

THE
WISDOM AND NECESSITY
OF THE
MOSAIC REVELATION,
A
SERMON

PREACHED AT THE
CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF YORK,

JUNE 20, 1772.

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TO THE MOST REVEREND

R O B E R T

LORD ARCHBISHOP OF YORK,

THE FOLLOWING DISCOURSE

IS INSCRIBED.

BY HIS GRACE'S DUTIFUL,

AND MOST OBLIGED SERVANT,

THE AUTHOR.

G A L. iii. 19.

WHEREFORE THEN SERVETH THE LAW?

IT is difficult for Man to form any just judgment concerning the decisions of God, for whilst the Creator is * *from everlasting to everlasting*, knows the past, the present, and the future, the Creature is circumscribed in his Ideas, his days are † *as an hand breadth*, and his age is *as nothing*. Yet, however short the Life of Man is, or however limited his Understanding, he cannot but discern and confess the astonishing goodness of God, that Goodness which hath been evidently apparent, in every Age and Period of the World. Since the Almighty formed ‡ *the Heavens and the Earth*, he never left himself without Witness, but continued to manifest himself gradually, § *at sundry times*, as St. Paul tells us, *and in divers manners*:

* Ps. xc. 2. † Ps. xxxix. 5. ‡ Ps. xc. 2. Acts xvii. 24.

§ Heb. i. 1. See Gen. ii. 23, 24. Matt. xix. 5. Mark x. 7. 1 Cor. xvi. 16. See Bishop Bull on the Subject, p. 182. and Jurieu's Crit. Hist. Vol. I. p. 34. By *Visions*, Gen. xxxi. 24. Job xxxiii. 14, 15. By *the Prophets*, Heb. i. 1. By *Preaching*, Titus i. 3. By *the appearing of our Saviour*, 2 Tim. i. 10. Num. xii. 6, 7, 8. By *Dreams*, Job iv. 13. Gen. xx. 3. Dan. ii. 1.

A

*ners: at first by the * light of Nature, and when that light proved insufficient for the important purposes of Religion, † He then established a Testimony in Jacob, and appointed a Law in Israel, which he commanded our Forefathers to teach their Children, that their Posterity might know it, and the Children which were yet unborn, to the intent that when they came up they might shew their Children the same, that they might put their trust in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his Commandments.*

THUS, as the capacities of Men differed, in different Ages of the World, the external form of Religion differed also. To the Religion of Nature the ‡ Patriarchal, to the Patriarchal the Mosaic, to the Mosaic the Christian Dispensation succeeded, all concentrating to one and the same point, the Instruction and Salvation of Man.

THE Sacred Writers have repeatedly informed us, that the Great Scheme of our Redemption in Christ Jesus, was || *fore-ordained before the foundation of the world: § God seeth not, as Man seeth; ¶ a thousand years in his sight are but as yesterday; † He declares the End from the beginning, and from Ancient Times, the things*

* Rom. i. 19, 20. — ii. 14, 15. Jer. li. 15. *Ray's Wisdom of God in the Creation, and Cic. de Natura Deorum.*

† Pl. lxxviii. 5, 6, 7. This Law may properly be divided into three several and distinct parts: in regard to the *Moral* part, which is eternal and unchangeable, see Deut. ix. 15. Exod. xxiv. 1. Ibid. xxxii. 15. Matt. xxii. 40. The *Ceremonial* and *Judicial* parts, were peculiar to the Jews only; Acts xv. 21. Ibid. x. 23—29. Heb. viii. 6—13.

‡ So called from Πατριὰ and ἀρχαί. See *Edwards's Survey of Religion*, B. i.

§ Ephes. i. 4. Col. i. 26. Tit. i. 2. Pet. i. 20. See also *Jenkin's Reasonableness*, Vol. II.

§ 1 Sam. xvi. 7.

¶ Pl. xc. 2.

