

those evidences; but there is an additional testimony to their credibility and truth as well as to their genuineness, which is afforded by their agreement with civil history, and which is too valuable to be passed in a cursory manner.

§ 1. Testimonies from Civil History to the Credibility of the Old Testament.

The Scripture History agrees, in a surprising manner, with the most authentic records that remain of the events, customs, and manners of the countries and ages to which it stands related. The rise and fall of empires, the revolutions that have taken place in the world, and the grand outlines of chronology, as mentioned or referred to in the Scriptures, are coincident with those stated by the most ancient writers that are extant; while the palpable errors in these respects, which are detected in the apocryphal books, constitute one of the most decisive reasons for rejecting them as spurious. The history of the Bible is of far greater antiquity than any other records extant in the world; and it is remarkable that, in numerous instances, it shows the real origin of those absurd fables which disgrace and invalidate all other histories of those remote times; which is no feeble proof that it was derived from some surer source than human tradition. The facts recorded in the Old Testament cannot be disproved; but, on the contrary, they are confirmed by the traditional accounts of almost all nations. Mr. Hume, indeed, affirmed that the Pentateuch was "wrote [written] in all probability long after the facts it relates." That this book was written long after some of the facts which it relates is not denied; but that it was written long after *all* or even most of those facts, there is (as we have already shown) no reason to believe. If, as Dr. Campbell forcibly remarked (and Mr. Hume neither did nor could refute the remark), this writer meant to signify by the expression quoted, that this was in all probability the case, why did he not produce the grounds on which such probability is founded? Shall a bold assertion pass for argument? or can it be expected that any one should consider reasons, which are only in general supposed, but not specified?

Mr. Hume added that the Pentateuch was "corroborated by no concurring testimony." To which we may reply, that it is as little invalidated by any *contradicting* testimony; and both for this plain reason, because there is no human composition that can be compared with this in respect of antiquity. It were absurd to require that the truth of Moses's history should be attested by heathen writers of the same or nearly the same antiquity with himself; since we know that those who affected to fix upon other nations the name of barbarians, were in his time, and for several centuries afterwards, themselves barbarians. But though the Pentateuch is not corroborated by the concurrent testimonies of any coeval histories, because if such histories were ever extant, they have long since perished, yet it is not on that account destitute of collateral evidence. On the contrary, its

authority is legible in the few fragments that remain of the earliest writers; and subsequent historians have fully confirmed it by the accounts which they give, though evidently mixed with depravation, of the history of the Jews, and of the legislation of Moses; as will appear from the following instances, selected out of a greater number which have been pointed out, and treated at length by various learned men.

I. TESTIMONIES TO THE MOSAIC ACCOUNT OF THE CREATION OF THE WORLD.

1. The heathens had a tradition among them concerning the *Primeval Chaos whence the World arose*, and the production of all things by the efficiency of a supreme mind, which bears so close a resemblance to the Mosaic account of the creation, as proves that they all originated from one common source: while the striking contrast between the unadorned simplicity of the one, and the allegorical turgidity of the others, accurately distinguishes the inspired narrative from the distorted tradition. This remark applies particularly to the Chaldean, Egyptian, Phœnician, Hindoo, Chinese, Etruscan, Gothic, Greek, and American Cosmogonies.¹

2. One of the most striking collateral confirmations of the Mosaic history of the creation, is the general adoption of the division of time into *weeks*, which extends from the Christian states of Europe to the remote shores of Hindostan, and has equally prevailed among the Hebrews, the Egyptians, Chinese, Greeks, Romans, and northern barbarians; — nations, some of whom had little or no intercourse with others, and were not even known by name to the Hebrews. It is to be observed, that there is a great difference between the concurrence of nations in the division of time into *weeks*, and their concurrence in the other periodical divisions into *years*, *months*, and *days*. These divisions arise from such natural causes as are everywhere obvious, viz. the annual and diurnal revolutions of the sun, and the revolution of the moon. The division into *weeks*, on the contrary, seems perfectly arbitrary: consequently its prevailing in distant countries, and among nations which had no communication with one another, affords a strong presumption that it must have been derived from some remote tradition (as that of the creation), which was never totally obliterated from the memory of the Gentiles, and which tradition has been older than the dispersion of mankind into different regions. It is easy to conceive, that the practice, in rude and barbarous ages, might remain through habit, when the tradition on which it was founded was entirely lost: it is easy to conceive, that, afterwards, people addicted to idolatry, or who, like the Egyptians, had become proficient in astronomy, should assign to the different days of the week the names of their deities or of their planets.²

3. Even the Mosaic method of reckoning by nights instead of days has prevailed in more than one nation. Thus, the polished Athenians computed the space of a day from sun-set to sun-set³; and from a similar custom of our Gothic ancestors, during their abode in the forests of Germany, words expressive of such a mode of computing time have been derived into our own language.⁴ The same custom also prevailed among the Celtic nations.⁵

II. Of the FORMATION OF MAN IN THE MORAL IMAGE OF GOD, and his being vested with dominion over other animals, similar tradi-

¹ See an account of these various Cosmogonies in Mr. Faber's *Horæ Mosaicæ*, vol. i. pp. 17—40. The Greek and Latin Cosmogonies are particularly considered in Edwards on the Truth and Authority of the Scriptures, vol. i. pp. 88—102. The testimonies of profane writers to the truth of the principal facts related in the Scriptures are adduced and fully considered by Dr. Collyer in his "Lectures on Scripture Facts." 8vo. 2nd edit. London, 1809. The subjects, noticed in this section, particularly the Creation and the Deluge, are likewise copiously treated of in the notes to Grotius, *De Veritate Rel. Christ.* lib. i. c. 16.

² Dr. Campbell's *Dissertation on Miracles*, p. 219. note.

³ Aulus Gellius, *Noctes Atticæ*, lib. iii. c. 2.

⁴ Tacitus, *de Mor. Ger.* c. 11. The expressions of *fortnight*, and *se'nnight*, for fourteen nights and seven nights, are still in use among us in England.

⁵ Cæsar, *de Bell. Gall.* lib. vi. c. 18.

tionary vestiges remain in the widely diffused notion, that mankind formerly lived in complete happiness and unstained innocence; that spring reigned perpetually, and that the earth spontaneously gave her increase.

This was the origin of the fabled golden age, so exquisitely described by the classic poets, and which may also be distinctly traced in the legends of our Scythian forefathers, and in the age of perfection of the Hindoos; and in the classical story of the garden of the Hesperides, we may equally discover an evident tradition of the Mosaical paradise and of the promised Saviour, who should bruise the head of the infernal Dragon. Nor is it improbable that, from the holiness of the garden of Eden, the pagans borrowed their ancient custom of consecrating groves to the worship of their various deities.¹

III. THE FALL OF MAN AND THE INTRODUCTION OF SIN INTO THE WORLD are related in the third chapter of the book of Genesis. It has been the fashion with minute philosophers and philosophising divines to endeavour to explain away the reality of the fall, and to resolve it all into allegory, apologue, or moral fable; but the whole scheme of redemption by Christ is founded upon it, and must stand or fall with it; a figurative fall requiring only a figurative redemption. Even Lord Bolingbroke (than whom Revelation never had a more subtle opposer) justly rejected the allegorical interpretation. "It CANNOT," he said, "be admitted by Christians; for, if it was, what would become of that famous text [that the seed of the woman should crush the serpent's head, Gen. iii. 15.], whereon the doctrine of our redemption is founded?"²

Indeed the Mosaic account, from its simplicity and consonance with the whole tenor of the Scriptures, was evidently designed to represent a real transaction³; and it has been received as such by the writers of the Old and New Testaments, who certainly were more competent to decide than men who have lived several thousands of years after the transaction, and whose bold contradictions of the best attested matters of fact render their unsupported assertions of no effect. Modern opposers of revelation have ridiculed the account of the fall as a myth or fable. But nothing is easier than ridicule to men who pay no regard to piety, equity, and common decency. Whatever they may assert (and let it be remembered that assertions without proof are not facts), and however they may attempt to explain away the Mosaic account of the fall, or attempt to prove it false, yet the evidently ruined condition of the human race would still remain as an UNDENIABLE FACT. And the narrative of the fall is confirmed both by natural and civil history. Thus, it agrees in an eminent manner both with the obvious facts of labour, sorrow, pain, and death, and also with what we see and feel every day, and with all our philosophical inquiries into the frame of the human mind, the nature of social life, and the origin of evil. The several powers of the little world within a man's own breast are at variance with one another, as well as those of the great world; and we are utterly unable to give a complete solution of the origin of the evils which

¹ Faber's *Hor. Mos.* vol. i. pp. 41—50. Edwards on *Scripture*, vol. i. pp. 103—106.

² Bolingbroke's *Works*, vol. v. p. 372. 8vo. edit.

³ Dr. Hales's *Chronology*, vol. ii. book i. p. 10.

flow from these discords and from the jarring elements of the natural world. But the Mosaic narrative accounts for all these otherwise unaccountable phenomena, and is corroborated by various traditions, more or less agreeable to it.

1. "The commencement of this moral taint is ascribed by the author of the Pentateuch to the **DISOBEDIENCE OF OUR FIRST PARENTS.**

"An evil spirit, the origination of whose malignity itself is a mystery which can never be fathomed, speaking through the organs of a serpent, tempted them to transgress the command of God by tasting the forbidden fruit of a distinctly specified tree. The penalty of their rebellion was death." Though Moses gives no account of Satan or the tempter, yet we learn from other passages of Scripture, that he was first made like other celestial spirits, perfect in his kind and happy in his condition; but that, through pride or ambition, falling into a crime (the circumstances of which are unknown to us), he thence fell into misery, and, together with his accomplices, was banished from the regions of bliss. Of this fall of wicked angels, the ancients had some notion, as is manifest from their tradition of the Titans and Giants invading heaven, fighting against Jupiter, and attempting to depose him from his throne, for which reason he cast them headlong into hell, where they are tormented with incessant fire. And therefore Empedocles, in some verses cited by Plutarch, makes mention of the fate of some demons, who for their rebellion were, from the summit of heaven, plunged into the bottom of the great abyss, there to be punished as they deserved.¹

The fictions of Indian mythology, with regard to contending powers and their subordinate ministers, both benevolent and malignant, are erected on the same basis of truth.

2. **THE INTRODUCTION OF PHYSICAL EVIL** into the world,

By the disobedience of our first mother Eve, is plainly alluded to by the well-known heathen legend of Pandora; who being led by a fatal curiosity to open a casket that had been given her by Jupiter, out of it flew all the evil into the world, and she became the original cause of all the miserable occurrences that befall mankind. Hope alone, — the hope in a promised and long-remembered deliverer, — remaining at the bottom of the casket.

3. **ORIGINAL SIN**, — the early corruption and depravation of man's nature in consequence of our first parents' transgression, is a subject of complaint among the ancient heathen moralists, philosophers, and poets.

Thus, Pythagoras termed it the *fatal companion, the noxious strife that lurks within us, and which was born along with us*; — Socrates called it, *the sin that is born with mankind*; — Plato, *natural wickedness*; — Aristotle, *the natural repugnancy of man's temper to reason*: and all the Greek and Roman philosophers, especially the Stoics and Platonists, complain of the depraved and degenerate condition of mankind, of their propensity to every thing that is evil, and of their aversion from every thing that is good. Thus, Cicero lamented that *men are brought into life by nature as a step-mother, with a naked, frail, and infirm body, and with a soul prone to divers lusts*. Seneca, one of the best of the Roman philosophers, observes, *We are born in such a condition, that we are not subject to fewer disorders of the mind than of the body*; — that *The seeds of all the vices are in all men, though they do not break out in every one*; — and that *To confess them is the beginning of our cure*. And Hierocles called this universal moral taint, *The domestic evil of mankind*. Even some of the sprightliest poets bear their testimony to the same fact. Propertius could say, *Every body has a vice to which he is inclined by nature*. Horace declared that *No man is born free from vices*, and that *He is the best man who is oppressed with the least*; that *Mankind rush into wickedness, and always desire what is forbidden*; that *Youth has the softness of wax to receive vicious impressions, and the hardness of*

¹ Huet, *Quæstiones Alnetanae*, lib. 2. Edwards on *Scripture*, vol. i. pp. 106, 107.

rock to resist virtuous admonitions; and, in short, that *We are mad enough to attack heaven itself, and that Our repeated crimes do not suffer the God of Heaven to lay aside his wrathful thunderbolts.* And Juvenal has furnished a striking corroboration to the statement of Paul of Tarsus concerning the *carnal mind* (Rom. vii. 18—23.), when he says that *Nature, unchangeably fixed, runs back to wickedness, as bodies to their centre.*

Further, there is reason to suppose, that the ancient Celtic Druids expressly taught the defection of the human soul from a state of original rectitude; the invariable belief of the Brahmins, in Hindostan, is, that man is a fallen creature; and it is well known that a similar opinion was inculcated by the classical mythologists, and especially by Hesiod, in their descriptions of the gradual corruption of the human race, during the period subsequent to the golden age. Catullus represents the unhallowed period, when justice was put to flight, and brothers imbrued their hands in fraternal blood, while incest and sacrilege alienated the mind of God from man; and Tacitus marks out the progress of depravity, from a period free from offence and punishment, to a flagitious and abandoned wickedness, devoid even of fear. Thus, "Providence seems to have drawn evidence of the guilt of men from their own confessions, and to have preserved their testimony for the conviction of subsequent times."¹

4. THE FORM ASSUMED BY THE TEMPTER,

When he seduced our first parents, has been handed down in the traditions of most ancient nations, particularly the Persians, Hindoos, Greeks, the Egyptians, and the Scythians or Goths; and though animals of the serpent tribe were worshipped by some of the Pagans, as the Egyptians, Phœnicians, and Greeks, as symbols of the good demon², yet they were more generally regarded as types or figures of the evil principle.³

There is nothing, in which the traditions and opinions of the heathens bear stronger testimony to the doctrines of Scripture, than the conviction which prevailed, of the necessity of an ATONEMENT FOR SIN, AND OF THE INTERVENTION OF A DIVINE MEDIATOR, and the universal practice of devoting piacular victims, which has at one period or other equally prevailed in every quarter of the globe.

It has been alike adopted by the most barbarous, and by the most refined nations. "The rude idolater of the recently discovered hemisphere, and the polished votary of polytheism, equally concur in the belief that without shedding of blood there can be no remission of sins. Nor was the life of the brute creation always deemed sufficient to remove the taint of guilt and to avert the wrath of heaven. The death of a nobler victim was frequently required; and the altars of paganism were bedewed with torrents of human blood." Thus, the Canaanites caused their first-born to pass through the fire, in order to appease the anger of their false deities; and one of the kings of Moab is said to have offered up his eldest son as a burnt-offering, when in danger from the superior power of the Edomites.⁴ "Nor was the belief that the gods were rendered propitious by this peculiar mode of sacrifice confined to the nations which were more immediately contiguous to the territories

¹ Faber, vol. i. pp. 65—71.; Edwards, vol. i. pp. 108—110.; Bp. Gray's Connection between Sacred and Profane Literature, vol. i. pp. 163—165.; Fletcher's Appeal to Matter of Fact, pp. 143—147.; Cormack's Inquiry into the Doctrine of Original Sin, pp. 24—26.; in which works the proofs of the facts above stated are given in detail.

² This is a manifest relic of the tempter's assuming the form of a goodly serpent, and appearing like a good demon, or angel of light, when he tempted Eve.

³ Faber, vol. i. pp. 71—76. Edwards, vol. i. pp. 111—114. Gray, vol. i. pp. 161, 162. The fullest view of this subject will be found in the Rev. J. B. Deane's elaborate treatise, intitled "The Worship of the Serpent traced throughout the World, and its Traditions referred to the Events in Paradise; proving the Temptation and Fall of Man by the Instrumentality of a Serpent Tempter. London, 1830." 8vo.

⁴ 2 Kings iii. 27. Other instances of human sacrifices may be seen in p. 5. *supra*, note 4.

of Israel. We learn from Homer, that a whole hecatomb of firstling lambs was no uncommon offering among his countrymen¹; and the ancient Goths having laid it down as a principle, that the effusion of the blood of animals appeased the anger of the gods, and that their justice turned aside upon the victims those strokes which were destined for men², soon proceeded to greater lengths, and adopted the horrid practice of devoting human victims. In honour of the mystical number three, a number deemed particularly dear to heaven, every ninth month witnessed the groans and dying struggles of nine unfortunate victims. The fatal blow being struck, the lifeless bodies were consumed in the sacred fire which was kept perpetually burning; while the blood, in singular conformity with the Levitical ordinances, was sprinkled, partly upon the surrounding multitude, partly upon the trees of the hallowed grove, and partly upon the images of their idols.³ Even the remote inhabitants of America retained similar customs, and for similar reasons. It is observed by Acosta, that, in cases of sickness, it was usual for a Peruvian to sacrifice his son to Virachoca, beseeching him to spare his life, and to be satisfied with the blood of his child.⁴

"Whence, then," we may ask with the learned author to whose researches this section is so deeply indebted: "Whence, then, could originate this universal practice of devoting the first-born, either of man or beast, and of offering it up as a burnt-offering? Whence, but from a deep and ancient consciousness of moral depravation? Whence, but from some perverted tradition, respecting the true sacrifice to be once offered for the sins of all mankind? In the oblation of the first-born, originally instituted by God himself, and faithfully adhered to both by Jew and Gentile, we behold the death of him, who was the first-born of his virgin-mother, accurately though obscurely exhibited. And in the constant use of fire, the invariable scriptural emblem of wrath and jealousy, we view the indignation of that God, who is a consuming fire, averted from our guilty race, and poured out upon the immaculate head of our great Intercessor. Had a consciousness of purity reigned in the bosoms of the ancient idolaters, it does not appear, why they should have had more reason to dread the vengeance of the Deity, than to expect and to claim his favour; yet that such a dread did universally prevail, is too well known to require the formality of a laboured demonstration."⁵

IV. THE TRANSLATION OF ENOCH

May be traced in the Grecian fables of the translation of their heroes or demigods, and particularly of Hesperus and Astrea (among the ancient Greeks), who are fabled to have ascended to heaven alive, and to have been turned into stars and celestial signs; of Dhruva among the Hindoos; of Buddha among the Ceylonese, and of Xaca (another name for Buddha) among the Calmucks of Siberia.⁶

V. THE LONGEVITY OF THE ANTEDILUVIAN INHABITANTS, mentioned by Moses, is confirmed by various heathen writers.

"All," says Josephus, "who have committed to writing the antiquities either of the Greeks or Barbarians, attest this longevity of the men before the flood." And he immediately subjoins,— "Manetho, who wrote an account of the Egyptians, Berosus, who compiled [an account of] the affairs of Chaldæa, and Mochus, and

¹ Iliad, lib. iv. ver. 202.

² Mallet's North. Antiq. vol. i. c. 7.

³ Mallet's North. Antiq. vol. i. c. 7.—Olai Magni Hist. lib. iii. c. 7.

⁴ Acost. apud Purch. Pilgr. book ix. c. 11. p. 885.

⁵ Faber's Hor. Mos. vol. i. pp. 64, 65.

⁶ Faber, vol. i. pp. 89—91. Edwards, vol. i. p. 117.

