion, as we have no reaſon to doubt it.

The ſecond is, That the Chriſtians exactly followed this Divine Model, and being convinced of the truth of the Facts which exactly correſponded with it, and which anſwered it in all its parts, they had all the Reaſon imaginable to believe that Jeſus Chriſt was the Meſſiah.

In ſhort, if we conſider it well, we ſhall find that the whole Chriſtian Religion is nothing but a queſtion of Fact between the *Jews* and *Chriſtians*: But ſuch a queſtion as the *Jews* at preſent are not in a condition to maintain againſt the Chriſtians.

Both *Jews* and Chriſtians agree in the Characters of the Meſſiah, or at leaſt about the moſt of them. According to theſe Characters the Meſſiah ought to be come: The Chriſtians maintain that they may be found in Jeſus Chriſt, and they prove it by matter of Fact; wherefore we muſt conclude, That either theſe Characters attributed to the Meſſiah, are not proper Characters

ters to know him by, and ſo the Wiſdom of God will be eluded, and both *Jews* and Chriſtians equally deceived, in taking that for a Character of the Meſſiah which is not; or elſe that both the Meſſiah is certainly come, and and that He is no other than that Jeſus whom we worſhip.

CHAP. XXI.

That the greatneſs of the Myſteries of the Chriſtian Religion; and the Diviſion which is amongſt Chriſtians, cannot be any prejudice to the proofs of the truth of the Chriſtian Religion.

I Come now to examine the double ſtumbling Block which the *Jews* pretend againſt the Chriſtian Religion. *This Religion*, ſay they, *propounds Doctrines that are inconceivable, and contrary to Reaſon: For inſtance, that of the Trinity, that of the Incarnation and the Divinity of the Meſſiah.* Theſe are the Doctrines which the *Jews* reject, as abſolutely incompatible with the Books of the *Old Teſtament*, which we have received from their hands.

But

But it is an easie matter to answer this Objection; 1. It is founded upon a total forgetfulness of the solidity of those proofs of Fact, which I have alledged. Jesus Christ is risen from the dead, this is a Fact confirmed by several Witnesses. It appears from *Tacitus*, that Jesus Christ suffered death under *Tiberius*, *Pontius Pilate* being Governour of *Judea*. It is known that *Claudius* banished the Christians from *Rome*, in the Year of our Lord 54. It is evident from *Tacitus*, in his Life of *Nero*, that he accused the Christians of burning the City of *Rome*, which himself was the Author of; the Christians therefore made a considerable Body in the Capital City of the Empire, and this happened in the year of our Lord 64. *Suetonius* says the same thing. 2. It appears that *Pliny*, in *Trajan*'s time, takes notice of the manner of their Meetings. 3. *Dion Cassius* sets down the Accusation brought in against *Flavius* and *Domitilla*, as against Atheists; which is the Title *Julian* the Apostate gives to *Constantine*, because the Christians rejected the worship of the Heathen Gods. 4. It appears by the latter end of the *Acts of the Apostles* that this Book was writ in the Year of our Lord 63, and yet this Book supposes the Gospel of S. *Luke* to have been written before it, and S. *Luke*'s Gospel takes it for granted, that some of the other Gospels were already published. 5. It appears from the Writings of *Clemens Romanus*, that the Epistle to the *Hebrews* was then written, and the same may be gathered from the Books of S. *Ignatius*, *Polycarp*; and S. *Justin*. These Facts which are certain, are sufficient to prove that immediately after the death of Jesus Christ, his Apostles, and their Disciples, as Eye witnesses, maintained the truth of his Resurrection. After this it may indeed be disputed, by what Power he was raised, whether by a Divine Power, or by his own; but it is ridiculous to dispute the Fact by reasonings drawn from pretended Absurdities which one may think to find in the Doctrines of the *Gospel*.

Secondly, These Mysteries, as for instance, that of the Trinity, relates to the Divine Nature, which is incomprehensible, so that it is no strange thing if an Idea of it be proposed to us, which not being distinctly known by us, may raise Difficulties and Perplexities in our Minds. If I would discourse with one born blind, of the Sun, of its Light and Heat, and should attribute to the Sun the Production of Light, and afterwards of Heat, he would find an infinite trouble not to imagine three Suns. It is known how the Philosophers, who agreed about the Unity of the Soul, have notwithstanding been obliged to attribute several Faculties to it, which the common People look upon as very different things, and which seem to oppose the Idea's of its Unity and Simplicity.