† Isaiah lxvi. 10, 11.

things that are not yet done; His ways are equal and just; He disposes all Events, even the most distant, with unerring Wisdom; He guides the whole fabric of the Universe, and all things therein contained, with the same Almighty facility, with which he at first created them. When therefore * *the most High divided to the Nations their inheritance, and determined the bounds of their habitation*, he for reasons the most excellent, though simple Man will not allow it, † *chose Israel for his peculiar Treasure*, as the Psalmist asserts; *i. e.* He distinguished the Jews eminently, by giving them ‡ *Statutes more Righteous* than any other Nation, for unto them as the Apostle expresses it, || *appertained the adoption, and the Glory, and the Covenant, and the giving of the Law, and the Service of God, and the Promises*. Why then did the Almighty make his Will known to Moses, by the Ministry of § Angels? Why take the people of Israel under his more immediate protection? Why vouchsafe to them so very extraordinary a Revelation? Why assign them, so peculiar a Constitution, or as the Apostle puts the question, *Wherefore then serveth the Law?* What in truth, was its chief end, and real purport? St. Paul who asks the question, does himself assign the reason: *it was added*, says he, to the preceding system of Religion, *i. e.* to the Patriarchal, *because of transgressions*, because at the time, when the Mosaic Constitution was first established, Mankind had almost universally fallen from * * that System, and were involved in Polytheism, and Idolatry: *it was added*, not for the use of the Jews alone, independent

* Deut. xxxii. 8. Acts xviith, xxvith.

† Ps. cxxxv. 4.

‡ Deut. iv. 7, 8. Nehemiah ix. 13.

|| Rom. ix. 4.

§ Acts vii. 35. Gal. iii. 19. * * See Mr. Bate's Examination of Chubb, p. 90.

dependent of all others, as * several passages in the Sacred Records clearly demonstrate, but that the Neighbouring Nations also, the *Egyptians*, the *Arabians*, the *Chaldeans*, the *Assyrians*, and they who from all parts of the World frequented the Maritime Towns of † *Sidon* and ‡ *Tyre*, might hear of their extraordinary *Wisdom* in matters of Religion, || and say, *surely this great Nation, is a wise, and understanding people; for what Nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, and what Nation is there so great, that hath Statutes and Judgments so Righteous? § God is of a truth no respecter of Persons: * * He is not the God of the Jews only: His Paternal Goodness is extended to all the Sons and Daughters of Adam, indiscriminately, and without exception. The Law of Moses, therefore, given to the Jews, was not to be, as they imagined, of perpetual obligation: it was a mere †† Temporary Institution, which drew towards its conclusion, after the appearance of John the Baptist; the Sacrifice and the Oblation enjoined in the Law, were to cease, and accordingly did cease, as predicted by the Prophet ‡‡ Daniel, with the abolishing of which, the Jewish*
Worship

* See Exod. vii. 15.—ix. 16.—xiv. 4. Num. xiv. 13. Ibid. xxi. Deut. iv. 6. 1 Kings viii. 41, 42, 43. Pl. xxvi. 3.

† See Isaiah xxiii. 12. Justin. Lib. 18.

‡ See the Prophet Isaiah xxiii. 3, 4, 8. and Ezek. xxvii. 3, 25. ix. 33. and Zech. ix. 3.

|| Deut. iv. 6, 7, 8.

§ Acts x. 34.

* * Rom. iii. 29.

†† This establishment continued about fourteen hundred years; the *Scepter*, as predicted, did not depart from *Judah* till *Shiloh* came, who was foretold to be the gathering of the People, Gen. xlix. 10. or as the Hebrew word is rendered by the Jewish Commentators, *πρόσδοξία* the expectation of the People.

‡‡ Dan. ix. 27. Sulpitius Severus, Lib. 2. Eusebius Ev. Hist. 4. 6. Origen. Cont. Cels. 11. p. 56. Eusebius Demonstr. Evang. 1. 1.