Hestæus, and with them Hieronymus the Egyptian, who had treated of the affairs of Egypt, agree with me in this. Also Hesiod, and Hecateus, and Hellanicus, and Acusilaus, and Ephorus, and Nicolaus, relate that the ancients lived a thousand years."¹ Similar traditions of the longevity of men, in former ages, are still to be found among the Burmans of the further Indian Peninsula, and also among the Chinese.²

VI. The Mosaic account of MEN OF A GIGANTIC STATURE, who were inured to deeds of lawless violence and rapine,

Is confirmed by the Greek and Latin poets, who relate that there were giants in the first ages of the world, and also by the Greek and Latin historians, particularly by Pausanias and Philostratus among the Greeks, and Pliny among the Romans, who have recorded that, on opening some sepulchres, the bodies of men were found to be much larger in old times. Josephus also speaks of bones seen in his days, of a magnitude almost exceeding credibility.³ These testimonies of historians of former ages to the generally gigantic stature of men, furnish a satisfactory answer to the petty cavils of those who object to the credibility of Moses, from his mentioning the gigantic size of Og's bedstead. (Deut. iii. 11.) But men of very large size are occasionally seen even in our days. Some allowance may also be made for royal vanity; as Alexander the Great ordered his soldiers to enlarge the size of their beds that they might give to the Indians, in succeeding ages, a great idea of the prodigious stature of the Macedonian soldiers.⁴

VII. No part of the Mosaic history has been more ridiculed by the opposers of revelation, than the narrative of the DELUGE; though no fact that ever occurred in the world is so well attested by civil history. Thus,

1. The *Paucity of Mankind*, and the vast tracts of uninhabited land, which are mentioned in the accounts of the first ages, show that mankind are sprung lately from a small stock, and even suit the time assigned by Moses before the flood. To which we may add, that the great number of small kingdoms and petty states, in the first ages, concur to the same purpose.

"Most eminent nations," it has been well observed, "like great families, have at all times been fond of extolling up their pedigree, and carrying it as high as possible; and, where no marks remain of the successive alterations in their state, are apt to imagine that it has been always the same. Hence the many foolish pretences

¹ Josephus, *Antiq. Jud.* lib. i. c. 3. (al. 4.) On the authors above cited by Josephus, it has been well remarked that "these men either were in possession of traditions relating to this fact, or that they borrowed them from Moses; and in either case our purpose is answered. For, if they received them from prevalent traditions, it will be granted that these traditions had originally some foundation in fact; and they correspond with the sacred history. But if they borrowed them from Moses, two points are gained on our part. It is proved that such a man as Moses did really exist; that his writings were then extant; that they were in substance what they now are; and that they bear an antiquity more remote than these, which are allowed to be the most ancient of the heathen writers. It is proved further, that his history was highly esteemed, and that it was supposed by these writers to contain facts. Whether they drew from Moses or from tradition; and whether their testimony sprang from this narration or from any other source; either way, the Mosaic account of these early ages is corroborated by the oldest fragments of antiquity." Collyer's *Lectures on Scripture Facts*, p. 104.

² Faber, vol. i. pp. 92, 93.

³ The passages from the historians above mentioned are given at length in Grotius de *Veritate*, lib. i. c. 16.

⁴ Bp. Watson's *Apology* in answer to Paine, p. 34. "My philosophy," he adds, "teaches me to doubt of many things, but it does not teach me to reject every testimony which is opposite to experience. Had I been born in Shetland, I could, on proper testimony, have believed in the existence of the Lincolnshire ox, or the largest dray-horse in London, though the oxen and horses of Shetland had not been bigger than mastiffs." *Ibid.* p. 35.

among the ancients to their being aborigines of the countries they had inhabited time out of mind: hence they were led to make their several gods the founders of their government. They knew but very little of the world; and the tradition which they had of that little was so far mixed and corrupted with romance that it served only to confound them.¹ Upon the removal of this cloud by the more diligent and accurate inquiry of the moderns, we see ancient history beginning to clear up, the world puts on a very different face, and all parts of it appear conformable to each other, and to the late better known course of things; as is proved very clearly, in various instances, by a learned and ingenious writer.²— We find the marvellous in all the annals of those times, and more especially in the great point of their antiquity, exceedingly reduced³, and our own plain accounts still more and more confirmed: whence we may be convinced that both the peopling and cultivation of the earth arose at first from a few low beginnings; that it very gradually spread itself from some one centre⁴; and that it has at all times proceeded by pretty near the same slow regular steps as it does at present."⁵

¹ "The grounds of the uncertainty of ancient history may be seen in Stillingfleet, *Origines Sacrae*, book i. ch. 1. sect. 16, 18, &c. Compare Bryant's accurate account of it *passim*. Of the Egyptian in particular, see Shaw's *Travels*, pp. 417, 442, 4to. Compare Baker on *History and Chronology* Reflect. ch. 10 and 11. Shuckford's *Connection*, vol. ii. book viii. Winder's *History of Knowledge*, vol. ii. ch. 10. sect. 4. &c. Bp. Clayton's *Remarks on the Origin of Hieroglyphics*, p. 58. &c. Goguet, vol. iii. diss. iii. p. 269. That the Babylonish empire was not so old as has been pretended, see Le Clerc on *Gen. x.* Concerning the fabulous antiquity of the Chinese, see *Conclusion of Mod. Hist.* ii. p. 95. fol."

² See Bryant's *Analysis of Ancient Mythology*, *passim*.

³ "Till men come to a scrutiny, they are very apt to imagine that a number is vastly greater than it is. I have often asked people to guess how many men there have been in a direct line between the present king of England [George II.] and Adam, meaning only one man in a generation; the king's father, grandfather, &c. The answer made upon a sudden conjecture, has always been, some thousands; whereas it is evident from a calculation, there have not been two hundred. For the space of time between Adam and Christ, let us take the genealogy of our Saviour, preserved by St. Luke, in which the names between Adam and Christ, exclusive of both, are but seventy-four. From the birth of Christ to the birth of the king, were sixteen hundred and eighty years. Let it be supposed, that in the list of the king's progenitors, every son was born when his father was twenty-five years old, which is as early as can be supposed, one with another. According to this supposition, there were four generations in every hundred years; i. e. in those sixteen hundred and eighty-three years, there were sixty-seven generations; which sixty-seven, added to the foregoing seventy-four, will make no more than a hundred and forty-one." Hallet on *Heb. xi. 7.* note a. p. 17. Comp. Goguet, vol. iii. diss. iii. pr. Bryant's *Analysis*, *passim*.

⁴ "This has been observed by Isaac Casaubon in one respect, viz. in relation to language. 'Est enim verissimum,' says he, 'linguas ceteras eo manifestiora et magis expressa originis Hebraicae vestigia servasse, et nunc servare, quo propius ab antiqua et prima hominum sede abfuerunt,' &c. A confirmation of it, in some other respects, may be had from the following *very remarkable* particular, as Hartley justly calls it (*Observ. on Man*, vol. ii. p. 113.): 'It appears from history, that the different nations of the world have had, ceteris paribus, more or less knowledge, civil and religious, in proportion as they were nearer to, or had more intimate communication with Egypt, Palestine, Chaldaea, and the other countries that were inhabited by the most eminent persons amongst the first descendants of Noah; and by those who are said in Scripture to have had particular revelations made to them by God: and that the first inhabitants of the extreme parts of the world, reckoning Palestine as the centre, were in general mere savages. Now all this is utterly inexplicable upon the footing of infidelity; of the exclusion of all divine communications. Why should not human nature be as sagacious, and make as many discoveries, civil and religious, at the Cape of Good Hope, or in America, as in Egypt, Palestine, Mesopotamia, Greece, or Rome? Nay, why should Palestine so far exceed them all, as it did confessedly? Allow the Scripture accounts, and all will be clear and easy. Mankind after the flood were first dispersed from the plains of Mesopotamia. Some of the chief heads of families settled there, in Palestine, and in Egypt. Palestine had afterwards extraordinary divine illuminations bestowed upon its inhabitants, the Israelites and Jews. Hence its inhabitants had the purest notions of God, and the wisest civil establishment. Not after them come the Egyptians and Chaldaeans; who, not being removed from

⁵ Bp. Law's *Theory of Religion*, pp. 238—241. 8vo. 1820

Sir William Jones has shown that the traditions of the present heathen nations of Asia are not of more authority than the traditions of the ancient nations of Asia and Europe. "We find," he says, "no certain monument or even probable tradition of nations planted, empires and states raised, laws enacted, cities built, navigation improved, commerce encouraged, arts invented, or letters contrived, above twelve or at most fifteen or sixteen centuries before the birth of Christ." And it is a well-known fact that for the first thousand years of that period we have no history unmingled with fable, except that of the turbulent and variable, but eminently distinguished nation descended from Abraham. The Chinese do not pretend that any historical monument existed among them in the age of Confucius more ancient than eleven hundred years before the Christian epoch. And the researches of those who are most deeply skilled in the literature and antiquities of the Hindoos have shown that the dawn of true Indian history appears only three or four centuries before the Christian æra, the preceding ages being clouded by allegory or fable.¹

2. The late *Invention and Progress of Arts and Sciences* also concur to confirm the Mosaic history of the antediluvians: for, as the Jewish legislator mentions little of their arts, so it appears from the late invention of these *after* the flood that those who were preserved from it were possessed but of few arts.

Since the history of past ages has been more narrowly examined, it has been proved that the ancients were far less knowing and expert than, by a superstitious reverence for every thing remote, we once were accustomed to suppose. Some of them, indeed, have described their knowledge in lofty strains, and perhaps for their times, and in comparison with some of their neighbours, it may have been considerable: and yet it is more than probable that such accounts are chiefly owing to their ignorance of the true state of mankind. This is particularly the case with the Egyptians, whose learning has been so much extolled. Though this country has been styled the Mother of Arts, as well as Mistress of Religion, and was, no doubt, as early polished as most countries; yet if we be allowed to judge of her improvement in other parts of science from that most important one, and that which in all reason should have been most cultivated, viz. that of *medicine*, of which she also claims the first invention, we shall not have much room to admire her highest advances. "It must evidently appear," says a learned writer, "that the Egyptians could have no such physicians in the days of Moses as Diodorus and Herodotus seem to suppose: it is much more probable that long after these times they were, like the Babylonians, entirely destitute of persons skillful in curing any diseases that might happen amongst them; and that the best method they could think of, after consulting their oracles, was, when any one was sick, to have as many persons to see and speak to him as possibly could; so that if any one who saw the sick person had had the like distemper, he might say what was proper to be done in that condition."²

The pretences which the Egyptians made to antiquity so much beyond the times recorded in the Scriptures, proceeded from their calculating by lunar years or months, or from their reckoning the dynasties of their kings in succession, which

their first habitations, and living in fertile countries watered by the Nile, Tigris, and Euphrates, may be supposed to have preserved more both of the antediluvian and post-diluvian revelations; also to have had more leisure for invention, and more free communication with the Israelites and Jews than any other nations. Whereas those small parties which were driven farther and farther from each other into the extremities of heat and cold, entirely occupied in providing necessaries for themselves, and also cut off by rivers, mountains, or distance, from all communication with Palestine, Egypt, and Chaldaea, would lose much of their original stock, and have neither inclination nor ability to invent more. Compare Bryant's Analysis, *passim*. Of the several arts, customs, religious rites and civil institutions which first arose in Asia, see Conclusion of Mod. Hist. p. 120. fol. Any one that fairly examines history will find those accounts more probable than that extraordinary supposition of Lord Bolingbroke, viz. that science may have come originally from west to east. Lord Bolingbroke's Works, vol. iv. p. 14."

¹ Sir W. Jones's Works, vol. iii. pp. 191. 145. 8vo. edit.

² Shuckford, Connecticut, book ix. p. 167. Bp. Law's Theory of Religion, p. 246.

were contemporary. For Herodotus¹ mentions twelve Egyptian kings reigning at one time. They had such different accounts, however, of chronology, that, as it is affirmed, some of them computed about thirteen thousand years more than others from the original of their dynasties to the time of Alexander the Great.² The solar year, in use among the Egyptians, who were most celebrated for astronomy, was so imperfect, that they said the sun had several times changed its course since the beginning of their dynasties; imputing the defect of their own computation to the sun's variation, or else affecting to speak something wonderful and extravagant. And Cassini has found the account of eclipses, at the beginning of Diogenes Laertius, to be false; which is a further confutation of the fabulous pretences of the Egyptians to antiquity. The earliest astronomical observations to be met with which were made in Egypt are those performed by the Greeks of Alexandria, less than three hundred years before Christ, as Dr. Halley has observed³: and since the recent discoveries in the Egyptian Hieroglyphics of our great archæologist, Dr. Young, and of M. Letronne and Champollion in France, it has been ascertained that the celebrated zodiacs of Esné and Dendera, to which some modern antagonists of divine revelation had assigned an incalculable antiquity, are *posterior to the time of Jesus Christ*, as well as the edifices on the ceilings of which they were painted!⁴

The pretensions of the Chaldæans to profound attainments in science have been shown to be equally unfounded. According to Berossus, they supposed the moon to be a luminous body, whence it is evident that they could have no great skill in astronomy: besides, they wanted instruments for making exact calculations. All that remains of their boasted astronomical discoveries is only seven eclipses of the moon; and even those are but very coarsely set down, the oldest not being more than seven hundred years before Christ: whence it is evident that they had made but little progress in this science. And though Callisthenes is said by Porphyry to have brought observations from Babylon to Greece upwards of nineteen hundred years older than Alexander, yet as the proper authors of those observations neither made any mention nor use of them, this circumstance renders his report justly suspected for a fable.⁵ So little ground is there for us to depend upon the accounts of time and the vain boasts of antiquity which these nations have made.

The Greeks had their astronomy from Babylon⁶; and the Athenians had but three hundred and sixty days in their year in the time of Demetrius Phalereus⁷; yet Dr. Halley further observes, that the Greeks were the first practical astronomers, who endeavoured in earnest to make themselves masters of the science, and that Thales was the first who could predict an eclipse in Greece, not six hundred years before Christ, and that Hipparchus made the first catalogue of the fixed stars not above one hundred and fifty years before Christ.

¹ Lib. ii. c. 151.

² Diodor. Sic. lib. i.

³ Wotton on Ant. and Mod. Learning, ch. 23. Jenkin's Reasonableness of Christianity, vol. i. pp. 335—337.

⁴ Cellérier, de l'Origine Authentique et Divine de l'Ancien Testament, pp. 100—104. On the planisphere or zodiac of Dendera, M. Champollion discovered an evidently Roman title, that of ATOKPTP, *Ἀτροκράτωρ*, or *emperor*, in phonetic hieroglyphics; which, most probably, may indicate Claudius or Nero, as both those sovereigns, in their medals struck in Egypt, are very often designated by that identical appellation. On prosecuting his researches still farther, M. Champollion read on the great edifice, in the ceiling of which that planisphere had been placed, the titles, names, and surnames of the emperors Tiberius, Claudius, Nero, and Domitian; and on the portico of Esné, the zodiac of which was reputed to be older than that of Dendera, by several ages, he read the imperial Roman names of Claudius and Antoninus Pius. Consequently these monuments, for which Volney and other infidel literati had claimed an incalculably remote antiquity, belong to that period when Egypt was under the domination of the Romans, and they cannot be dated earlier than the first or second century of the Christian æra. Greppo, Essai sur le Système Hiéroglyphique de M. Champollion, pp. 262, 263. Paris, 1829. See also Mr. Poole's article on Egypt, in the eighth volume of the Encyclopædia Britannica (eighth edition); and also his *Horæ Ægyptiacæ*; or, Chronology of ancient Egypt discovered from . . . Hieroglyphical Records. London, 1851.

⁵ Dr. Halley, in Wotton's Observations on Learning, ch. 23. Stanley, in his History of Philosophy (pp. 757, 758. Lond. 1753), has shown that Porphyry's account is intitled to little credit; since there is nothing extant in the Chaldean astrology more ancient than the æra of Nabonassar, which begins only 747 years before Christ.

⁶ Herodotus, lib. ii. c. 109.

⁷ Pliny, Hist. Nat. lib. xxxiv. c. C.

According to the well known observation of Varro¹, there was nothing that can deserve the name of history to be found among the Greeks before the Olympiads, which commenced only about twenty years before the building of Rome; and Plutarch informs us how little the tables of the Olympiads are to be relied on.² Whatever learning or knowledge of ancient times the Romans had, they borrowed it from the Greeks. For they were so little capable of transmitting their own affairs down to posterity with any exactness in point of time, that for many ages they had neither dials nor hour-glasses by which to measure their days and nights for common use; and for three hundred years they knew no such things as hours, or the like distinctions, but computed their time only from noon to noon.

The pretensions of the Chinese to antiquity appear equally vain, and upon the same grounds. They, too, understand little or nothing of astronomy. Indeed, they themselves confess that their antiquities are in great part fabulous, and they acknowledge that their most ancient books were in hieroglyphics, which were not expounded by any one who lived nearer than one thousand seven hundred years to the first author of them; that the numbers in computation are sometimes mistaken, or that months are put for years. But of what antiquity or authority soever their first writers were, there is little or no credit to be given to the books now remaining, since the general destruction of all ancient books by the Emperor Xi Hoam Ti. He lived only about two hundred years before Christ, and commanded, upon pain of death, all the monuments of antiquity to be destroyed relating either to history or philosophy, especially the books of Confucius; and killed many of their learned men: so that from his time they have only some fragments of old authors left. — The Chinese are a people vain enough to say any thing that may favour their pretences to antiquity, and love to magnify themselves to the Europeans, which makes them endeavour to have it believed that their antiquities are sufficiently entire, notwithstanding this destruction of their books. But the fact is well known to be otherwise³: — and, upon inspection, it was found that their instruments were useless; and that after all their boasted skill in astronomy, they were not able to make an exact calendar, and their tables of eclipses were so incorrect that they could scarcely foretell about what time that of the sun should happen.⁴ In like manner, the boasted antiquity, claimed for the science and records of the Hindoos over those of Moses by some modern writers, has been fully exposed since scientific Europeans have become thoroughly acquainted with their language. “The Hindoos, perhaps the most anciently civilised people on the face of the earth, and who have least deviated from their originally established forms, have unfortunately no history. Among an infinite number of books of mystical theology and abstruse metaphysics, they do not possess a single volume that is capable of affording any distinct account of their origin, or of the various events that have occurred to their communities. Their Maha-Bharata, or pretended great history, is nothing more than a poem. The Pouranas are mere legends; on comparing which with the Greek and Latin authors, it is excessively difficult to establish a few slight coincidences of chronology, and even that is continually broken off and interrupted, and never goes back farther than the time of Alexander.⁵ It is now clearly proved that their famous astronomical tables, from which it has been attempted to assign a prodigious antiquity to the Hindoos, have been calculated backwards⁶; and it has been lately ascertained that their Surya-Siddhanta, which they consider as their most ancient astronomical treatise, and pretend to have been revealed to their nation more than two millions of years ago, must have been composed within the seven

hundred and fifty years last past.¹ Their Vedas, or sacred books, judging from the calendars which are conjoined with them, and by which they are guided in their religious observances, and estimating the colures indicated in these calendars, may perhaps go back about three thousand two hundred years, which nearly coincides with the epoch of Moses.² Yet the Hindoos are not entirely ignorant of the revolutions which have affected the globe, as their theology has in some measure consecrated certain successive destructions which its surface has already undergone, and is still doomed to experience: and they only carry back the last of those which have already happened, about five thousand years³; besides which, one of these revolutions is described in terms nearly corresponding with the account given by Moses.⁴ It is also very remarkable that the epoch at which they fix the commencement of the reigns of their first human sovereigns of the race of the sun and moon, is nearly the same at which the ancient authors of the west have placed the origin of the Assyrian monarchy, or about four thousand years ago.”⁵

From all these particulars it is evident how little credit is to be given to the pretences which the several nations among the heathens have made to antiquity, without any ground from history, but upon uncertain calculations of astronomy, in which science they actually had but little or no skill.