In the third place, The Christians prove very solidly, that these Mysteries have been clearly proposed by the Apostles, who received their light from Heaven as to these Truths, and so might necessarily be believed upon their word, for the same reason that the Prophets of the *Old Testament* were formerly believed.

Moreover, they assert that these Doctrines were

were first expressed, tho' not so clearly, in the *Old Testament*, which is in the hands of the *Jews*, the mortal Enemies of Christians.

I add to these Remarks, that most of those Facts whose truth is so invincibly established, suppose these Doctrines; and that the whole frame of the Religion doth so necessarily require them, that we rob it of a considerable part of its Glory in questioning or contesting any of them.

These Reflexions may suffice in general to resolve this difficulty of the *Jews*; and for a more particular Satisfaction, we refer the Reader to those Books which purposely treat of these Mysteries, desiring him to observe carefully, that commonly the most difficult Objections of Hereticks against these matters, do rather oppose the terms which are made use of, or the notions which men follow in speaking of these truths, than the Propositions contained in the Writings of the *New Testament*.

At least one may be assured, that the *Jews* are constrained to resolve several parallel Objections, to which one can scarcely give a satisfactory Answer, without borrowing some Distinctions and Notions from the Christians.

Neither can the second Objection of the *Jews* give us any more disturbance. It is true that there have been Divisions amongst Christians, and are still to this day; What can we conclude thence? Can we reasonably conclude that therefore the first Founders of Christianity were doubtful concerning the truth of those Facts which are the support and foundation of it.

On

On the contrary, upon an attentive Observation one may find,

1. That Heresies have only served to render the truth of these Facts more inconteſtable, by obliging those that had consider'd of them, to examine their certainty with more care and application. This is the Judgment one ought to make upon all those Heresies in the second Age, about the truth of the Flesh of Jesus Christ, or about the truth of his Death: From thence men took occasion to take notice of, and collect with great care all the Circumstances that prove the truth of both these Facts.

2. We find that the greatest part of these Contests do not concern the truth of the Facts, but the several Consequences drawn from them, the truth of those Matters continuing still beyond dispute. This we find in the Dispute raised about the *Millennium*, the truth of the Promises of Jesus Christ being equally believed by both the disputing Parties; but differently understood, according to the temper of those that consider'd of them; some forming gross and sensual Conceptions concerning them; others having a more spiritual relish, which they had acquired by studying the Prophecies, and their true sense.

3. We find that this Division which hath sprung up amongst Christians, is one of the most solid proofs of the truth of the Books of the *New Testament*. If some Fools have endeavoured to decry some of them, or to falsifie some particular places, we see that both Parties unite to repel that violence, by producing their Co-

 pies,

pies, and beating back the Impostors with their united strength. One see's that *Tertullian*, tho' a *Montanist*, writ Prescriptions against Hereticks; and *Epiphanius* takes notice (without any respect to some that were Orthodox) of their Crime in blotting out of their Copies, that Christ had wept.

It is known that the Division of the *Jews* into *Karaites* and *Thalmudists*, the Jealousie between the *Jews* and *Samaritans*, and the Division between the *Jews* and *Christians*, is a means of preserving the Scripture, and hindering its Corruption, each Party being very vigilant to hinder their Adversaries from attempting any thing to its prejudice, in corrupting a Book which they consider as common to them all.

I might observe many other advantages which accrew to the Truth from these Human Failings; but I will only instance in one, which has always seem'd to me very considerable; and that is, That these Hereticks distinctly prove the truth of the Predictions of our Saviour. An impious person would have reason to accuse our Oracles as false, if there had never been any Heresies. But Truth triumphs in seeing so great a multitude of them, who the more they encrease, the more she see's her self confirm'd and established. This is the Reason induced God to permit so great an increase in the first Ages, when the Truth, meeting with the greatest Opposition by Persecutions, stood in the greatest need of sensible Characters, by which it might be known.

I conclude this Work with desiring my Reader to consider these Reflexions upon the Holy Scripture here propounded, with a serious attention, and to examine the Coherence and Indissoluble Connexion of them; and with prayer to God that it may please him to make them serviceable to advance the Glory of his Name, which is the only end I have proposed to my self in the writing of them.

FINIS.