The design of *Sacrifice* is expressly declared, Lev. i. 4. and its insufficiency shewn, Heb. x. i. It was typical and expressive of that *Only True Atoning Sacrifice*, which the Son of God was to offer *in due time*.

Worship and Church, were brought to a final period. The Law of Moses, then, * *made nothing perfect*; it was a state of discipline and † *bondage under the elements of this World*, a ‡ *Schoolmaster* to instruct them in the Rudiments of Religion, to lay before them the beginning or first opening of an universal System, being declaratory and expressive of that Future Dispensation, and those Future Benefits, which were to be more explicitly unfolded in || *the Ages to come*, when God should § *raise them up* another Prophet *from among their brethren*, who according to the Predictions of ** *David*, and †† *Zechariah*, should be both King, and High Priest, and who in the words of *St. Paul*, should be ‡‡ *counted worthy of more glory, than even the faithful Moses himself*. In the Old Testament, we read only of one Prophet, the Prophet ||| *Jonah*, who was expressly sent to the Gentiles, for their instruction, and information: his appointment to that Office, was a premonition to the People, that the Almighty did intend, in *the fulness of time*, as the Scripture speaks, to §§ *raise up a root of Jesse*, to *break down the middle wall of Partition*, and finally to unite all Nations, in one communion, under one great Shepherd, and Bishop of their Souls.

IN the mean time, till that Glorious, and long promised Event should take place, the People of *Israel* were honored, in

* Heb. vii. 19. † Gal. iv. 3. ‡ παιδαγωγος, Ibid. v. 24.

|| εν τοις αἰῶσι τοις ἐπερχομένοις. Ephes. ii. 7.

§ Deut. xviii. 18. ἀναστήσω· εἰς τὴν ἀναστήναι προφῆτην ὡς σὺ. So also Heb. ii. 17. Πίστος Ἀρχιερεὺς.

** Ps. cx. †† Sech. 6. verse 13.

‡‡ Heb. iii. 2, 5. and the reason is assigned Acts xiii. 38, 39.

||| Jonah i. 3. §§ See Isaiah xi. 10. Eph. ii. 14. 1 Pet. ii. 25.

in an * extraordinary manner; God himself condescended to be their † Instructor, and Guide; It was their distinguished privilege to know God, and the adoration due to him; the preservation of true Religion, was to be traced among them only, of all the Nations of the Earth: They were therefore to be God's ‡ *Witnesses*, as he himself terms them, *that he was God*; the One, Supreme, Universal God, the Maker and Governor of the whole World; that God, concerning whom the Idolatrous Nations retained no just conception whatsoever, for they worshipped a Multiplicity of *Idols*, vain objects of Trust, and || *no Gods, but the work of Men's hands, Wood and Stone*: Some of them, even the wisest and most civilized, attributed all events to § Fate, or Unguided Chance, whilst others, to deprecate the Wrath of their Pretended Deities, were addicted not only to the most ridiculous ceremonies, but to the most ** Immoral and Barbarous Rites. The Establishment, therefore,

* See Joseph. cont. Ap. and Selden de Jure Gent. passim.

† Warburton's Divine Legat. B. 5. S. 2. p. 366, 374, &c.

‡ Isaiah xliii. 10, 12.

|| 2 Kings xix. 18. Maimonides Mor. Nevoc. L. 3. C. 37. Macrobi. Saturn. Lib. 3. C. 8.

§ Their miserable, wretched, dubious State, is appositely expressed by the Historian *Tacitus*: "Mihi hæc ac talia audienti in incerto judicium est, fatone res Humanæ et necessitate immutabili, an forte volvantur; quippe Sapientissimos Veterum, quique eorum sectam æmulantur, diversos reperies, ac multis insitam Opinionem, non initia Nostra, non Finem, non denique Homines, Diis Curæ." Tacit. Annal. Lib. 6.