3. The truth of the Mosaic history of the deluge is confirmed by the *Tradition* of it, which universally obtained. If such an event had ever happened, it is natural to expect that some traces of it will be found in the records of pagan nations as well as in those of Scripture. Indeed it is scarcely probable, not to say possible, that the knowledge of so great a calamity should be utterly lost to the rest of the world, and should be confined to the Jewish nation alone. We find, however, that this is by no means the case: a tradition of the deluge, in many respects accurately coinciding with the Mosaic account of it, has been preserved almost universally among the ancient nations.

¹ See the Memoirs, by Mr. Bentley, on the Antiquity of the Surya-Siddhanta, in the Calcutta Memoirs, vol. vi. p. 537. and the Memoir by the same author on the Astronomical Systems of the Hindoos, *ibid.* vol. ix. p. 195.

² See the Memoir by Mr. Colebrooke upon the Vedas, and particularly p. 493., in the Calcutta Memoirs, vol. viii.

³ Voyage to India by M. le Gentil, i. 235. Bentley in the Calcutta Memoirs, vol. ix. p. 222. Paterson in ditto, *ibid.* p. 86.

⁴ Sir William Jones says, “We may fix the time of Buddah, or the ninth great incarnation of Vishnu, in the year 1014 before the birth of Christ. The Cashmirians, who boast of his descent in their kingdom, assert that he appeared on earth about two centuries after Crishna, the Indian Apollo. — We have therefore determined another interesting epoch, by fixing the age of Crishna near the year 1214 before Christ. As the three first avatars or descents of Vishnu relate no less clearly to an universal deluge in which eight persons only were saved, than the fourth and fifth do to the punishment of impiety and the humiliation of the proud, we may for the present assume that the second, or silver age of the Hindoos, was subsequent to the dispersion from Babel; so that we have only a dark interval of about a thousand years, which were employed in the settlement of nations, and the cultivation of civilised society.” Works of Sir William Jones, vol. i. p. 29. London, 1799. 4to.

⁵ Cuvier's Theory of the Earth, pp. 156—159. The extravagant priority claimed for the Hindoo records and sciences over the writings of Moses by M. Bailly and some other modern infidel writers, has been fully disproved by Count Laplace, in his Exposition du Systeme du Monde, pp. 293, 294. 4to. or vol. iii. pp. 253, 254. of Mr. Pond's English translation; and by Captain Wilford and Mr. Bentley, in their elaborate Memoirs on Hindoo Chronology, inserted in the fifth volume of the Calcutta Memoirs or Asiatic Researches. The subject is also considered by Mr. Carwithen in the second of his Bampton Lectures; but the most compendious view of it is to be found in Dr. Nares's Bampton Lectures, pp. 222—227. and especially his lucid and satisfactory note, pp. 256—273.; which, depending upon minute calculations and deductions, will not admit of abridgement.

¹ Censorinus, De Die Natali, c. 21.

² Plutarch, in Numa, initio.

³ Martinii Hist. Sin. — Le Compte's Memoir.

⁴ Jenkin's Reasonableness of Christianity, vol. i. pp. 339—343.; and see also Winder's History of Knowledge, vol. ii. chapters x.—xx., where the facts above stated are confirmed by proofs. Additional testimonies to the late date and imperfect progress of knowledge among the Chinese may be seen in the facts and authorities collected by Bp. Law, in his Theory of Religion, pp. 243—245. note (z).

⁵ Consult the elaborate memoir of Mr. Paterson, respecting the kings of Magadaha emperors of Hindostan, and upon the epochs of Vicramadityia and Salahanna, in the Calcutta Memoirs, vol. ix.

⁶ See Expos. du Syst. du Monde, by Count Laplace, p. 330.

It is indeed a very remarkable fact concerning the deluge, that the memory of almost all nations ends in the history of it, even of those nations which were unknown until they were discovered by enterprising voyagers and travellers; and that the traditions of the deluge were kept up in all the rites and ceremonies of the Gentile world. And it is observable, that the farther we go back, the more vivid the traces appear, especially in those countries which were nearest to the scene of action. The reverse of this would happen, if the whole were originally a fable. The history would not only be less widely diffused; but, the more remote our researches, the less light we should obtain; and however we might strain our sight, the objects would by degrees grow faint, and the scene would terminate in clouds and darkness. Besides, there would not have been that correspondence and harmony in the traditions of different nations, which so plainly subsisted among them: now this could not be the result of chance, but must necessarily have arisen from the same history being universally acknowledged. These evidences are derived to us from people who were of different ages and countries, and, in consequence, widely separated from each other: and, what is extraordinary, they did not know, in many instances, the purport of the data which they transmitted, nor the value and consequence of their intelligence. In their mythology they adhered to the letter, without considering the meaning; and acquiesced in the hieroglyphic, though they were strangers to the purport of it. With respect to ourselves, it is a happy circumstance, not only that these histories have been transmitted to us, but also that, after an interval of so long a date, we should be able to see into the hidden mystery, and from these crude materials to obtain such satisfactory truths. We now proceed to notice a few of the most striking of these traditional narratives.

Thus Berosus, the Chaldean historian, following the most ancient writings, as Josephus affirms¹, has related the same things as Moses, of the deluge, and of mankind perishing in it, and likewise of the ark in which *Nochus*, the restorer of the human race, was preserved, being carried to the summit of the Armenian mountains. Hieronymus the Egyptian, who wrote the antiquities of the Phoenicians, Nicolaus of Damascus, and many others, mention these things, as Josephus² also testifies. Further, there is a fragment preserved of Abydenus³, an ancient Assyrian historian, in which mention is made of the deluge being foretold before it happened, and of the birds being sent forth three different times to see whether the earth was dried, and of the ark being driven into Armenia. He and others agree with Moses in the main circumstances, but in lesser particulars sometimes adulterate the truth with fabulous mixtures. Alexander Polyhistor, another ancient historian, is cited by Cyril⁴ of Alexandria, together with Abydenus, and both to the same purpose. He says, that in the reign of Xisuthrus (the same as Noah) was the great deluge; that Xisuthrus was saved, Saturn having predicted to him what should happen, and that he ought to build an ark, and, together with the fowls and creeping things and cattle, to sail in it.

Among the Greeks, Plato⁵ mentions the great deluge, in which the cities were destroyed, and useful arts were lost; and suggests that there was a great and universal deluge before the particular inundations celebrated by the Grecians. He

¹ Josephus contra Apion, lib. i. § 19. edit. Hudson.

² Joseph. Antiq. lib. i. cap. 3.

³ Abyd. in Euseb. Præp. Evang. lib. ix. cap. 12. edit. Vigeri.

⁴ Cyril contra Jul. lib. i. p. 8. edit. Spanhemii.

⁵ Plato de Leg. lib. iii. p. 677. tom. ii.; Timæus, p. 23. tom. iii. edit. Serrault.

plainly thought that there had been several deluges, but one greater than the rest. Moreover, it was the tradition of the Egyptians, as Diodorus¹ informs us, that most living creatures perished in the deluge, which was in Deucalion's time. Ovid's² description of Deucalion's flood is so well known and remembered by every scholar that it is needless to point out its identity with Noah's flood to any one who has received the least tincture of letters. Plutarch³, in his treatise of the sagacity of animals, observes, that a dove was sent out by Deucalion, which, entering into the ark again, was a sign of the continuance of the flood, but afterwards flying away, was a sign of serene weather. Homer also plainly alludes to the particular of the rainbow, by⁴ calling it a *sign* or *token* to men, *τέρας μερόπων ἀνθρώπων*.

Lucian mentions⁵ more than once the great deluge in Deucalion's time, and the ark which preserved the small remnant of human kind. He describes also the particulars of Deucalion's flood after the example of Noah's flood: the present race of men was not the first, but the former generation was all destroyed; this second race sprang from Deucalion: the former was a wicked and profligate generation, for which reason this great calamity befel them; the earth gave forth abundance of water, great showers of rain fell, and the rivers increased, and the sea swelled to such a degree, that all things were water, and all men perished: Deucalion alone was left for a second generation, on account of his prudence and piety; and he was preserved in this manner; he built a great ark, and entered into it with his wife and children, and to him swine, and horses, and lions, and serpents, and all other creatures which the earth maintains, came in pairs: he received them all, and they hurt him not; on the contrary, there was, by divine instinct, great friendship among them, and they sailed together in the same ark, as long as the water prevailed. At the beginning and in the conclusion, he professes to have received this account from the Grecians, so that he cannot be suspected of borrowing it from Scripture.⁶

The orthodox among the ancient Persians believed in a deluge, and that it was universal, and overwhelmed the whole earth. Similar traditions have prevailed in the East among the Hindoos, Burmans, and Chinese: of these, the tradition of the Chinese is particularly worthy of note, as it not only refers, both directly and indirectly, to the deluge itself, but also to the cause of it. The same tradition of a general flood is also to be traced among the ancient Goths and Druids, as well as among the Mexicans, Peruvians, Brazilians, and Nicaraguans; to whom may be added the very lately discovered inhabitants of Western Caledonia⁷, the Cree Indians in the polar regions of North America⁸, the Otahitians before their conversion to Christianity, and also⁹ the Sandwich Islanders.¹⁰

From these various evidences it is manifest that the heathens were well acquainted with all the leading circumstances of the universal deluge; that their traditions (though largely blended with fable)

¹ Diod. Sic. lib. i. p. 10. edit. Rhodmani.

² Plutarch, de Solertia Animalium, p. 968. tom. ii. edit. Paris, 1624.

³ Iliad. xi. 28.

⁴ Lucian in Timon, p. 59. De Saltatione, p. 930. tom. i. et de Syria Dea, pp. 882, 883. tom. ii. edit. Benedicti.

⁵ Bishop Newton's Works, vol. i. pp. 188—191.

⁶ Harman's Journal of Voyages and Travels in Western Caledonia, abridged in the Quarterly Review, vol. xxvi. p. 415.

⁷ Capt. Franklin's Journey to the Polar Sea, p. 78. London, 1823. 4to. or vol. i. pp. 113, 114. 8vo. edit. "The North American Indian," says Major Strickland, "is familiar with the history of the deluge. Indeed, the general idea of the flood all over the world seems fixed in the mind of the human family, from pole to pole, as if to give the lie to all the foolish quibbles of infidelity." Strickland's Twenty-seven Years in Canada West, vol. ii. p. 89.

⁸ Ellis's Polynesian Researches, vol. i. pp. 62, 63.

⁹ Most of the above noticed traditions are given at length in Mr. Faber's *Horæ Mosaicæ*, vol. i. pp. 98—136. with references to various authorities for each. Mr. Sharon Turner has also collected a truly valuable series of historical testimonies to the fact of the deluge in his "Sacred History of the World," vol. ii. pp. 270—289. eighth edit. Mr. Bryant's Analysis of Ancient Mythology (3 vols. 4to. or 6 vols. 8vo.), however, is the completest work on the subject of the deluge, as preserved in the traditions of the ancients; an abstract of his system is given in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* and *Perthensis*, article *Deluge*.

bear a striking resemblance to the narrative of Moses; and that the moral certainty of that great event is established on a basis sufficiently firm to bid defiance to the cavils of scepticism. Instead, therefore, of asserting (as it had been asserted, contrary to all the evidence furnished by civil history), that we have no sufficient evidence to induce us to believe that the deluge ever took place,—“let the ingenuity of unbelief first account satisfactorily for this universal agreement of the pagan world, and she may then, with a greater degree of plausibility, impeach the truth of the scriptural narrative of the deluge.”¹

VIII. The first remarkable occurrence after the flood was the attempt to build the *Tower of Babel* (Gen. xi. 1—4.); and this is not omitted in pagan records.

Berosus, the Chaldee historian, mentions it, with the following additional circumstances, that it was erected by giants who waged war against the gods, and were at length dispersed, and that the edifice was beaten down by a great wind. According to Josephus, the building of this tower is also mentioned by Hestiazus, and by one of the ancient sibyls², and also, as Eusebius informs us, by Abydenus and Eupolemus.³ The tower of Belus, mentioned by Herodotus, is, in all probability, the tower of Babel, repaired by Belus II., king of Babylon, who is frequently confounded by the ancient historians with Belus I., or Nimrod. That it was constructed with burnt bricks and bitumen (as we read in Gen. xi. 3.) is attested by Justin, Quintus Curtius, Vitruvius, and other heathen writers, and also by the relations of modern travellers, who have described its ruins.⁴

IX. The *History of the Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah*

Is expressly attested by Diodorus Siculus, Strabo, Solinus, Tacitus, Pliny, and Josephus; whose accounts mainly agree with the Mosaic narrative; and their reports concerning the physical appearance of the Dead Sea are confirmed in all material points by the relations of modern travellers⁵, and especially by commander (now captain) Lynch, of the United States' Navy, who in 1847 first navigated the Dead Sea since the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, in his Narrative of the United States' Expedition to the River Jordan.⁶

X. Berosus, Alexander Polyhistor from Eupolemus and Melo (writers more ancient than himself), Nicolaus Damascenus, Artapanus, and other ancient historians cited by Josephus and Eusebius, make express and honourable mention of *Abraham, Isaac, Jacob*, and

¹ Faber's *Horæ Mosaicæ*, vol. i. p. 136. For a notice of objections made by modern unbelievers to the Mosaic Narrative of the Deluge, as being contrary to matter of fact, see the Appendix to this volume, No. VIII. *infra*.

² Josephus, *Ant. Jud.* lib. i. c. 4. (al. c. 5.) § 3.

³ Eusebius, *de Præp. Evang.* lib. ix. c. 14.

⁴ The testimonies above noticed are given at length by Mr. Faber, *Horæ Mosaicæ*, vol. i. pp. 146—170. See also Dr. Hales's *Analysis*, vol. i. pp. 350—355.; Mr. Rich's *Memoirs on the Ruins of Babylon*, 8vo. 1818; Sir R. K. Porter's *Travels in Georgia, Persia, &c.*, vol. ii. pp. 308—332.; and especially the recent learned researches of Mr. Layard, which contain one of the noblest monuments of the credibility of the sacred writers that can be furnished by profound learning and patient researches combined.

⁵ Diod. *Sic.* lib. xix. c. 98. tom. viii. pp. 418—421. edit. Bipont. Strabo, lib. xvi. pp. 1087, 1088. edit. Oxon. Solinus, c. 36. Tacitus, *Hist.* lib. v. c. 6. (al. 7.) Pliny, *Hist. Nat.* lib. v. c. 16. lib. xxxv. c. 15. Josephus, *de Bell. Jud.* lib. iv. c. viii. § 4. Faber, vol. i. pp. 171—174.

⁶ “Capt. Lynch gives the following account of the impression made upon himself and his friends by their careful examination of the river [Jordan] “and of the lake [or Dead Sea] in which it ends:—“It is for the learned to comment on the facts which we have laboriously collected. Upon ourselves the result is a decided one; we entered upon this sea with conflicting opinions. One of the party was sceptical; and another, I think, a professed unbeliever of the Mosaic account. After twenty-two days' close investigation, if I am not mistaken, we were unanimous in the conviction of the truth of the Scriptural account of the destruction of the cities of the Plain.” (Narrative, p. 253.) Rawlinson's *Bampton Lecture for 1859*, p. 371.

Joseph, agreeing with the accounts of Moses; and Josephus states that Hecataeus wrote a book concerning Abraham, which was extant in his time, though it is now lost.¹

XI. That Moses was not a mythological person (as has recently been affirmed, contrary to all history), but a real character and an eminent legislator, we have already shown in a preceding page.² To the testimonies there adduced, we may add, that the departure of the Israelites from Egypt, and their miraculous passage of the Red Sea, is attested by Berosus, Artapanus, Strabo, Diodorus Siculus, Numenius, Justin, and Tacitus. Of these, the testimonies of Artapanus and Diodorus are particularly worthy of notice.

According to Artapanus, the Heliopolitans gave the following account of the passage of the Red Sea:—“The king of Egypt, as soon as the Jews had departed from his country, pursued them with an immense army, bearing along with him the consecrated animals. But Moses having by the divine command struck the waters with his rod, they parted asunder, and afforded a free passage to the Israelites. The Egyptians attempted to follow them, when fire suddenly flashed in their faces, and the sea returning to its usual channel, brought an universal destruction upon their army.”³ A similar tradition, though less minutely particular, is mentioned by Diodorus, as subsisting even at the time when he wrote. He relates, that among the Ichthyophagi, the natives of the spot, a tradition is given, which is preserved from their ancestors, that by a great ebb of the waters, the whole bosom of the gulf became dry, disclosing its weeds, the sea rolling upon the opposite shore. But the bare earth having been rendered visible from the very bottom of the abyss, the tide returning in its strength restored the passage once more to its former condition.⁴ Nor is the old tradition of the country even yet extinct. According to a learned and respectable modern traveller, the inhabitants of Corondel and its neighbourhood (on the eastern side of the Red Sea) to this day preserve the remembrance of the deliverance of the Israelites; which event is further confirmed by the Red Sea being called, by the Arabian geographers, the *sea of Kolzum*, that is, of destruction.⁵ “The very country, indeed, where the event is said to have happened, bears testimony in some degree to the accuracy of the Mosaic narrative. Still is the scriptural *Etham* denominated *Etti*; the wilderness of *Shur*, the mountain of *Sinai*, and the country of Paran, are still known by the same names⁶; and *Marah*, *Elath*, and *Midian*, are still familiar to the ears of the Arabs. The grove of Elim yet remains; and its twelve fountains have neither decreased nor diminished in number since the days of Moses.”⁷

XII. Further, the HEATHEN WRITERS BORROWED IMAGES from the accounts communicated in the Scriptures, and attributed to their deities distinctions similar to those which are ascribed to the Divine Majesty, when God manifested himself to the world. Thus, both poets and historians represented the heathen deities to be veiled in clouds, as Jehovah appeared.

Many of their religious institutions were likewise evidently derived from the

¹ Josephus, *Ant. Jud.* lib. i. c. 7. Eusebius, *Præp. Evang.* lib. ix. cc. 17—23. The passages above referred to are given at length in Mr. Faber's *Horæ Mosaicæ*, vol. i. pp. 174—186.

² See pp. 49—55. *supra*.

³ Eusebius, *Præp. Evang.* lib. ix. c. 27. This circumstance (Mr. Faber remarks) of the Egyptians being struck with lightning, as well as being overwhelmed by the waves, is mentioned in Psalm lxxvii. 17., although unnoticed in the Pentateuch.

⁴ Diod. *Sic.* lib. iii. c. 39. (vol. iii. p. 279. edit. Bipont.)

⁵ Dr. Shaw's *Travels in Barbary and the Levant*, vol. ii. pp. 99, 100. Edinb. 1808.

⁶ Niebuhr's *Travels*, vol. i. pp. 189, 191.

⁷ Faber, vol. i. pp. 189—191. See also Huet's *Demonstratio Evangelica*, prop. iv. vol. i. pp. 73—153., where very numerous additional collateral testimonies are given to the credibility of the Mosaic writings.

Mosaic appointments, as that of marriage and the observance of stated days, among the Greeks and Romans, and, indeed, among almost all nations. The rite of circumcision, which was appointed by the Almighty as a sign of a distinctive covenant with Abraham, and designed to be expressive of spiritual purity¹, was adopted by several nations not descended from that patriarch, as the Egyptians, Colchians, and others.² There are likewise other particulars in which the Greeks and Romans appear to have borrowed customs from the Jews. Thus Solon, conformably to the Jewish practice, decreed that the time of the sun setting on the mountains should be deemed the last hour of the day. This law was copied into the laws of the twelve tables, and observed by the Romans; whose laws concerning the inheritance and adoption of children, retribution in punishment of corporeal injuries, and other points, seem to have been framed on principles sanctioned by Moses; and traces of resemblance between the Hebrew and Roman codes are still to be discovered in the Institutes of Justinian. The Jewish custom of orphan girls marrying their next of kin also obtained among the heathens. The appropriation of a tenth part of the spoils, of the produce of lands, and of other things, to religious purposes, is mentioned by many pagan writers. Lycurgus distributed the possession of lands by lot, and rendered them inalienable. Those feasts, in which servants were put on an equality with their masters, were apparently borrowed from the Jews, and from the feast of tabernacles: and the reverence which the Jews paid to the state of the moon also influenced the Lacedemonians, who are supposed to have been early connected with the Jews; and who, in consequence of their superstition, having delayed the march of their army till after the new moon, were thus deprived of participating in the honour of the celebrated battle of Marathon, as they did not arrive till the day after it had taken place.³

The preceding statements and facts are surely sufficient to satisfy any candid inquirer, that the principal facts related in the books of Moses do not depend upon his solitary testimony; but that they are supported by the concurrent voice of all nations. Upon what principle can this coincidence be accounted for, if Moses had not been a real person, and if the events recorded by him had not actually occurred?

XIII. Many other things, which the Old Testament relates to have happened, subsequently to the giving of the law until the Babylonish captivity, are to be found among profane writers. A few of these shall be adduced:— Thus,

1. From the story of Moses's rod (Exod. iv. 17.) the heathens invented the fables of the Thyrsus of Bacchus and the Caduceus of Mercury.

¹ Compare Gen. xvii. 12.; Rom. ii. 28, 29.; Phil. iii. 3.

² A modern opposer of the Bible has affirmed, contrary to all history, that the Jews borrowed the rite of circumcision from the Egyptians. From an obscure passage in Herodotus, who wrote several hundred years after Moses (and who collected his information from the Egyptian priests, whose extravagant claims to antiquity have long since been refuted), some learned men have conjectured that the Hebrews derived it from the Egyptians; but conjectures are not proofs. Indeed, so little dependence can be placed on the historical traditions of the Egyptians, the falsehood of which has been exposed by Sir John Marsham, that it is more than probable that the Egyptians derived it from the Hebrews or Ishmaelites; although, at this distance of time, it is impossible to account for the way in which circumcision became established among the Egyptians. It is, moreover, worthy of remark, that the practice of this rite among the Hebrews differed very considerably from that of the Egyptians. Among the former, it was a religious ceremony performed on the eighth day after the birth of the male child; but among the latter it was a point of mere decency and cleanliness, and was not performed until the thirteenth year, and then upon persons of both sexes. See Marsham's *Chronicon Aegyptiacum*, and Spencer, de Legibus Hebraeorum.

³ Bp. Gray's Connection between Sacred and Profane Literature, vol. i. pp. 187—193. Huët, *Demonstratio Evangelica, ut supra*.

2. The circumstance of *Jephthah's devoting his daughter* gave rise to the story of Iphigenia being sacrificed by her father Agamemnon.

3. The story of Scylla having cut off the purple lock of her father Nisus, king of Megara, and given it to his enemy, Minos (with whom he was then at war), and by that means destroyed both him and his kingdom, — was in all probability taken from the history of *Samson's being shaved*.

4. When Herodotus, the father of profane history, tells us, from the priests of Egypt, that their traditions had informed them, that in very remote ages the sun had four times departed from his regular course, having twice set where he ought to have risen, and twice risen where he ought to have set, — it is impossible to read this most singular tradition, without recollecting the narrative in the book of Joshua, which relates, "That the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hastened not to go down about a whole day;" and the fact related in the history of Hezekiah "that the sun went back ten degrees, on the dial of Ahaz." The priests of Egypt professed to explain the revolutions of the Nile, the fertility of their country, and the state of public health, by the influence of the sun; and, therefore, in mentioning the unexampled traditional phenomena alluded to, they adverted to a circumstance, which to them appeared as remarkable as the facts themselves, that those singular deviations of the sun from his course had produced no sensible effects on the state of the river, on the productions of the soil, on the progress of diseases, or on deaths. The circumstances are not mentioned in the same form by Joshua and Herodotus, but they are in substance the same in both the narratives. And, supposing the traditions to have been founded on facts, it can scarcely be doubted that they relate to the same events; especially when we recollect, that where so much was ascribed to the influence of the sun, such remarkable deviations from the course of ordinary experience could not fail to be handed down through many ages.¹

5. Eupolemus and Dios, as quoted by Eusebius and Grotius, mention many remarkable circumstances of David and Solomon, agreeing with the Old Testament history²; and Herodotus has a remarkable passage which evidently refers to the destruction of the Assyrians in the reign of Hezekiah, in which he mentions Sennacherib by name.³ As we advance further to the Assyrian monarchy, the Scripture accounts agree with the profane ones rectified; and when we descend still lower to the æra of Nabonassar and to the kings of Babylon and Persia, who are posterior to this æra, and are recorded in Ptolemy's canon or series of them, we find the agreement of sacred and profane history much more exact, there being certain criteria in profane history for fixing the facts related in it. And it is remarkable, that not only the direct relations of the historical books, but also the indirect mention of things in the prophecies, correspond with the true chronology; which is an unquestionable evidence for their genuineness and truth.

The history contained in the Old Testament is throughout distinct, methodical, and consistent; while profane history is utterly deficient in the first ages, and full of myths or fictions in the succeeding ages; and becomes clear and precise in the principal facts, *only* about the period when the Old Testament history ends: so that the latter corrects and regulates the former, and renders it intelligible in many instances which must otherwise be given up as utterly inexplicable. How then can we suppose the Old Testament history not to be genuine and true, or a wicked imposture to be made, and not only continue undiscovered, but even to increase to a most audacious height in a nation, that, of all others, kept the most exact accounts of time? It is further worthy of remark, that this same nation, who may not have lost so much as one year from the creation of the world to the Babylonish captivity, as soon as they were deprived of the assistance of the prophets, became the most inaccurate in their

¹ Herodotus, *Euterpe*, pp. 144, 145. edit. Valla.

² Eusebius, *Præp. Evang.* lib. ix. cc. 30—34. 39—41. Josephus, *Ant. Jud.* lib. viii. c. 2.

³ Lib. ii. c. 141.

methods of keeping time; there being nothing more erroneous than the accounts of Josephus and the modern Jews, from the time of Cyrus to that of Alexander the Great: notwithstanding that all the requisite aids might easily have been borrowed from the neighbouring nations, who now kept regular annals. Whence it appears that the exactness of the sacred history was owing to divine assistance.¹ To the preceding considerations and facts we may add, that the manners of the persons mentioned in the Scriptures are characterised by that simplicity and plainness, which is also ascribed to the first ages of the world by pagan writers, and both of them concur to prove the novelty of the then present race, and consequently the deluge.

XIV. Lastly, the FERTILITY OF THE SOIL OF PALESTINE, which is so frequently mentioned in the Scriptures, is confirmed by the unanimous testimony of ancient writers², as well as of most, if not all, the travellers who have visited that country.³ Its *present* reduced and miserable state, therefore, furnishes no ground for the objection which some modern opposers of revelation have raised against the Bible. Were Palestine to be as well inhabited and as well cultivated as formerly, its produce would exceed all calculation.

Besides these attestations from natural and profane history, we may consider the Jews themselves as bearing testimony to this day, in all countries of the world, to the truth of their ancient history, that is, to the truth of the Old and New Testaments. Allow this, and it will be easy to see how they should still persist in their attachment to that religion, those laws, and those predictions which so manifestly condemn them, both in past times and in the present. Suppose, however, that any considerable alterations have been made in their ancient history,—that is, any such alteration as may answer the purposes of infidelity, and their present state will be *inexplicable*.⁴

§ 2. Testimonies of Profane Writers to the Credibility of the New Testament.

Striking as is the evidence for the credibility and truth of the facts and events related in the Old Testament, furnished by natural and civil history, the books of the New Testament are verified in a manner still more illustrious; these books being written, and the facts mentioned in them being transacted during the times of Augustus, Tiberius, and the succeeding Cæsars. The learned and most exact Dr. Lardner has collected from profane writers a variety of important testimonies to the truth of the New Testament, in the first part of his

¹ The various proofs of the facts above stated may be seen in Dr. Edwards on Scripture, vol. i. pp. 193—223. Sir H. M. Wellwood's Discourses, pp. 18, 19. Hartley on Man, vol. ii. p. 116.

² See Josephus, Ant. Jud. lib. v. c. i. § 21. lib. xv. c. 5. § 1. De Bell. Jud. lib. iii. c. 3. § 2. and Hecataeus in Josephus, contr. Apion. lib. i. § 22. Pliny, Hist. Nat. lib. v. c. 17. Tacitus, Hist. lib. v. c. 6. Justin, lib. xxxvi. c. 3. and Ammianus Marcellinus, lib. xiv. c. 26.

³ See particularly the testimonies of Maundrell and Dr. Shaw, collected in Dr. Mac-knight's Harmony, vol. i. discourses vi. and vii. Dr. E. D. Clarke's Travels, part ii. pp. 520, 521. 4to. or vol. iv. pp. 283—285. 8vo. edit. See also Vol. III. pp. 84—87. *infra*.

⁴ Hartley on Man, vol. ii. 117.

“Credibility of the Gospel History,” and also in his “Jewish and Heathen Testimonies;” from which elaborate works the following particulars are chiefly abridged. The results of his observations may be arranged under the following heads; viz. Testimonies of Jewish and Pagan authors to the account of princes and governors mentioned in the New Testament; — Testimonies to the character of the Jewish and heathen nations, which are either directly mentioned, or incidentally alluded to therein; — Testimonies of Jewish adversaries to the name and faith of Christ; — Testimonies of Pagan adversaries to the character of Jesus Christ, and also relative to the doctrines, character, innocency of life, and constancy of the first Christians in the profession of their faith.

I. TESTIMONIES OF JEWISH AND PAGAN AUTHORS TO THE ACCOUNT OF PRINCES AND GOVERNORS MENTIONED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

Josephus and various heathen writers mention Herod, Archelaus, Pontius Pilate, and other persons, whose names occur in the New Testament; and they differ but little from the evangelical historians, concerning their offices and characters.

1. From the New Testament we learn that Jesus was born at Bethlehem of Judæa in the days of HEROD the king; and Josephus informs us that a prince of that name reigned over all Judæa for thirty-seven years, even to the reign of Augustus. Concerning this Herod, Matthew (ii. 1—16.) relates that he commanded all the male children in Bethlehem and its immediate vicinity to be put to death; because he had heard, that in that place was born one who was to be the king of the Jews. To us, who are accustomed to the finer feelings of Christianity, this appears almost incredible; but the character of Herod, as portrayed by Josephus, is such a compound of ambition and sanguinary cruelty as renders the evangelical narrative perfectly credible. Herod left three sons, Archelaus, Herod Antipas, and Philip, among whom his territories were divided. According to Josephus, Herod by his will appointed Archelaus to succeed him in Judæa, with the title of king; and assigned the rest of his dominions to Herod Antipas as tetrarch of Galilee, and to Philip as tetrarch of Trachonitis and the neighbouring countries; and, according to the narrative of Luke (iii. 1.) these two princes were tetrarchs in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar.

2. The will of HEROD, however, being only partially confirmed by Augustus, Archelaus was appointed ruler over Judæa and Idumea with the title of ethnarch, the regal dignity being withheld until he should deserve it. But Archelaus soon assumed the title; and Josephus, who has given us an account of this limitation, calls him the king that succeeded Herod, and has used the verb *reigning* with reference to the duration of his government. It likewise appears from the Jewish historian, that Archelaus was a cruel and tyrannical prince. All these circumstances attest the veracity of the evangelist Matthew, who says (ii. 22.) that when Joseph heard that Archelaus did REIGN in Judæa, in the room of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither, and turned aside into the parts of Galilee, which were under the jurisdiction of Herod Antipas.

3. Luke relates (Acts xii. 1—3.) that HEROD the king stretched forth his hand to vex certain of the church, and that he killed James, the brother of John, with the sword; and because he saw that it PLEASED the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also. The correctness of this statement is also confirmed by Josephus, from whom we learn that this Herod was a grandson of Herod the Great, whom the favour of the emperors Caligula and Claudius had raised to royal dignity, and to whom nearly all the territories that had been possessed by his grandfather were gradually restored. He was also exceedingly zealous for the institutions and customs of the Jews; and this zeal of his accounts for putting James to death, and causing Peter to be apprehended. The death of this monarch is related by Luke and Josephus with so much harmony, that if the latter had been a Christian, one would have cer-

tainly believed that he intended to write a commentary on that narrative. This haughty monarch had deferred giving an audience to the Tyrian and Sidonian ambassadors, who had solicited peace with him, until a certain day.¹ *And upon a set day² Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon his throne³, and made an oration unto them. And the people gave a shout, saying, "It is the voice of a god, and not of a man."⁴ And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him⁵, because he gave not God the glory.⁶ And he was eaten of worms⁷, and gave up the ghost. (Acts xii. 20—23.)* Both historians relate the fact, as to the chief particulars, in the same manner. Luke describes the pride of the king, as well as the nature of his illness, more circumstantially; and omits a superstitious addition which is recorded by Josephus;—a proof that the former surpasses in fidelity, accuracy, and judgment, even this learned historian of the Jews.⁸ Herod had three daughters, Bernice, Mariamne, and Drusilla; the last of whom, according to Josephus and Luke, was married to Felix, who was appointed governor of Judæa on the death of Herod.

4. According to the testimonies of Tacitus and Josephus, this FELIX was an oppressive, avaricious, and tyrannical governor, who had persuaded Drusilla to abandon her lawful husband, Azizus, king of the Emesenes, and to live with him. It was not unnatural for such a man to tremble, when Paul *reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come*, and to hope that the Apostle would have given him money to liberate him. (Acts xxiv. 25, 26.)⁹

5. Luke (Acts xviii. 14—16.) gives an honourable character of the temper and manners of GALLIO¹⁰; and this account is confirmed by Gallio's brother, the cele-

¹ Josephus (Ant. Jud. lib. xviii. c. 8. § 2.) has not mentioned this particular circumstance; but he informs us, that the termination of the king's life succeeded a festival which had been appointed in honour of the emperor Claudius. Hence we may conceive why Herod deferred to receive the ambassadors from Tyre and Sidon until that particular day, viz. that he might show himself with so much greater pomp to the people.

² Josephus determines this day expressly. It was the second day of the shows, which were exhibited at Cæsarea, in honour of the emperor.

³ Josephus says, that he came into the theatre, early in the morning, dressed in a robe or garment made wholly of silver (σολήν ἐνδυσάμενος ἐξ ἀργύρου πεποιημένην ΠΑΣΑΝ) of most wonderful workmanship; and that the reflection of the rays of the rising sun from the silver gave him a majestic and awful appearance.

⁴ In a short time (says Josephus) his flatterers exclaimed, one from one place and one from another (though not for his good), that "he was a god;" and they entreated him to be propitious to them, saying, "Hitherto we have revered thee as a man, but henceforth we acknowledge that thou art exalted above mortal nature."

⁵ Josephus has here inserted a superstitious story, that Herod, shortly after, looking up, perceived an owl sitting on a certain cord over his head, which he held to be an evil omen. The fact itself he thus relates:—Immediately after, he was seized with pains in his bowels, extremely violent at the very first, and was carried to his palace!!

⁶ The very same cause is assigned by Josephus, viz. Because the king had neither reproved his flatterers, nor rejected their impious adulation.

⁷ Josephus has not described the disease so circumstantially: he relates that Herod died, worn out by the excruciating pain in his bowels. Luke states that he was eaten of worms. These narratives are perfectly consistent. Luke relates the cause, Josephus the effect of his disease; on the nature of which the reader may consult Dr. Mead's *Medica Sacra*, c. 5.

⁸ Less on the Authenticity of the New Testament, pp. 314, 315.

⁹ The proofs of all the above particulars are stated, at length, by Dr. Lardner, in his *Credibility of the Gospel History*, part i. book i. chap. i. — Works, vol. i. pp. 11—31. 8vo. or vol. i. pp. 9—20. 4to.

¹⁰ From the conduct of Gallio on the occasion described by the evangelist Luke in Acts xviii. 14—16. the terms "Gallionism" and "Gallio-like" have been invented, and are not unfrequently though erroneously used, to denote utter indifference to religion. But "that he took not cognisance of the cause which was brought before him, proceeded not from his stupidity, indolence, or negligence, but from his strict adherence to the Roman laws."... "It is well known, that the affairs of religion were always a principal part of the care of the Roman magistrates and senate; and as they had many laws on that subject, so we frequently read of their execution. The true reason, why Gallio did not interpose in the affair brought before him, was, because the senate and emperors had by various decrees, and particularly the then reigning emperor Claudius, allowed the Jews everywhere under their dominion to govern themselves according to their own laws in all matters of religion. This being such, he esteemed it not of his cognisance: therefore he says (verse 15.), 'I will

brated philosopher Seneca, who represents him as a man of a sweet and gentle disposition, and of much generosity and virtue.¹ Gallio is styled by the evangelical historian, in our translation, the *deputy*, but in the original Greek, the *proconsul* of Achaia.² The accuracy of Luke in this instance is very remarkable. In the partition of the provinces of the Roman empire, Macedonia and Achaia were assigned to the people and senate of Rome; but, in the reign of Tiberius, they were, at their own request, transferred to the emperor. In the reign of Claudius (A. U. C. 797, A. D. 44), they were again restored to the senate, after which time proconsuls were sent into this country. Paul was brought before Gallio, A. D. 52 or 53, consequently he was proconsul of Achaia, as Luke expressly terms him. There is likewise a peculiar propriety in the name of the province of which Gallio was proconsul. The country subject to him was all Greece; but the proper name of the province among the Romans was Achaia, as appears from various passages of the Roman historians, and especially from the testimony of the Greek geographer Pausanias, which are given at length by Dr. Lardner.³

II. Equally striking with the preceding testimonies to the credibility of the New Testament history, is the agreement between the evangelical historians and profane writers, relative to the SECTS, MORALS, AND CUSTOMS OF THE JEWS.

1. Thus it appears from Josephus, that they enjoyed the free exercise of their religion, with the power of accusing and prosecuting, but not of putting any man to death. In consequence of this power, they importuned Pilate to crucify Jesus; and when he commanded them to take him and crucify him, they said, *It is not lawful for us to put any man to death.* (John xviii. 31.)

2. Further, it appears from Philo, Josephus, and other writers, that the Jews were dispersed into many countries before the destruction of Jerusalem; and Luke tells us, in different parts of the Acts of the Apostles, that Paul preached in the Jewish synagogues at Antioch, Iconium, Thessalonica, Athens, Ephesus, and Rome.