** Arnobius, L. 5. p. 175. Schædus de Diis Germanis, p. 130. Natalis Comit. L. 5. p. 491. Athenæi Deipnos. L. xiv. p. 647. Justin. L. 18. c. 5. Ibid. Lib. 18. Cap. 6. Schædus de Diis Germanis, p. 593. On this account the *Assyrians* and *Egyptians* were severely punished, as *Constantine* affirms; Μεμφοῖς καὶ Βαβυλῶν ἐρημώθητε, καὶ οἱ οἰκητοὶ καταλείψουσιν αὐτὰ μετὰ τῶν πατρῶων Θεῶν. Constant. Orat. Cap. 16. apud Euseb. Eccles. Hist. p. 697. For these reasons, and because the people of *Tyre* were enemies to the Jews, see Ezek. xxvi. 2—28. Joel iii. 1—8. Amos i. 9. therefore the Almighty devoted them to destruction.

fore, of the Mosaic Constitution, was an unquestionable proof of the Wisdom, the Goodness, and the Justice of God: it was a preservative against Idolatry, and a standing Confutation of it: it turned many from the adoration of Idols, to the adoration of the living God. The People of Israël, considered as *God's Witnesses*, were well instructed for that important end: they were not only in possession of those Sacred Records, which contained the promise of the Messiah, but they had *seen*, and therefore could attest * *his glory among the Heathen, his wonders among all the people; that he is great, and greatly to be praised, and that he is to be feared above all Gods*: they had *seen*, and therefore could attest the Extraordinary Facts done in † *Egypt*, at the ‡ *Red Sea*, and at the promulgation of the Law on *Mount Sinai*, from whence, to their great || *Terror*, and extreme astonishment, the Almighty gave the most illustrious exhibition of his Divine Presence and Majesty. Those famous Lawgivers, *Lycurgus*, *Minos*, *Numa*, and Others, were desirous of giving their Laws the § appearance at least, of a Divine Authority. So was the Imposter *Mahomet*, who in his *Koran* calls himself the Messenger of God. They all pretended that they

* Pl. xcvi. 3, 4, 5.

† *Pharaoh* might well imagine, that he had the people of Israël *entangled* and *shut in*; see Exod. xiv. 3. The road through which they passed was very straight, admitting only *five in a rank*; Exod. xiii. 18. On each side were Mountains impassable: the Red-Sea in front, and their Enemies the *Egyptians* at their backs.

‡ Ancient Writers bear testimony to the truth of this astonishing event. See Euseb. Præp. Evang. Lib. 9. Cap. 27. Orosii, Lib. I. ex Greg. Tur. Hist. Lib. 1. Cap. 10. and Diod. Sic. Hist. Lib. 3. p. 174. Tom. I. Edit. Rhodem. Also Dr. *Shaw's* learned Remarks; see his Travels, p. 352.

|| See Le Clerc on Gen. xvi. 13.

§ *Lycurgus* persuaded the *Spartans* that his Laws were given by *Apollo*, *Numa* persuaded the *Romans* that his were given by *Egeria*.

they received their respective Systems from Heaven, but the truth of this depended on their own affirmations only : they had No Witnesses to appear on their behalf, and give evidence to the truth of their Declarations. Not so, the Divine Law-giver MOSES. He put the proof of the Divine Authority of his Law, upon sensible facts, of the most public Nature. The whole body of the *Jews*, not the * *Heads of their Tribes*, and of *their Elders* only, but their whole Body, *all Israel assembled*, six hundred thousand People, and upwards, were his Witnesses and Attestators. When the immutable part of the Law was delivered from *Sinai*, They All † *heard the Voice of the Living God*, They All, ‡ *saw His Glory and His Greatness*. But the People of Israel are not the only Witnesses in this important cause: The || *Babylonians*, the § *Egyptians*, the ** *Chaldeans*, the †† *Arabians*, the ‡‡ *Tyrians*, All give evidence to the truth of the Mosaic Revelation; ||| *all that is written in the Book, which the Prophet Jeremiah prophesied*, and the Other Prophets, *against All these Nations*, have been literally fulfilled. This is a piece of Evidence, clear and incontestable : here the Knowledge and the Power of God, are both concerned, the Power of God effecting what the Knowledge of God alone could have foretold. These Nations, through their intercourse with the Israelites, had opportunities of knowing the true God, and his True Religion, but they neglected those
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* Deut. v. 23.