3. The accounts, related by the evangelists, of the sects of Pharisees, Sadducees, and Herodians, as well as of the depravity of the Jewish nation, in the time of Christ, and of the antipathy that subsisted between the Samaritans and the Jews, are all confirmed by Josephus; and the Roman mode of treating prisoners and crucifying criminals, as mentioned in the New Testament, is corroborated by the testimonies of Cicero, Plutarch, and other writers, who have incidentally mentioned it.⁴ According to Luke's narrative (Acts ix. 36.), the person whom Peter raised from the dead at Joppa was named Tabitha or Dorcas; and it appears from Josephus that this name was at that time in common use.⁵ The same evangelist relates, that there was a great famine throughout the land of Judæa in the reign of the emperor Claudius (Acts xi. 28, 29.): Josephus also mentions this calamity, which

be no judge of such matters: had you accused this man of injustice, violence, or crimes against the state, I would willingly have heard you; but I am not sent here as a judge of your religious differences: these are to be rectified among yourselves." Biscoe on the Acts, p. 55. Oxford edition, 1829, p. 55.

¹ Solebam tibi dicere, Gallionem fratrem meum (quem nemo non parum amat, etiam qui amare plus non potest), alia vitia non nosse, hoc etiam (i.e. adulationem) odisse. — Nemo enim mortalium uni tam dulcis est, quam hic omnibus. — Hoc quoque loco blanditiis tuis restitit, ut exclamares invenisse te inexpugnabilem virum adversus insidias, quas nemo non in sinum recipit." L. Ann. Seneca, Natural. Quæst. lib. iv. in præf. Op. tom. iv. p. 267. edit. Bipont. The learned John Selden, in a letter to Archbishop Usher, has collected the various passages, which are to be found in the ancient classic authors, relative to Gallio. Selden's Opera, tom. ii. part ii. cols. 1712 and 1713.

² Γαλλίωτος ΑΝΩΤΤΙΑΤΟΥ ΟΝΤΟΣ τῆς Ἀχαίας. Acts xviii. 12.

³ Lardner's Credibility, part i. chap. i. § xii. — Works, vol. i. p. 32. 8vo. or vol. i. p. 20. 4to.

⁴ The above noticed particulars are illustrated, *infra*, Vol. III. Dr. Lardner has treated them at full length in his Credibility, part i. book i. chapters ii.—x. Works, vol. i. pp. 33—237. 8vo.; or vol. i. pp. 20—130. 4to.

⁵ Otilii Spicilegium ex Josepho ad Novi Testamenti illustrationem, pp. 278, 279. 8vo. Lug Bat. 1741.

began in the fourth year of that reign, but raged chiefly in the two following years; and says, that many persons died for want of means to procure food.¹

4. When Paul was taken prisoner, in consequence of an uproar which the Jews at Jerusalem had excited against him, the Roman chiliarch, according to the relation of Luke (Acts xxi. 38.) asked him, *Art thou not that Egyptian, which before these days (or a short time since) madest an uproar, and leddest out into the wilderness four thousand men, that were murderers?* Josephus has recorded at length the transactions here incidentally mentioned. During the government of Felix, and consequently at the time alluded to by Luke, an Egyptian, who pretended to be a prophet, led into the wilderness several thousand men, and marched against Jerusalem, promising that the walls should fall down at his command. But Felix marched out of the city with a strong force, and attacked the impostor, who escaped with only a small part of his army. There is a remarkable agreement between the chiliarch or chief captain in the Acts and Josephus. The former says, *Art thou not THAT EGYPTIAN?* Josephus has nowhere mentioned the name of this man, but calls him *THE EGYPTIAN*, and *THE EGYPTIAN false prophet*.²

5. In Acts vi. 9. the sacred historian "speaks of a synagogue at Jerusalem belonging to a class of persons whom he calls *Λιβερτινοι*" (in our version rendered Libertines), "a term which is evidently the same with the Latin *Libertini*. Now, whatever meaning we affix to this word (for it is variously explained), — whether we understand emancipated slaves or the sons of emancipated slaves, — they must have been the slaves or the sons of slaves to Roman masters; otherwise the Latin word, *Libertini*, would not apply to them. That among persons of this description there were many at Rome who professed the Jewish religion, whether slaves of Jewish origin, or proselytes after manumission, is nothing very extraordinary. But that they should have been so numerous at Jerusalem as to have a synagogue in that city, built for their particular use, appears at least to be more than might be expected. Some commentators, therefore, have supposed that the term in question, instead of denoting emancipated Roman slaves, or the sons of such persons, was an adjective belonging to the name of some city or district; while others, on mere conjecture, have proposed to alter the term itself. But the whole difficulty is removed by a passage in the second book of the "Annals of Tacitus";³ from which it appears that the persons whom that historian describes as being *libertini generis*, and infected (as he calls it) with foreign — that is, with Jewish — superstition, were so numerous in the time of the emperor Tiberius, that four thousand of them, who were of age to carry arms, were sent to the island of Sardinia; and that all the rest of them were ordered either to renounce their religion or to depart from Italy before a day appointed. This statement of Tacitus is confirmed by Suetonius⁴, who relates that Tiberius disposed of the young men among the Jews then at Rome (under pretence of their serving in the wars) in provinces of an unhealthy climate; and that he banished from the city all the rest of that nation, or proselytes to that religion, under penalty of being condemned to slavery for life, if they did not comply with his commands. We can now therefore account for the number of Libertini in Judæa, at the period of which Luke was speaking, which was about fifteen years after their banishment from Italy.

III. The CHARACTERS AND PURSUITS OF THE HEATHEN NATIONS, which are incidentally introduced into the New Testament, are equally corroborated by the testimonies of profane writers.

1. The diligent investigation and pursuit of wisdom formed the general character of the Greeks.

Thus Paul declares, — *the Greeks seek after wisdom* (1 Cor. i. 22.); and this account of them is amply attested by all the authors of those times, who take notice of their avidity in the cultivation of philosophy and literature. Not to multiply unnecessary evidence, we may remark, that there is a passage in Hero-

¹ Ant. Jud. lib. xx. c. 2. *fine*, and c. 5. § 2.

² Lardner's Credibility, part i. book ii. chap. viii. Works, vol. i. pp. 414—419. 8vo.; vol. i. pp. 225—228. 4to.

³ Annal. lib. ii. c. 85. Bp. Marsh's Lectures, Part VI. p. 70.

⁴ In Tiberio, c. 36.

dotus, which most strongly corroborates Paul's character of them. He says, that the Peloponnesians "affirm that Anacharsis was sent by the Scythian monarch into Greece for the express purpose of improving himself in *science*; and they add, that at his return he informed his employer, *that all the people of Greece were occupied in scientific pursuits, except the Lacedemonians*."¹ To this general character of the Greeks there are many allusions in the writings of Paul. He informs us, that they regarded the Christian doctrine with sovereign contempt, as *foolishness*, because it was not ornamented with wisdom of words, and with the figures and flowers of a vain and showy rhetoric; and he urges this very circumstance as a signal proof of the divine truth and authority of the Christian religion, that it made a rapid and triumphant progress in the world, and even among this very refined and philosophical people, though totally divested of all those studied decorations with which their several schemes of philosophy were so industriously embellished. Thus he tells the Corinthians that when he first published the Gospel among them, he studied not to ornament it by elegance of diction, or by the display of superior wisdom; for it was his fixed determination to disclaim all knowledge among them, except the knowledge of Jesus Christ and his crucifixion; that he appeared among them in tremour and diffidence, in a plain, artless, and undisguised manner; and that his public discourses did not recommend themselves by any elaborate persuasive arts of human erudition, but were confirmed to them by spiritual gifts and by miracles; so that their conviction of the truth of the Gospel did not stand in learned arguments philosophically expressed, but in the power of God.²

2. With regard to the ATHENIANS in particular, Paul represents them as very devout, greatly addicted to religious practices, and entirely devoted to the worship of the multiplicity of deities which they had received; and he takes notice that their city was full of idols. (Acts xvii. 22, 23.)

To the correctness of this description of the Athenian character all antiquity bears testimony; and that they adopted the gods of all nations, and crowded into their capital all the divinities of the then known world. Their streets were encumbered with statues, so that it was said to be easier, at Athens, to find a God than a man.³ The account given of the Athenians by St. Luke, — *that all the Athenians and strangers which were in their city spent their time in nothing else, but to tell or hear some new thing* (Acts xvii. 21.) — is confirmed by the testimony of Demosthenes⁴, who describes them as loitering about and inquiring in the places of public resort, if there be any news? Iamblichus passes a similar censure upon the Greeks in general.⁵

3. The general character of the CRETANS, noticed in Paul's epistle to Titus, is confirmed by the testimony of antiquity.

The Apostle, writing to Titus, who had been left in Crete to regulate the affairs of the Christian church in that island, complains of many disorderly men there, — *many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, who subvert whole houses* (or families),

¹ Herodotus, lib. iv. c. 77. tom. i. p. 277. Oxon. 1809.

² 1 Cor. ii. 1—5.

³ Dr. Harwood's Introduction to the New Test. vol. ii. p. 69.

⁴ The passage of Demosthenes above alluded to occurs in his first oration against Philip king of Macedon, and is noticed by Longinus (sect. 18.) as a fine specimen of the use of interrogations in the sublime. — "Is it," says the orator, — "Is it your sole ambition to wander through the public places, *each inquiring of the other, 'WHAT NEWS?'* Can any thing be more new, than that a man of Macedon should conquer the Athenians, and give law to Greece?" — (Oratores Græci, a Reiske, tom. i. p. 43.) Towards the close of Demosthenes's oration on Philip's Letter to the Athenians, the orator, speaking of the successes of Philip, has the following passage: — "How is it that, in the late war, his arms had such superior fortune? This is the cause (for I will speak with undaunted freedom), he takes the field himself; endures its toils, and shares its dangers; no favourable incident escapes him. While *we* (for the truth must not be concealed) are confined within our walls in perfect inactivity, delaying, and voting, *and inquiring in the public places, whether there is ANY THING NEW?* Can any thing better deserve the name of new, than that a Macedonian should insult Athens?" — (Ibid. pp. 156, 157.) The modern Athenians are not less inquisitive than their ancestors. See an instance in Mr. Hughes's Travels in Sicily, &c. vol. ii. p. 306.

⁵ They are, says this philosopher, greatly addicted to novelty, perpetually running about, from one place to another, in pursuit of it, — unstable, and without ballast. Iamblichus, De Mysteriori, sect. vii. § 5.

teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake (Tit. i. 10, 11.); and he quotes (12.) the following verse from one of themselves, a prophet of their own, viz. Epimenides, who was a Cretan poet, and whose writings were by the ancients termed *XPHEMOI*, or *oracles*,

Κρήτες αἰεὶ ψεύσται, κακὰ θηρία, γαστέρες ἀργαί.¹

The general import of which passage is, that the Cretans were always a false people; and united in their character the ferocity of the wild beast with the luxury of the domesticated one. The circumstances of Paul's styling Epimenides a prophet is sufficiently explained by the fact of the words *poet* and *prophet* being often used promiscuously by the Greeks and Romans,—probably because their poets pretended to be inspired, and were by some believed to be so. The Apostle adds, that the testimony of Epimenides is but too true,—*this witness is true*. How true the first part of it is, with respect to their deceit and lying, the following facts will attest. From the time of Homer, the island of Crete was regarded as the scene of fiction. Many authors affirm that, as a people, its inhabitants were infamous for their violation of truth; and at length their falsehood became so notorious, that *κρητίζω*, to *cretise*, or imitate the Cretans, was a proverbial expression among the ancients for LYING.

IV. THE TESTIMONIES FURNISHED BY JEWISH ADVERSARIES TO THE NAME AND FAITH OF CHRIST ARE FURTHER CORROBORATIONS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

1. Thus JOSEPHUS, — in a passage of his Jewish Antiquities, which the opposers of Christianity (unable to resist its force) have, contrary to all evidence, affirmed to be spurious, — bears the following testimony to the character, miracles, and doctrines of Jesus Christ.²

After relating a sedition of the Jews against Pontius Pilate, which the latter had quelled, he says, — “Now there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man; for he performed many wonderful works. He was the teacher of such men as received the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him many of the Jews, and also many of the Gentiles. *This was the Christ* (ὁ Χριστὸς οὗτος ἦν). — And when Pilate, at the instigation of the principal men among us, had condemned him to the cross, those who had loved him from the first did not cease to adhere to him. For he appeared to them alive again, on the third day; the divine prophets having foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him. And the tribe (or sect) of Christians, so named from him, subsists to this time.”

2. The TALMUDS³, though blended with much falsehood and with malicious insinuations against Jesus Christ, refer to his nativity, relate his journey into Egypt, and do not deny that he performed numerous eminent miracles.

But they absurdly ascribe them to his having acquired the right pronunciation of the Shemphoresh, or the ineffable name of God, which (they say) he clandestinely stole out of the temple; or they impute it to the magic arts, which he learnt in Egypt (whence they affirm that he brought them, having inserted them in his

¹ Epimenides. apud Fabricii Bibliothec. Græc. lib. i. c. 6. § 3. Harwood's Introduction to the New Test. vol. ii. pp. 70, 71. Dodd's Translation of Callimachus's Hymns, p. 3. note, where it is shown that Paul did not cite Callimachus, as some learned men have thought; and some additional testimonies, from classic authors, are produced for the bad character of the ancient Cretans.

² Josephus, Ant. Jud. lib. xviii. c. 3. § 3. That the passage referred to is genuine, see the Appendix to this Volume, No. VII. *infra*.

³ The Talmuds are two in number, and consist of two parts, viz. the *Mishna* and the *Gemara*. — The *Mishna* is a collection of Jewish traditions, which are said to have been committed to writing by Rabbi Jehudah, surnamed *Hakkadosh* or the *Holy*, about the middle of the second century. On this there are extant two commentaries by the Jews, called *Gemara*, i. e. perfection; viz. that of Jerusalem, which was compiled in the third or fourth century; and that of Babylon, compiled in the sixth century. When the *Mishna* or text, and the *Gemara* or commentary accompany each other, they are called the *Talmud*; and accordingly as the Jerusalem or Babylonish commentary accompanies the *Mishna*, it is called the Jerusalem or Babylonish Talmud.

flesh), and exercised with greater dexterity than any other impostor ever did! They call him Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Mary, the daughter of Eli, whose son he was without the knowledge of her husband. After this, they say, he fled into Egypt, and there learned those magic arts by which he was enabled to perform all his miracles. Again, they own that two witnesses were suborned to swear against him, and declare that he was crucified on the evening of the passover. Mention is also made in these writings of several of his disciples, of Matthew, Thaddæus, and Bauni, the name of him who was afterwards called Nicodemus, and of whom, as a very great, and good, and pious ruler, much is related in these books. In one of them Eliezer tells his friend Akiba, that he met with James, a disciple of Jesus of Nazareth, in Zippor, a town in Galilee, who gave him the interpretation of a passage in the Old Testament, which he had received from Jesus, and with which Eliezer was at that time pleased. That the disciples of Jesus had the power of working miracles, and the gift of healing, in the name of their Master, is confessed by these Jews; who give an instance of it in the grandson of Rabbi Joshua, the son of Levi, who being in great danger, one of the disciples came, and would have cured him in the name of Jesus. This power is again acknowledged in the case of the son of Dama, grandson of Ishmael, who was dying of the bite of a serpent, when James, the same who had the conference with Eliezer, came and offered to cure the young man, but the grandfather forbid it, and he died. In a much later work of the Jews (the *Toledoth Jesu*), and that the most virulent of all the invectives against Jesus, his power of raising from the dead, and healing leprous persons, is repeatedly acknowledged.¹ Further, it appears from the Talmuds, that Christ was put to death on the evening of the passover, and that a crier preceded him for forty days, proclaiming, “This man comes forth to be stoned because he dealt in sorcery, and persuaded and seduced Israel.” But the Talmudical acknowledgments of the miracles, of his preaching, and of his suffering as a malefactor, are blended with most virulent aspersions of his character, of his mother Mary, and also of the Christians.² The falsehood of these assertions has been well exposed by Professor Vernet.³ Concerning the destruction of Jerusalem by Vespasian and Titus, the testimony of the Talmuds is very valuable.

V. Nor are the testimonies of heathen adversaries to Christianity less explicit or less satisfactory than those stated in the preceding pages: these may be arranged under two classes, viz. 1. Testimonies to the life and character of Jesus Christ; and, 2. Testimonies relative to the Christians.

1. TESTIMONIES TO THE LIFE AND CHARACTER OF JESUS CHRIST AS A REAL LIVING AND HISTORICAL PERSON.

(1.) PONTIUS PILATE. — The ancient Romans were particularly careful to preserve the memory of all remarkable events which happened in the city; and this was done either in their *Acts of the Senate* (*Acta Senatûs*), or in the *Daily Acts of the People* (*Acta Diurna Populi*), which were diligently made and kept at Rome.⁴ In like manner, it was customary for the governors of provinces to send to the emperor an account of remarkable transactions that occurred in the places where they resided, which were preserved as the *acts* of their respective governments. Of this custom the letter from Pliny to Trajan, given in pp. 178, 179., is a memorable example. Such a custom, indeed, is necessarily incident to all states possessing conquered or de-

¹ Dr. Gregory Sharpe's Argument in Defence of Christianity taken from the concessions of the most ancient adversaries, pp. 40—48. (London, 1755, 8vo.) In the notes he has given the passages from the Talmudical writers at length, in Hebrew and English.

² Dr. Lardner's Jewish Testimonies, chap. v. Works, vol. vii. pp. 138—161. 8vo. or vol. iii. pp. 547—580. 4to.

³ In his *Traité de la Vérité de la Religion Chrétienne*, tom. x. pp. 253—264.

⁴ See a further account of these *Acta* in Adam's *Roman Antiquities*, p. 18.

tached provinces. In conformity with this usage, Pilate kept memoirs of the Jewish affairs during his procuratorship, which were therefore called *Acta Pilati*. Referring to this usage, Eusebius (who wrote about the year 318) says: "Our Saviour's resurrection being much talked of throughout Palestine, Pilate informed the emperor of it, as likewise of his miracles, of which he had heard; and that, being raised up after he had been put to death, he was already believed by many to be a God."¹ These accounts were never published for general perusal, but were deposited among the archives of the empire, where they served as a fund of information to historians. Hence we find, long before the time of Eusebius, that the primitive Christians, in their disputes with the Gentiles, appealed to these Acts of Pilate as to most undoubted testimony. Thus, Justin Martyr, in his first apology for the Christians, which was presented to the emperor Antoninus Pius and the senate of Rome, about the year 140, having mentioned the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, and some of its attendant circumstances, adds, — "And that these things were so done, you may know from the ACTS made (or, written) in the time of PONTIUS PILATE." Afterwards, in the same apology, having noticed some of our Lord's miracles, such as healing diseases and raising the dead, he says, — "And that these things were done by him, you may know from the ACTS made in the time of PONTIUS PILATE."²

The learned Tertullian, in his Apology for Christianity, about the year 200, after speaking of our Saviour's crucifixion and resurrection, and his appearance to the disciples, and ascension into heaven in the sight of the same disciples, who were ordained by him to publish the Gospel over the world, thus proceeds: — "Of all these things relating to Christ, PILATE himself, in his conscience already a Christian, SENT AN ACCOUNT to Tiberius, then emperor."³ The same writer, in the same Apology, thus relates the proceedings of Tiberius on receiving this information: — "There was an ancient decree that no one should be received for a deity, unless he was first approved by the senate. Tiberius, in whose time the Christian name" (or religion) "had its rise, having received from Palestine in Syria an account of such things as manifested the truth of his" (Christ's) "divinity, proposed to the senate that he should be enrolled among the Roman gods, and gave his own prerogative vote in favour of the motion. But the senate" (without whose consent no deification could take place) "rejected it, because the emperor himself had declined the same honour. Nevertheless, the emperor persisted in his opinion, and threatened punishment to the accusers of the Christians. Search YOUR OWN COMMENTARIES" (or public records), "you will there find that Nero was the first who raged with the imperial sword against this sect, when rising most at Rome."⁴ These testimonies of Justin and

Tertullian are taken, not from any Acts of Pilate in their own possession (who might have been imposed upon by an early forgery)¹, but from public apologies for the Christian religion, which were presented either to the emperor and senate of Rome, or to magistrates of public authority and great distinction in the Roman empire. Now it is incredible that such writers would have made such appeals, especially to the very persons in whose custody these documents were, had they not been fully satisfied of their existence and contents. Nor can there be any doubt that it was from this source that Suetonius and Tacitus (whose testimonies follow this paragraph) derived their knowledge of Christ and of Christians; just as modern historians obtain their materials from state-paper offices and government archives. Modern infidels, indeed, have affected to sneer at these appeals of Justin, Tertullian, and Eusebius to the Acts of Pilate in the Roman archives; but it is important to remark, that these appeals were never contradicted by the heathen infidels of the first four centuries, Celsus, Porphyry, and Julian. "Celsus attempted an elaborate confutation of the new faith, and published his treatise about A. D. 175, thirty-five years after the appearance of Justin Martyr's first Apology. The Pagan unbeliever had the Christian work before him, and must have studied it diligently, page by page, and sentence by sentence. Why did not the learned and vindictive Celsus meet and contradict the bold appeal of Justin Martyr to 'the Acts written in the time of Pontius Pilate?' He did not, because he dared not. By such contradiction he would have come into direct collision with the public records of the empire.

"About the year 270, and a little more than seventy years after the

the Gospel, in its infancy, without molestation; while both he and Chrysostom consider the remarkable refusal of the Roman senate to deity Christ, as equally owing to the control of Divine Providence, in order that the Divinity of Christ might be established, not by human authority, but by the mighty power of God; and that Jesus might not be ranked or associated among the many infamous characters who were deified by the Romans. Eusebius, Hist. Eccl. lib. ii. c. 2. Chrysostom, Homil. 26. in 2 Cor. Op. tom. x. p. 624. A. The originals of all the preceding passages are given by Dr. Lardner, who has investigated the subjects of the Acts of Pilate, and his letter to Tiberius, with his accustomed minuteness and accuracy. See Heathen Testimonies, chap. ii. Works, vol. vii. pp. 231—244. 8vo.; or vol. iii. pp. 599—606. 4to. The same subject is also copiously treated by Vernet, in his *Traité de la Vérité de la Religion Chrétienne*, tom. ix. pp. 283—354.

¹ Prof. Tischendorf (to whose learned labours sacred literature is most deeply indebted) has argued that, as all that we hear of the Acts of Pilate from Justin and Tertullian "coincides with what we find in a Christian forgery, known in later years as the Gospel of Nicodemus, but in early times" (as he thinks) "by the very name of the 'Acts of Pilate'" [he has printed these pretended Acts in pp. 266—300. of his "*Evangelica Apocrypha*," Lipsiæ, 1853], "it is reasonable to believe that this was the work alluded to by them." (*Ibid.* Prolegom. pp. lxii.—lxvi. *Christian Observer*, August, 1855. p. 565.) But this conjecture of the learned professor is not borne out by facts. There is no evidence to prove that Justin and Tertullian were actually possessed of these "Acts of Pilate;" on the contrary, as is shown above, they appealed to public documents in the archives of the Roman empire, which were in the custody of the enemies of Christianity, who neither could nor did gainsay or deny the fidelity and accuracy of their appeal. The conjecture, made by Prof. Tischendorf in the prolegomena to his "*Evangelica Apocrypha*," he subsequently traced more at length in an university thesis, entitled "Pilate circa Christum quid lucis afferatur ex Actis Pilati . . . scripsit Constantinus Tischendorf." Lipsiæ, 1855. 8vo. An epitome of this curious tract is given in the *Christian Observer* for August, 1855. pp. 565—567.

¹ Euseb. Eccl. Hist. lib. ii. c. 2.

² Justin Martyr, Apol. prima, pp. 65. 72. edit. Benedict.

³ Tertullian, Apologia, c. 21.

⁴ *Ibid.* c. 5. To Tertullian's account Eusebius adds, that Tiberius threatened the accusers of the Christians with the punishment of death: and he considers this interference of the Roman emperor as providentially designed to promote the propagation of

publication of Tertullian's Apology, heathen infidelity, personified by Porphyry, one of its most renowned champions, made its second great effort to write down the faith of the cross. Open before the eyes of Porphyry lay the writings of the two Christian apologists: his ears he could not close to the challenge of Tertullian,—'Search YOUR OWN commentaries' (or public records). How overwhelming must have been the triumph of the Pagan combatant, could he have averred and shown that the imperial archives contained not the pretended report from the procurator of Judæa! How would the Christian world have been humbled and confounded, as it gazed on the public immolation of its two favourite advocates by infidel hands, not as martyrs to the truth, but as fabricators of falsehood! Yet, upon the pressing emergency, the wary Porphyry stood speechless as the grave.

"In the fourth century, and about fifty years after Eusebius had reiterated the standing appeal of evangelical antiquity to Pilate's official report of the crucifixion, the apostate Julian brandished his imperial pen against the new religion. He was an accomplished scholar and a profound statesman. His own experience had impressed on his mind the ancient and universal usage of the empire, requiring from governors of provinces official reports of such extraordinary events as marked their administrations. He had before him the works of Justin Martyr, of Tertullian, and of Eusebius. He could not be ignorant that the appeal of the faithful to the report of Pontius Pilate had been sounded, and echoed and reverberated along the track of centuries. He must have felt the pressure of the appeal. Yet even the emperor Julian passed over, in ominous silence, the subject of that memorable letter from the governor of Judæa to his imperial master; which, unless subtracted by Pagan cunning, still survived—a speaking witness from his own archives."

Moreover, "it is a principle of universal justice, that, if a party rightfully demands the production of a document in the possession of his adversary, its non-production creates a decisive presumption against the party withholding it; for its suppression must have been prompted by views incompatible with truth. This principle strongly recommends itself to the common sense of mankind. The official report of the crucifixion, transmitted by Pilate to Tiberius, was a document perhaps decisive of the great controversy between Christianity and unbelief. It was in the hostile custody of heathen Rome, who ought to have held it for the common benefit of all her subjects. The advocates of primitive Christianity appealed to the document and demanded its production; they named the place of its custody, and stated its momentous contents. The champions of Paganism remained dumb as the idols they worshipped. This silence, continued for centuries, was a virtual confession that the Christian asseverations of the existence and contents of the document were 'the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.'"¹

(2.) SÆTONIUS, a Roman historian who flourished in the reign of the emperor Trajan, A. D. 116, refers to Christ, when he says that "Claudius Cæsar expelled the Jews from Rome, because they raised

¹ Griffin's Gospel its own Advocate, pp. 31—34. New York, 1850. 8vo.

continual tumults at the instigation of Christ,"¹ who (it is well known) was sometimes called Chrestus, and his disciples Chrestians.² This event took place A. D. 52, within *twenty* years after the crucifixion.

(3.) TACITUS, the historian, who also flourished under Trajan, A. D. 110, when writing the history of Nero (Claudius's successor), and speaking of the Christians, A. D. 64, says that "the author of that" (sect or) "name was Christus, who, in the reign of Tiberius, was punished with death, as a criminal, by the procurator Pontius Pilate."³ And,

(4.) The younger PLINY, in his celebrated letter to Trajan, written A. D. 107, says that Jesus was worshipped by his followers as God.—"They sing among themselves, alternately, a hymn to Christ as to God."⁴

(5.) The historian ÆLIUS LAMPRIDIUS relates, that the emperor Alexander Severus (who reigned from A. D. 222 to 235), had two private chapels, one more honourable than the other; and that in the former "were the deified emperors, and also some eminently good men, and among them Apollonius, and, as a writer of his time says, Christ, Abraham, and Orpheus (whom he considered as deities), and the images of his ancestors."⁵ The same historian adds, that the emperor "wished to erect a temple to Christ, and to receive him among the gods. But he was forbidden by those who consulted the oracles, they having found that, if that was done, all men would become Christians, and the other temples be forsaken."⁶

(6.) CÆLSUS, one of the bitterest antagonists of Christianity, who

¹ Judæos, impulsore Chresto, assidue tumultuantes Romæ expulit. Suetonius, in Claudio, c. 25. Though the Jews alone are mentioned by the historian, yet, from the nature of the thing, we understand that Christians were comprehended in it; for the first professors of Christianity being of the Jewish nation were for some time confounded with the disciples of Moses, and participated in all the hardships that were imposed on them. Accordingly, in Acts xviii. 2. we read of Aquila and Priscilla, two Jewish Christians, who had been banished from Rome by the above-mentioned edict of Claudius. The historian attributes the tumults of the Jews in that city to the instigation of Christ; but the true state of the affair was this:—The admission of the Gentiles into the Christian church without subjecting them to the institutions of Moses giving great offence to the Judaizing Christians at Rome, they joined their unbelieving brethren in opposing, not only the Gentile converts, but also such of their own nation as espoused their cause. Of all nations, the Jews were the most fierce and obstinate in their religious disputes; and the preaching of the Gospel to the Gentiles was particularly offensive to them. In Asia Minor and in Greece they opposed it by main force, as we learn from Acts xvi.—xviii.; whence it is highly probable that in this quarrel they proceeded to similar outrages at Rome also. Macknight's Credibility of the Gospel History, p. 300. The decree above noticed, which was issued, not by the senate, but by the emperor Claudius himself, continued in force only during his life, if so long; for, in no long time after this, Rome abounded again with Jews.

² Perperam Christianus pronunciat à vobis. Tertullian, Apol. c. 3. Sed exponenda hujus nominis ratio est, propter ignorantium errorem, qui cum immutatâ literâ Chrestum solent dicere. Lactantius, Instit. Divin. lib. iv. c. 7. Lucian, or the author of the dialogue entitled Philopatris, which is ascribed to him, also calls Jesus, Chrestus. Lardner, vol. viii. p. 78. 8vo.; or vol. iv. p. 154. 4to.

³ Auctor nominis ejus Christus, qui Tiberio imperante per procuratorem Pontium Pilatum supplicio affectus erat. Tacit. Annal. lib. xv. c. 44.

⁴ Carmenque Christo, quasi Deo, dicere secum invicem. Plin. Epist. lib. x. ep. 97. tom. ii. p. 128. edit. Bipont.

⁵ Lampridius, in vitâ Severi, c. 29. apud Historiæ Augustæ Scriptores, vol. i. p. 278. edit. Bipont.

⁶ Ibid. c. 43. vol. i. p. 290.

wrote in the latter part of the second century, speaks of the founder of the Christian religion as having lived but a very few years before his time, and mentions the principal facts of the Gospel history relative to Jesus Christ, — declaring that he had copied the account from the writings of the evangelists. He quotes these books (as we have already had occasion to remark¹), and makes extracts from them as being composed by the disciples and companions of Jesus, and under the names which they now bear. He takes notice particularly of his incarnation; his being born of a virgin; his being worshipped by the magi; his flight into Egypt, and the slaughter of the infants. He speaks of Christ's baptism by John, of the descent of the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove, and of the voice from heaven, declaring him to be the Son of God; of his being accounted a prophet by his disciples; of his foretelling who should betray him, as well as the circumstances of his death and resurrection. He allows that Christ was considered as a divine person by his disciples, who worshipped him; and notices all the circumstances attending the crucifixion of Christ, and his appearing to his disciples afterwards. He frequently alludes to the Holy Spirit, mentions God under the title of the Most High, and speaks collectively of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. He acknowledges the miracles wrought by Jesus Christ, by which he engaged great multitudes to adhere to him as the Messiah. That these miracles were really performed he NEVER disputes or denies, but ascribes them to the magic art, which (he says) Christ learned in Egypt.²

(7.) PORPHYRY, another learned antagonist of Christianity (perhaps the most learned and acute antagonist Christianity ever had), who flourished about a century after Celsus, has also borne evidence to the genuineness of the books received by the Christians³: and his testimony is all the more valuable from the fact that he conversed with Christians at Tyre, in Sicily, and at Rome. Porphyry not only allowed that there was such a person as Jesus Christ, but also honoured him as a pious person, who was conveyed into heaven, as being approved by the gods.⁴

(8.) About the middle of the fourth century reigned the emperor JULIAN. It is a remarkable fact, that this very learned and inveterate enemy of the Christian name and faith could produce *no* counter evidence in refutation of the truth of the evangelical history, though (as we have already seen⁵) he attests the genuineness and early date of the four Gospels; and that he never attempted to deny the reality of Christ's miracles. Jesus, he says, did nothing worthy of fame, unless any one can suppose that curing the lame and the blind, and exorcising demons in the villages of Bethsaida, are some of the greatest works. He acknowledges that Jesus had a sovereign power over impure spirits; that he walked on the surface of the deep, and expelled demons. He endeavours to depreciate these wonderful

¹ See pp. 88—90. *suprà*.

² Lardner's Heathen Testimonies, chap. xviii. Works, vol. viii. pp. 5—69. 8vo.; or vol. iv. pp. 113—149. 4to.

³ See pp. 90, 91. *suprà*.

⁴ Lardner's Heathen Testimonies, chap. xxxvii. Works, vol. viii. pp. 176—248. 8vo.; or vol. iv. pp. 209—250. 4to.

⁵ See pp. 91, 92. *suprà*.

works, but in vain. The consequence is undeniable; such works are good proofs of a divine mission."¹

(9.) Lastly, — to omit the very numerous intervening testimonies that might be adduced, — MOHAMMED (who lived in the latter end of the fifth and the former part of the sixth century), though he assumed the honour of delivering to mankind a new revelation, expressly acknowledged the authority of the Gospels. He speaks of Jesus Christ and of his mother by their names, and calls him the Word of God. He says, that he was miraculously born of a virgin; acknowledges the truth of his miracles and prophecies; and speaks of his death and ascension, of his apostles, of the unbelief of the Jews, of Zecharias the father of John the Baptist, and of the Baptist himself, describing his character in a manner perfectly conformable to the Gospels.²

2. TESTIMONIES OF HEATHEN ADVERSARIES TO THE LIVES AND CHARACTERS OF THE FIRST CHRISTIANS.

(1.) The first persecution of the Christians was raised by the emperor Nero, A. D. 65, that is, about thirty years after the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. Concerning this persecution, we have the testimonies of two Roman historians, Tacitus and Suetonius.

TACITUS was contemporary with the apostles. Relating the great fire at Rome, in the tenth year of Nero's reign, he says, that the people imputed that calamity to the emperor, who (they imagined) had set fire to the city, that he might have the glory of rebuilding it more magnificently, and of calling it after his own name; but that Nero charged the crime on the Christians, and, in order to give the more plausible colour to this calumny, he put great numbers of them to death in the most cruel manner. With the view of conciliating the people, he expended great sums in adorning the city, he bestowed largesses on those who had suffered by the fire, and offered many expiatory sacrifices to appease the gods. The historian's words are: — "But neither human assistance, nor the largesses of the emperor, nor all the atonements offered to the gods availed: the infamy of that horrible transaction still adhered to him. To suppress, if possible, this common rumour, Nero procured others to be accused, and punished with exquisite tortures a race of men detested for their evil practices, who were commonly known by the name of Christians. The author of that sect (or name) was Christus, who in the reign of Tiberius was punished with death, as a criminal, by the procurator Pontius Pilate. But this pestilent superstition, though checked for a while, broke out afresh, not only in Judæa, where the evil first originated, but even in the city (of Rome), the common sink into which every thing filthy and abominable flows from all quarters of the world. At first those only were apprehended who confessed themselves of that sect; afterwards a *vast multitude* discovered by them; all of whom were condemned, not so much for the crime of burning the city as for their enmity to mankind. Their executions were so contrived as to expose them to derision and contempt. Some were

¹ Lardner's Heath. Test. chap. xlvi. Works, vol. viii. pp. 355—423. 8vo.; or vol. iv. pp. 311—348. 4to.

² See the Koran, chapters 3, 4, 5, 6, 19. Dr. Macknight has collected and inserted the passages of length in his *Credibility of the Gospel History*, pp. 340, 341.

covered over with the skins of wild beasts, that they might be torn to pieces by dogs; some were crucified; while others, having been daubed over with combustible materials, were set up as lights in the night-time, and thus burnt to death. For these spectacles Nero gave his own gardens, and, at the same time, exhibited there the diversions of the circus; sometimes standing in the crowd as a spectator, in the habit of a charioteer, and at other times driving a chariot himself; until at length these men, though really criminal and deserving exemplary punishment, began to be commiserated as people who were destroyed, not out of regard to the public welfare, but only to gratify the cruelty of one man."¹

The testimony which Suetonius bears to this persecution is in the following words:—"The Christians likewise were severely punished,—a sort of people addicted to a new and mischievous superstition."²

The preceding accounts of the persecution of the Christians by Nero are further confirmed by Martial, the epigrammatist (who lived at the close of the first century), and by Juvenal, the satirist (who flourished during the reigns of Domitian, Nerva, Trajan, and Adrian), both of whom allude to the Neronian persecution, and especially to the pitched coat in which the Christians were burnt.

Martial has an epigram, of which the following is a literal translation:—"You have, perhaps, lately seen acted on the theatre, Mucius, who thrust his hand into the fire: if you think such a person patient, valiant, stout, you are a senseless dotard. For it is a much greater thing, when threatened *with the troublesome coat*, to say, 'I do not sacrifice,' than to obey the command, 'Burn the hand.'"³ This troublesome coat or shirt of the Christians was made like a sack, of paper or coarse linen cloth, either besmeared with pitch, wax, or sulphur, and similar combustible materials, or dipped in them: it was then put upon the Christians; and, in order that they might be kept upright,—the better to resemble a flaming torch,—their chins were severally fastened to stakes fixed in the ground.⁴

In his first satire, Juvenal has the following allusion:—

Now dare
To glance at Tigellinus, and you glare
In that pitch'd shirt in which such crowds expire,
Chain'd to the bloody stake, and wrapp'd in fire."⁵

¹ Tacitus, Annal. lib. xv. c. 44. Lardner's Heathen Testimonies, chap. v. Works, vol. vii. pp. 251—259. 8vo.; or vol. iii. pp. 610—614. 4to.

² Suetonius in Nerone, c. xvi. Lardner, chap. viii. Works, vol. vii. pp. 265—272. 8vo.; or vol. iii. pp. 618—622. 4to.

³ In matutina nuper spectatus arena

Mucius, imposuit qui sua membra focis,
Si patiens fortisque tibi durusque videtur,
Abderitanæ pectora plebis habes.

Nam cum dictatur, tunicâ præsentè molestâ,

"Ure manum," plus est dicere: "Non facio." Martial lib. x. epigr. 25.

⁴ Lardner, chap. vi. Works, vol. vii. pp. 260—262. 8vo.; or vol. iii. pp. 615, 616. 4to.

⁵ Mr. Gifford's translation, p. 27. The original passage is thus:—

Pone Tigellinum, tædâ lucebis in illâ,

Quâ stantes ardent, qui fixo gutture fumant,

Et latum mediâ sulcum deducit arenâ. Juven. Sat. lib. i. 155—157.