† Ibid. verse 26.

‡ Ibid. verse 24.

|| Jer. xxv. 12. Babylon, Chaldaicarum gentium caput, diu summam claritatem obtinuit in toto Orbe, propter quam reliqua pars Mesopotamiæ, Assyriæque, Babylonia appellata est. Plin, Lib. 6. Cap. 26.

§ See Ezek. xxix. 30.

** Jer. xxv. 12.

†† Ibid. ver. 24.

‡‡ Ibid. ver. 22.

||| Jer. xxv. 13.

opportunities, and in despite of every admonition, obstinately adhered to their own Idolatrous Worship, a Crime of the deepest die, for which reason the Almighty first forewarned, then * punished them.

MODERN Infidels may adopt the maxims of a *Bolingbroke*, or a *Voltaire*; may disavow every thing, that doth not fall within the line of their own finite understandings, not considering, that *their ways are not as God's ways, nor their thoughts as his thoughts; but as the Heavens are high above the Earth, so are His ways above their ways, and His thoughts above their thoughts.* The time is coming, when these Men, and their Disciples also, shall receive their Punishment, for their Ingratitude and Rebellious opposition to the most High; for their denial and disavowal of God's Revelations, which were graciously given for the Consolation, and Instruction of Man. We all believe the coming of the Lord to judgment, and we know not how soon he may be *revealed from heaven with his mighty Angels*, to take vengeance on his Enemies; on those, who have profanely written, or profanely argued against the truth of the Jewish, and the Christian Scriptures. When that Terrible day comes, and these wonderfully Wise Men, these Profound Investigators of Truth, are summoned before the Tribunal of the Almighty, on their Arraignment, what can they plead in their defence? They cannot plead Ignorance of God's Law,

* Jer. xxv. 12. Jeremiah prophesied more than 600, Isaiah more than 700, and Ezekiel almost 600 Years before Christ. According to the prediction of Ezekiel, c. xix. 25. Egypt hath been *diminished* and oppressed by Persians, Macedonians, Romans, Saracens, and Turks. The Prophecies relative to the other nations were fulfilled with the same accuracy.

Law, for They had *Moses and the Prophets*, nay, they had that more perfect Revelation, foretold from the beginning of the World, and communicated by our most blessed Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, which instead of reverencing, They ridiculed, and abused. Another circumstance attendant on these Men, ought to be considered. The uncommon, and extraordinary Abilities, with which they were endowed, and which ought, therefore, to have been employed in the Service, and to the Glory of God, but, which They basely perverted, by attempting to destroy the Credit, and to weaken the Authority of Revealed Religion in general, will add, greatly add to the Severity of their Condemnation.

THE Conclusion, from what hath been said, is clear and undeniable; that All Scripture, all that is contained in the Sacred Canonical Books, both of the Old, and of the New Testament, is *given by Inspiration of God*, and therefore ought to be revered, and obeyed.

I WILL sum up the whole in the incomparable words of the Immortal *Chillingworth*, a Man for Learning and Strength of Judgment, inferior to none: * “Propose me any thing (says this great Man) out of this Book, (meaning the Bible) and require whether I believe or no, and seem it never so incomprehensible to Human Reason, I will subscribe it with hand and heart, as knowing no Demonstration can be stronger than this, God hath said so, therefore it is True.”

* See Chillingworth's Religion of Protestants, Chap. 6. p. 335.