Or more literally;—"Describe a great villain, such as was Tigellinus" (a corrupt minister under Nero), "and you shall suffer the same punishment with those who stand burning in their own flame and smoke, their head being held up by a stake fixed to a chain, till they make a long stream" (of blood and fluid sulphur) "on the ground."¹

The above cited testimony of Tacitus, corroborated as it is by contemporary writers, is a very important confirmation of the evangelical history. In it the historian asserts, 1. That Jesus Christ really lived and taught, and was put to death as a malefactor by Pontius Pilate, procurator under Tiberius; 2. That from Christ the people called Christians derived their name and religious sentiments; 3. That this religion or superstition (as he terms it) had its rise in Judæa, where it also spread, notwithstanding the ignominious death of its founder, and the opposition which his followers afterwards experienced from the people of that country; 4. That it was propagated from Judæa into other parts of the world as far as Rome, where, in the tenth or eleventh year of Nero, and before that time, the Christians were very numerous²; and, 5. That the professors of this religion were reproached and hated, and underwent many and grievous sufferings.³

(2.) The next testimony to be adduced is that of Caius Plinius Cæcilius Secundus, better known by the name of the *younger* PLINY. He was born A. D. 61 or 62; and, after holding various distinguished offices, was sent to the provinces of Pontus and Bithynia, by the emperor Trajan, A. D. 106—108, as his lieutenant and prætor, with proconsular power. The persecution of the Christians under that emperor had commenced A. D. 100; and in that remote country there

¹ Lardner, ch. vii. Works, vol. vii. pp. 262—265. 8vo.; or vol. iii. pp. 616—618. 4to.

² The expression of Tacitus is, *ingens multitudo*, a vast multitude; which Voltaire, with his accustomed disregard of truth, has represented as only a few poor wretches, who were sacrificed to public vengeance. Essay on History, vol. i. ch. v. p. 60. Nugent's translation. Dr. Macknight has completely exposed the falsehood of that profligate writer, in his Credibility of the Gospel History, pp. 300—302. Mr. Gibbon's false translation and misrepresentations of the passage of Tacitus above cited are ably exposed in the appendix to Bishop Watson's Apology for the Bible, addressed to the historian. The testimony of Tacitus to the vast number of Christians at Rome is now confirmed by the evidence of the catacombs there, which "are calculated to extend over nine hundred miles of streets, and to contain almost seven millions of graves!" "And we may regard it as established beyond all reasonable doubt, that in spite of the general contempt and hatred, in spite of the constant ill usage to which they were exposed, and the occasional 'fiery trials' which proved them, the Christians, as early as the second century, formed one of the chief elements in the population of Rome." Rawlinson's Bampton Lecture for 1859, pp. 284-5.

³ On the above-cited passage of Tacitus, Gibbon has the following remark:—"The most sceptical criticism is obliged to respect the TRUTH of this extraordinary fact (the persecution of the Christians under Nero), AND THE INTEGRITY of THIS CELEBRATED PASSAGE OF TACITUS. The FORMER (its truth) is confirmed by the diligent and accurate Suetonius, who mentions the punishment which Nero inflicted upon the Christians. The LATTER (its integrity and genuineness) may be proved by the consent of the most ancient manuscripts; by the inimitable character of Tacitus; by his reputation, which guarded his text from the interpolations of pious fraud; and by the purport of his narration." (Decline and Fall, vol. ii. pp. 407, 408.) Such is the observation of the elegant and learned historian, whose hatred of Christianity has led him, in other parts of his work, to misrepresent both it and the Christians: yet, in defiance of all historical and critical testimony, a modern opposer of revelation affirmed that "the texts which are to be found in the works of Tacitus are too much suspected of interpolations to be adduced as an authority!" The effrontery of this assertion is only surpassed by the wilful ignorance which it exhibits, especially as the writer alluded to reprinted Gibbon's misrepresentations of Christians and Christianity in a cheap form in order to deceive and mislead the unwary.—The reader who is desirous of prosecuting this subject further will find the historical testimonies of Tacitus and Suetonius completely vindicated in p. 352. *et seq.* of Mr. W. A. Hails's "Remarks on Volney's Ruins" (London, 1825, 8vo.); a learned and ably written treatise, in which the sophistry and false assertions of that most insidious and dangerous of infidel writers is fully and satisfactorily refuted.

were at this time prodigious numbers of Christians, against whom Pliny, by the emperor's edict, was obliged to use all manner of severity. Being, however, a person of good sense and moderation, he judged it prudent not to proceed to the extreme rigour of the law until he had represented the case to Trajan, and had received his commands concerning it. He therefore wrote him the following epistle¹, A. D. 107 (which is too important to be abridged), and in the same year received the emperor's rescript. The authenticity of both these documents is admitted by the sceptical historian Gibbon.²

“Pliny, to the emperor Trajan, wisheth health and happiness:—

“It is my constant custom, sir, to refer myself to you in all matters concerning which I have any doubt. For who can better direct me where I hesitate, or instruct me where I am ignorant? I have never been present at any trials of Christians, so that I know not well what is the subject-matter of punishment or of inquiry, or what strictness ought to be used in either. Nor have I been a little perplexed to determine whether any difference ought to be made upon account of age, or whether the young and tender, and the full grown and robust, ought to be treated all alike; whether repentance should entitle to pardon, or whether all who have once been Christians ought to be punished, though they are now no longer so; whether the name itself, although no crimes be detected, or crimes only belonging to the name, ought to be punished. Concerning all these things I am in doubt.

“In the mean time I have taken this course with all who have been brought before me, and have been accused as Christians. I have put the question to them, Whether they were Christians. Upon their confessing to me that they were, I repeated the question a second and a third time, threatening also to punish them with death. Such as still persisted, I ordered away to be punished; for it was no doubt with me, whatever might be the nature of their opinion, that contumacy and inflexible obstinacy ought to be punished. There were others of the same infatuation, whom, because they are Roman citizens, I have noted down to be sent to the city.

“In a short time, the crime spreading itself, even whilst under persecution, as is usual in such cases, divers sorts of people came in my way. An information was presented to me, without mentioning the author, containing the names of many persons, who, upon examination, denied that they were Christians, or had ever been so; who repeated after me an invocation of the gods, and with wine and frankincense made supplication to your image, which, for that purpose, I had caused to be brought and set before them, together with the statues of the deities. Moreover, they reviled the name of Christ, none of which things, as is said, they who are really Christians can by any means be compelled to do. These, therefore, I thought

¹ Pliny, Epist. lib. x. ep. 97. tom. ii. pp. 127—129. edit. Bipont. It is reprinted by Dr. Lardner, whose translation we have given, and who has illustrated both the epistle of the philosopher and the emperor Trajan's rescript with numerous valuable observations. *Heathen Testimonies*, chap. ix. Works, vol. vii. pp. 287—344. 8vo.; or vol. iv. pp. 10—43. 4to.

² *Decline and Fall*, vol. ii. p. 409

proper to discharge. Others were named by an informer, who at first confessed themselves Christians, and afterwards denied it; the rest said they had been Christians, but had left them, — some three years ago, some longer, and one or more above twenty years. They all worshipped your image, and the statues of the gods; these also reviled Christ. *They affirmed that the whole of their fault or error lay in this, that they were wont to meet together, on a stated day, before it was light, and sing among themselves, alternately, a hymn to Christ as God; and to bind themselves by a solemn oath (sacramento), not to the commission of any wickedness, but not to be guilty of theft, or robbery, or adultery, never to falsify their word, nor to deny a pledge committed to them, when called upon to return it. When these things were performed, it was their custom to separate, and then come together again to a meal, which they ate in common, without any disorder; but this they had forborne since the publication of my edict, by which, according to your commands, I prohibited assemblies.*

“After receiving this account, I judged it the more necessary to examine, and that by torture, two maid-servants, which were called ministers. But I have discovered nothing beside an evil and excessive superstition. Suspending therefore all judicial proceedings, I have recourse to you for advice; for it has appeared unto me a matter highly deserving consideration, especially upon account of the great number of persons who are in danger of suffering; for many of all ages, and every rank, of both sexes likewise, are accused, and will be accused. Nor has the contagion of this superstition seized cities only, but the lesser towns also, and the open country. Nevertheless, it seems to me that it may be restrained and corrected. It is certain that the temples, which were almost forsaken, begin to be more frequented; and the sacred solemnities, after a long intermission, are revived. Victims likewise are every where bought up, whereas for some time there were few purchasers. Whence it is easy to imagine what numbers of men might be reclaimed, if pardon were granted to those who shall repent.”

To the preceding letter, the emperor Trajan sent the following reply:—

“Trajan to Pliny, wisheth health and happiness:—

“You have taken the right method, my Pliny, in your proceedings with those who have been brought before you as Christians; for it is impossible to establish any one rule that shall hold universally. They are not to be sought for. If any are brought before you, and are convicted, they ought to be punished. However, he that denies his being a Christian, and makes it evident in fact, that is, by supplicating to our gods, though he be suspected to have been so formerly, let him be pardoned upon repentance. But in no case, of any crime whatever, may a bill of information be received, without being signed by him who presents it; for that would be a dangerous precedent, and unworthy of my government.”

The preceding letter and rescript furnish numerous important testimonies to the state of Christianity, and to the purity of Christian principles. We learn from it, in the *FIRST* place, the great

progress of the Christian religion in a short space of time. Christianity was neither known nor heard of in the world before the reign of Tiberius. Eighty years had not elapsed since the crucifixion of Jesus, when Pliny wrote this letter, nor seventy years since the disciples of Jesus began to make any mention of him to the Gentiles; and yet there were at this time great numbers of men whom Pliny repeatedly terms Christians, in that part of Asia where he presided, at a great distance from Judæa. Christians there were every where, throughout the whole extent of his province, in cities, in villages, and in the open country. Among them were persons of all ages, of every rank and condition, and of both sexes; and some of them also were citizens of Rome. The prevalence of Christianity appears likewise from the universal decay of pagan worship: the temples were deserted, and the sacrifices discontinued. Beasts, brought to market for victims, had few purchasers. So many were accused, and were in danger of suffering on account of the prevalence of this opinion, as gave the president no small concern. Further, it is evident that there were not only many at this time, who bore the Christian name, but that such people had been there for many years; some, for several years; and one or more, who had been brought before Pliny, had professed Christianity, and had renounced it more than twenty years. All which circumstances prove that Christianity had been planted there for many years before his arrival. Such an increase, indeed, could only be the work of time.—*SECONDLY*, Pliny's letter bears a noble testimony to the fortitude of the Christians in suffering, and to their steady perseverance in the faith of Jesus Christ; and it also communicates several interesting particulars relative to their religious belief and worship. More particularly, 1. They disowned all the gods of the heathens, and would not worship the images of the emperors or of their gods. The people who embraced this religion forsook the heathen temples and altars, and offered no sacrifices there. 2. They assembled together on a stated day, which we know from the collateral testimony of Christian writers was the Lord's Day or Sunday, on which day Christians celebrate the weekly festival of Christ's resurrection. 3. When they were assembled, Pliny says that they sang a hymn to Christ as God; and also engaged themselves, "by an oath, not to commit theft, or robbery, or adultery, never to falsify their word, nor to deny a pledge committed to them." This account is highly to the honour of the first Christians. They paid divine worship to their God and Saviour, Jesus Christ, and devoted themselves to the practice of moral virtue.—*LASTLY*, both the epistle of Pliny, and the letter or rescript of Trajan, attest the innocence and virtue of the first Christians. From the former it is evident that no crime, besides that of their religion, was proved against any of those who were brought before Pliny. Even their accusers and prosecutors alleged nothing else against them, but that they were Christians: he examined apostates; he put to the torture two young women who were ministers or deaconesses, and yet he discovered nothing but what was quite harmless. The only charge against them is an absurd superstition, and obstinacy in adhering to

it. Trajan's rescript affords equally strong proof of the innocence of these men. He knew not of any offence of which they were guilty, excepting only that they did not supplicate the heathen deities. The honesty and innocency of these men oblige us to pay a great regard to their belief and profession of the Christian religion. If they were sober and discreet before they embraced it, we may be sure that there *then* were such evidences of its truth as approved themselves to serious persons. If they are supposed to have formerly been vicious and irregular, here is a strong proof of the truth and goodness of Christianity, inasmuch as it had so great an influence on the minds of men, at a time when they might easily know whether it was well grounded or not. In either case, it is an honour to these principles, that those who embraced them maintained such innocence in their lives, that their enemies, even after the strictest inquiries, could discover nothing criminal against them.

(3.) A. D. 176. CELSUS ridicules the Christians for their worship of Christ, and attests the gradual increase of their numbers. He also acknowledges that there were modest, temperate, and intelligent persons among them¹, and bears witness to their constancy in the faith of Christ. At the very time when he wrote against them, they were suffering a grievous persecution, but were enabled to withstand both his sharp-pointed pen, and also the sword of the magistrate.²

(4.) LUCIAN, the contemporary of Celsus, was a bitter enemy of the Christians. In his account of the death of the philosopher Peregrinus, he bears authentic testimony to the principal facts and principles of Christianity; that its founder was crucified in Palestine, and worshipped by the Christians, who entertained peculiarly strong hopes of immortal life, and great contempt for this world and its enjoyments; and that they courageously endured many afflictions on account of their principles, and sometimes surrendered themselves to sufferings. Honesty and probity prevailed so much among them, that they trusted each other without security. Their Master had earnestly recommended to all his followers mutual love, by which also they were much distinguished. In his piece, entitled Alexander or Pseudomantis, he says, that they were well known in the world by the name of Christians; that they were at that time numerous in Pontus, Paphlagonia, and the neighbouring countries; and, finally, that they were formidable to cheats and impostors. And in the dialogue entitled Philopatris (which if not written by Lucian himself, to whom it is usually ascribed, was composed not long after his time), there are numerous allusions to the writings, principles, and practices of Christians, all of which are ridiculed, and especially their belief of the doctrine of the Trinity.³

(5.) The fortitude and constancy of the Christians under persecution are referred to by EPICETETUS (A. D. 109), under the name of

¹ Vide Origen, contra Celsum, lib. i. p. 22. edit. Cantab. 1677.

² Lardner's Heathen Testimonies, ch. xviii. sections 5—8. Works, vol. viii. pp. 36—50. 8vo.; or vol. iv. pp. 130—138. 4to.

³ Ibid. chap. xix. Works, vol. viii. pp. 69—81. 8vo.; or vol. iv. pp. 149—156. 4to.

Galileans.¹ The emperor MARCUS ANTONINUS (A. D. 161) mentions the Christians as examples of an obstinate contempt of death.² And GALEN (A. D. 200) acknowledges the constancy of Christians in their principles.³ PORPHYRY (A. D. 270) acknowledges that they were then very numerous in the Roman empire, and unwillingly admits the miracles wrought by the apostles, which, however, he ascribes to the magic art; and he endeavoured to expose them to popular reproach by insinuating that they were the causes of the calamities that befell the Roman empire.⁴

(6.) Lastly, the emperor JULIAN (A. D. 361), though he endeavours to lessen the number of the early believers in Jesus, yet is constrained to acknowledge that there were multitudes of such men in Greece and Italy before John wrote his Gospel, and that they were not confined to the lower classes; men of character — such as Cornelius, a Roman centurion, at Cæsarea, and Sergius Paulus, pro-consul of Cyprus, — being converted to the faith of Jesus before the end of Claudius's reign (who ascended the imperial throne A. D. 41, and died A. D. 54); and he frequently speaks, with much indignation, of Peter and Paul, those two great apostles of Jesus, and successful preachers of his Gospel. So that, upon the whole, the apostate emperor Julian has undesignedly borne testimony to the truth of many things recorded in the New Testament. He aimed to overthrow the Christian religion, but has CONFIRMED it; his arguments against it are perfectly harmless, and insufficient to unsettle the weakest Christian; for he has not made one objection of moment against the Christian religion, as contained in the genuine and authentic books of the New Testament.⁵

VI. Thus do all the inveterate enemies of Christianity, — from its first origin to its complete establishment in the then known world, in the fourth century of the Christian æra, — unite in giving an honourable testimony to the character of Christ, the reality of his miracles, to the genuineness, authenticity, and credibility of the writings of the New Testament, and to the wide and rapid progress of the Christian religion, as well as to the unity of the objects of the Christian faith and worship, the blameless lives of the Christians, and their unshaken constancy in adhering to their holy profession, regardless of the most sanguinary and exquisite torments that could be inflicted on them. It is true that, concerning many important articles of Scripture history, the Greek and Latin writers now extant are totally silent; and hence some have attempted to raise an argument against the credibility of this history. But the silence of the writers in

¹ Lardner's *Heathen Testimonies*, chap. x. Works, vol. vii. pp. 344—357. 8vo.; or vol. iv. pp. 43—50. 4to.

² *Ibid.* chap. xv. § 2. Works, vol. vii. pp. 398—406. 8vo.; or vol. iv. pp. 73—78. 4to.

³ *Ibid.* chap. xxi. Works, vol. viii. pp. 90, 91. 8vo.; or vol. iv. p. 161. 4to.

⁴ *Ibid.* chap. xxxvii. Works, vol. viii. pp. 220—226. 8vo.; or vol. iv. pp. 234—238. 4to.

⁵ *Ibid.* chap. xlvi. Works, vol. viii. pp. 394—411. 8vo.; or vol. iv. pp. 332—342. 4to. The infidel historian of declining Rome has attested the accuracy of the passages collected by Dr. Lardner from the apostate emperor, by affirming that Dr. Lardner has "accurately compiled all that can now be discovered of Julian's work against the Christians." *Decline and Fall*, vol. iv. p. 81. note g. Herwerden, de *Imperatore Juliano*, pp. 114—131. Lugd. Bat. 1827, 8vo.

question may be satisfactorily accounted for, by their great ignorance of such facts as occurred very long before their own time, and by the peculiar contempt entertained for both Jews and Christians, arising from the diversity of their customs and institutions. To these general considerations we may add, particularly with reference to the silence of profane historians relative to the remarkable events in the life of Christ, —

1. That many books of those remote ages are LOST, in which it is very possible that some mention might have been made of these facts.

Hence it has happened that many occurrences, which are related in the evangelical history, are not to be found in the writings of the heathens. Of these writings, indeed, we have now but few remaining in comparison of their original number; and those which are extant are only fragments of preceding histories. Thus, the mighty works performed by Jesus Christ, and the monuments of the great achievements that took place in the age when he was born, are now missing or lost. All the history of Dion Cassius, from the consulships of Antistius and Balbus to the consulships of Messala and Cinna (that is, for the space of ten years, — five years before and five years after the birth of Christ), is totally lost, as also is Livy's history of the same period. In vain, therefore, does any one expect to find the remarkable passages concerning the birth of Christ in these writers; and much more vain is it to look for these things in those writers whose histories are altogether missing at this day. To instance only the census or enrolment ordered by Augustus, and mentioned by Luke (ii. 1, 2.), the silence of historians concerning which has been a favourite topic with objectors: — there can be no doubt but that some one of the Roman historians did record that transaction (for the Romans have sedulously recorded every thing that was connected with the grandeur and riches of their empire); though their writings are now lost, either by negligence, by fire, by the irruption of the barbarous nations into Italy, or by age and length of time. It is evident that some one historian *did mention* the census above alluded to; otherwise, whence did Suidas derive information of the fact, — that Augustus sent TWENTY SELECT MEN, of acknowledged character for virtue and integrity, into ALL the provinces of the empire, to take a census both of men and of property, and commanded that a just proportion of the latter should be brought into the imperial treasury? And this, Suidas adds, was the FIRST census.¹

2. Some of the Roman historians, whose works have come down to our time, are DEFECTIVE.

This is particularly the case with Livy and Tacitus, from whom we cannot expect any narrative of events that have reference to the birth of Christ, or to any great occurrence that took place at that time. For Livy wrote only to the commencement of Augustus's reign, which was before the time of Christ; consequently he could not record so memorable an event as that of a census throughout the Roman empire, which did not take place until the thirtieth year of Augustus's reign. And no notice could be taken of that transaction by Tacitus, because he does not go so far back as Augustus. His *Annals* begin with the reign of Tiberius, and continue to the death of Nero: his books of *History* begin where the *Annals* terminate, and conclude with Vespasian's expedition against the Jews. For the knowledge of the transactions intervening between the close of Livy and the commencement of Tacitus, we are indebted to Velleius Paterculus, Florus, Plutarch, Dion Cassius, Justin, and others, who lived long after the time of Augustus, and who compiled their histories from such materials as they could command. Florus, in particular, is only an abbreviator of Livy, from whom little consequently can be expected. Though Velleius Paterculus advances a little further, yet he is merely an epitomiser; and as Justin, who flourished in the reign of the emperor Antoninus Pius, only abridged the history of Trogius Pompeius, which he did not continue, we

¹ Suidæ Lexicon, voce *Απριλιον*, tom. i. p. 271. edit. Kuster.

cannot, therefore, expect any information from him relative to the birth of Christ. Appian has altogether omitted Judæa in the description which he has left us of the Roman empire. These facts will account for the silence of the generality of pagan writers concerning the events related in the Gospel history; while the express, authentic, and genuine statement of Tacitus, already given¹, furnishes an indisputable testimony to the fact, that Jesus Christ lived and was crucified during the reign of Tiberius, and thus completely refutes the absurd and ignorant assertion (an assertion, indeed, so truly absurd as to be unworthy of notice, were it not that its effrontery may impose on the unwary) which has been made, viz. that it is not known at what year between A. D. 60 and 100 the name of Christ was first heard of in Europe, and in that part of Asia which is contiguous to Europe and the Mediterranean Sea; and that it is evident from all existing testimony that it was not before the year 60!!!

3. *Of the few remaining historians, who wrote about the ages in question, most were engaged on other subjects; to which it is to be added, that no profane historians, whether Jews or Heathens, take notice of ALL occurrences.*

Thus the obscurity of the sun at Julius Cæsar's death, which is said to have lasted a whole year, is not noticed by any Roman author except the poets Ovid and Virgil, and the philosopher Pliny: yet ten historians or more, in the following century, wrote lives of Cæsar, and gave an account of his assassination and of several things that occurred after it. A similar prodigy is reported by Cedrenus to have happened in the reign of the emperor Justinian; but between that time and Cedrenus, there were nearly twenty considerable writers, who mentioned no such thing. Neither Tacitus, Justin, nor Strabo, who have particularly spoken of the Jews, have noticed the existence of the Jewish sect of the Essenes: nay, even Josephus, the Jewish historian, is totally silent concerning them in his two books against Apion, though he has mentioned them in his other writings. Yet, will any one pretend that there were no Essenes, either before or in the time of Christ? — Again, neither Herodotus, nor Thucydides, nor any other Greek writers of that time, have taken any notice of Rome, though the conquests of the Roman people were then extended far and wide, and the Romans were become great and formidable. Suetonius wrote the lives of the first twelve Roman emperors; yet if we compare his relations with the events recorded by other historians, we shall find that he has omitted many important transactions that were obvious. Now, to apply this to our present purpose: — it is true that none of the heathen historians of imperial Rome have spoken of the celebrated census in the time of Augustus, which is mentioned by Luke (ii. 1, 2.): yet it does not follow that it did not actually take effect, since we see it is not unusual for historians to pass by some persons and things, which are very remarkable and deserve to be recorded. If, then, some matters which are mentioned by the evangelists are not noticed in other histories, we cannot, with any reason, conclude from them, that the evangelists have recorded that which is false. No such thing can be inferred; for even among pagan writers there are many peculiar historical passages related by some of them concerning which the rest are totally silent. Tacitus and Valerius Maximus, for instance, have narrations which are not to be found in any other Roman historians, and yet they are not suspected of falsehood. Why, then, may we not credit those things which are recorded in the New Testament, although no Gentile historians make any the slightest mention of them? Nay, the evangelical historians themselves do not all relate the same things; though all of them have mentioned some passages, yet there are others which are noticed only by one or two of the evangelists; and there are some things or persons concerning which they are wholly silent, but which are as remarkable as some of those which they have committed to writing. Thus, the Gospels speak of the Pharisees and Sadducees, and also of the Galilæans and Herodians; and yet they take no notice whatever of the Essenes by name, though they were at that time a considerable sect among the Jews. It is no reasonable objection, therefore, to the New Testament, that some things occur in it which are not to be found in very approved authors. No history, whether sacred or profane,

¹ See pp. 173, 175. *suprà*.

relates every thing. The evangelists themselves do not pretend to do this: we cannot, therefore, expect to find all the actions of Christ recorded in their writings, for one of them who wrote last of all thus expresses himself at the close of his Gospel: — *And there are many other things which Jesus did; the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written.* (John xxi. 25.)

4. *Several of the facts, relating to Christ and his miracles, coming from Jews, would be slighted as fabulous by the Gentile writers, especially considering, on the one hand, how common prodigies and magical stories were in that day; and on the other hand, how superstitious and credulous the Jews were reputed to be.*

The scene of Christ's actions lay at a great distance from Greece and Italy, and authentic accounts of his miracles could not soon be transmitted thither: the learned Greeks and Romans, therefore, would regard the first reports of them as idle or incredible tales. Besides, it was foreign to the purpose of any author who wrote the life of a Roman emperor, or the history of a celebrated war, or the annals of a particular state, to describe minutely a religious sect, begun in Judæa by one who was rejected as a deceiver in his own country. Or, if his subject led such a writer to mention the Christian religion, its doctrines, miracles, and disciples, he would naturally speak of them in such a manner as he himself felt affected towards them; and in what sovereign contempt the first Christians were held, by the generality of profane writers, many of the passages adduced from their works, in the preceding pages, sufficiently attest. Lastly, the Christian scheme of doctrines and moral duties was so contrary to the received tenets and maxims of the heathen, that it cannot excite surprise that many of them cared but little to inquire into evidences and facts relating to it. Many, however, who *did* inquire, doubtless became Christians; their testimony, therefore, is not to be reckoned here.

One single example will illustrate the three last observations. The preternatural darkness of three hours, which prevailed in the land of Judæa at the time of Christ's crucifixion, and which has been recorded by three of the evangelists, is unnoticed by any profane historian; from which circumstance Mr. Gibbon took occasion to insinuate that the evidence of the evangelists is not sufficient to establish the truth of facts, unless it is supported by the concurrent testimony of pagan contemporary writers. Speaking of that darkness, he expresses his surprise that this miraculous event "*passed without notice in an age of science and history.*" It happened," he adds, "*during the lifetime of Seneca and the elder Pliny, who must have experienced the immediate effects, or received the earliest intelligence of the prodigy.*" Each of these philosophers, in a laborious work, has recorded *all the great phenomena of nature, earthquakes, meteors, comets, and eclipses, which his indefatigable industry could collect.* Both the one and the other have omitted to mention the greatest phenomenon to which mortal eye has been witness since the creation of the globe. *A distinct chapter of Pliny is devoted to eclipses of an extraordinary nature and unusual duration:* but he contents himself with describing the singular defect of light which followed the murder of Cæsar, when, during the greatest part of the year, the orb of the sun appeared pale and without splendour."¹ The sentences printed in italic are those in which the sceptical historian has had recourse to those misrepresentations which unhappily pervade too many of his splendid pages. On this passage we remark,

¹ Decline and Fall, vol. ii. pp. 379.

FIRST, That the eclipse being confined to Judæa, its *immediate effects* could not necessarily have been experienced by Seneca or Pliny, neither of whom could have been on the spot in the reign of Tiberius, when the eclipse took place; nor can it be proved that they had immediate information from all parts of the globe as soon as any extraordinary phenomenon had taken place.

SECONDLY, Neither Pliny nor Seneca have left any works that correspond to the historian's pompous description. Seneca does *not* treat on eclipses at all, in the passage referred to¹; he speaks indeed of *earthquakes*, but only in a very cursory manner, and does not instance more than four or five, because his object was evidently not to write a history of them, but to investigate their symptoms, causes, and prognostics. The same remark applies to Pliny with respect to earthquakes. They are mentioned only to introduce philosophical observations. The historian, therefore, has but very feeble props to support his assertion. We may reasonably imagine, that if Seneca and Pliny have recorded all the great phenomena of nature, they must of course have explored the Grecian and Roman histories, which were immediately open to their inquiries. Now, let us try an experiment as to what they have derived from those sources with respect to eclipses. Do they mention the total eclipse of the sun, when the celebrated plague happened at Athens, in the first year of the Peloponnesian war? Do they mention the solar eclipse on the day when the foundations of Rome were laid? Do they mention the eclipse foretold by Thales, by which a peace was effected between the Medes and the Lydians? It would be too tedious and useless to ask for many others, which might be mentioned without any fear of our questions being answered in the affirmative.

THIRDLY, The *distinct chapter* of Pliny, in which, according to the historian's lofty representation, we should expect to find the subject of eclipses exhausted by his full and elaborate detail, consists of only *eighteen words*, the purport of which is, that "eclipses of the sun are sometimes of extraordinary duration; such as that which took place on the death of Cæsar, and during the war with Antony, when the sun appeared pale for nearly a year."²

LASTLY, This miraculous preternatural darkness did *not* pass without notice. Omitting the supposed attestation of it by Phlegon (a pagan chronologist who wrote during the reign of the emperor Hadrian³, and whose testimony is cited by Tertullian, Origen, and Eusebius), and also the supposed mention of it by Thallus (who lived in the second century), which is cited by Julius Africanus⁴, a writer of great eminence and probity, who lived at the beginning of the third century; — we may remark that there are two other testimonies not founded on the statements of Phlegon and Thallus, which *unequivocally* confirm the evangelical history of the darkness at the crucifixion, viz. those of Tertullian and Celsus. In his Apology for the Christians, which was addressed to their heathen adversaries, Tertullian expressly says, "*At the moment of Christ's death, the light departed from the sun, and the land was darkened at noon-day; WHICH WONDER IS RELATED IN YOUR OWN ANNALS, AND IS PRESERVED IN YOUR ARCHIVES TO THIS DAY.*"⁵ If the account of this extraordinary darkness had not been registered, Tertullian would have exposed both himself to the charge of asserting a falsehood (which charge was *never* brought against him), and also his religion to the ridicule of his enemies. It is further particularly worthy of remark, that the darkness and earthquake at the crucifixion are both explicitly recognised and mentioned as *FACTS* by that acute adversary of Christianity, Celsus; who would not have made such an admission, if he could have possibly denied them.⁶

In addition to the preceding observations, we may state that many good and solid reasons may be assigned why profane writers have *not* made mention of the darkness at the crucifixion, which, it is now generally admitted, was confined to the land of Judæa. The most

¹ Nat. Quæst. lib. vi. c. 1. Op. tom. iv. pp. 309—312. edit. Bipont.

² Fiunt prodigiosi, et longiores solis defectus: qualis occiso dictatore Cæsare, et Antoniano bello, totius pæne anni pallore continuo. Plin. Hist. Nat. lib. ii. c. 30. tom. i. p. 148. edit. Bipont.

³ See Lardner's Works, vol. vii. pp. 370—387. 8vo.; or vol. iv. pp. 58—67. 4to.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Tertullian, Apol. c. 21.

⁶ See Origen contr. Celsum, lib. ii. § 55. p. 94.

obvious is, that they might have no sufficient information of it. The provinces of the Roman empire were very extensive, and we find, in general, that the attention of writers was chiefly confined to those which were nearest to the metropolis. The ancient historians and biographers are remarkably concise, and seldom stop to mention occurrences, which, although they may have happened during the times of which they write, have no relation whatever to their main subject. This was their general rule, and there is no reason for which it should be violated merely to indulge the caprice of the captious, or satisfy the scruples of the petulant. There is no more reason in the nature of the thing itself why the testimony of profane writers should be called for to support the sacred than the sacred should be called for to support the profane. We may then retort the argument, and in our turn ask the historian, and those who have circulated his false account of the progress of Christianity, how they can credit the accounts given by Paterculus, Pliny the elder, Valerius Maximus, and Seneca, when Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John take not the least notice of them? But let it be supposed that the Roman writers had received information of the fact in question, it is most probable that they would have considered it as a natural occurrence, being accustomed to earthquakes and darkness for whole days together, in consequence of the eruptions of Mount Vesuvius. Or, supposing that they had believed it to be a preternatural darkness, would it have been consistent with their principles as heathens to have mentioned it? They must plainly have foreseen what great advantage would have been given to Christianity by it. Their readers would naturally have been led to inquire into the character of the extraordinary person, at whose death the laws of nature were infringed, and this inquiry, as it would have opened a more complete view of the new dispensation, must have led to their conversion. Hence we collect a very satisfactory reason for their silence. Supposing that they knew the fact, and from motives of policy suppressed it, their silence furnishes as strong a proof of its truth as their express testimony could possibly have done.

Upon the whole, we may venture boldly to assert, that even if this fact be destitute of support from profane writers, it is a deficiency which may easily be dispensed with. We believe many things upon the evidence of one credible witness. But in the case before us, we have no less than *three*, whose knowledge of the fact was *never* denied, whose veracity is indisputable, and their integrity not to be impeached. So plainly are the characters of truth marked upon their writings, that every person of common discernment must see them, and he who is not satisfied as to the certainty of what they relate, must give up all pretensions to a sound judgment, and be abandoned to the incurable obstinacy of his own forlorn scepticism.¹

An example taken from English history will confirm and illustrate the preceding observations. No one in our days, who has read the whole history of the popish plot in Charles the Second's time, with any candour and attention, believes it. The incoherence, and every way

¹ Kett's Bampton Lectures, Notes and Authorities, pp. xxiv.—xxxii.

incredible circumstances of the whole deposition, together with the infamous characters of the witnesses, preclude an assent. Yet, a circumstance to this day unaccounted for—the murder of Sir Edmundbury Godfrey—happened to give it an air of probability. Yet he would be thought injudicious to the last degree, who should thence be inclined to favour the evidence of Titus Oates. The case before us is opposite, indeed, but parallel. Christianity stands supported by evidences of the most unexceptionable nature; yet the circumstance of Seneca's and Pliny's silence concerning the eclipse or preternatural darkness (admit it only for argument's sake) is unaccountable. The evidence of the Gospel is, however, by no means shaken, nor will be shaken, till it can be proved that we must be able to account for every thing in an event, before we admit the testimony of the event itself.

In short, there is no history in the world more certain and indubitable than that contained in the Christian Scriptures, which is supported by the concurring testimony, — not to say of so many men, but of so many different nations, divided, indeed, among themselves in other particulars, but all uniting to confirm the truth of the facts related in the Gospels. And, therefore, even though the Christian institution had perished with the apostles, and there were not in the world at this day so much as one Christian, we should have the most unquestionable evidence that the persons and actions, recorded in the Gospels, and attested by the concurring voice of all nations, really existed in the country of Judæa during the reign of Tiberius, as the evangelists have assured us.¹

§ 3. Collateral Testimonies to the Truth of the Facts recorded in the Scriptures from Coins, Medals, and ancient Marbles.

There remains yet one more class of collateral testimonies to the credibility of the facts recorded in the Bible, which is not less important and decisive than the series of evidence of profane historians given in the preceding pages. These testimonies are furnished by ancient coins, medals, and inscriptions on marbles; which have survived the wreck of time, and are extant to this day. These remains of antiquity are allowed to be among the most important proofs of ancient history in general; and they afford satisfactory confirmation of many particulars related in the Scriptures. The most remarkable of these we now proceed to submit to the consideration of the reader.

I. THE MOSAIC NARRATIVE OF THE DELUGE

Is confirmed by a coin struck at Apamea, in Phrygia, in the reign of Philip the elder. On the reverse of this medal is represented a kind of square chest, floating upon the waters: a man and woman are advancing out of it to dry land, while two other persons remain within. Above it flutters a dove, bearing an olive branch,

¹ Edwards, on the Authority, &c. of Scripture, vol. i. pp. 400—420. Macknight's Truth of the Gospel, pp. 305, 306, 343.

and another bird, possibly a raven, is perched upon its roof. In one of the front panels of the chest is the word NOE in ancient Greek characters.¹

II. Various passages in the Old Testament are confirmed by the successful researches of Dr. Young, Messrs. Salt, Champollion, Coquerel, Rossellini, Sir Gardner Wilkinson, Botta, Layard, Col. Rawlinson, the Rev. George Rawlinson, and other eminent scholars, in deciphering the hitherto illegible hieroglyphics, which are still extant on ancient Egyptian and Assyrian Monuments. To adduce a few instances out of many which might be offered:—

1. Several ages before the time of Sesostris, the shepherd-kings invaded and conquered almost the whole of Egypt, about the year 2080 before the Christian era, and in the time of the patriarch Abraham. The princes of the eighteenth dynasty (the Theban or Diospolitan), whose chief was Thoutmosis I., the first sovereign after the shepherd-kings, erected the most ancient edifices of Thebes and Egypt. Thoutmosis was adored as a god, under the name of Amenophis, because he had delivered Egypt from the shepherds; the recollection of whose tyranny was odious to the Egyptians and to the kings of that dynasty, to which the Pharaoh, mentioned in the latter part of the book of Genesis, belongs. In Gen. xlvii. 34. Joseph tells his brethren that *Every shepherd is an abomination unto the Egyptians*. This hatred of theirs against *shepherds* is confirmed in a very singular manner by a very ancient mummy now at Paris, beneath the buskins of both whose feet is painted a *shepherd, bound with cords*.²

2. In the arrangements of the courts of the two first Pharaohs mentioned in the Bible—one of whom was contemporary with Abraham (Gen. xii. 15.) and the other with Joseph (Gen. xxxvii. 36.)—we may recognise the style and Egyptian customs which were re-established after the expulsion of the shepherd-kings. In Exod. i. 11. 14. mention is made of the vast structures, in the building of which the Egyptians embittered the lives of the Israelites *with hard bondage*; and it was precisely the sovereigns of that dynasty, who distinguished themselves by the erection of gigantic monuments. The granite columns and apartments of the palace at Karnac, several temples in Nubia, the great sphinx of the pyramids, and the colossal obelisk of St. John of Lateran, attest the power of Thoutmosis III., the Moeris of the Greeks. Amenophis II. erected the colossal statue which attracted the superstitious curiosity of the Romans. Ramses (or Rameses) II. caused the superb obelisks at Luxor to be erected. M. Champollion read the names of all these sovereigns on the inscriptions of monuments. The Pharaoh, under whose reign Moses was born, was Ramses IV. surnamed Mei-Amoun, that is, the Friend of Ammon; who left numerous edifices built by the children of Israel, whom he so cruelly oppressed. He caused the vast palace of Medinet-Abou to be erected, as well as the temple situated towards the southern gate of Karnac. The sarcophagus of this monarch is preserved in the Louvre at Paris. The contemporary of Moses must have swayed the Egyptian sceptre more than forty years, since the Hebrew legislator passed forty years at his court, and, a long time afterwards, it is said that the king of Egypt died. Now, it appears from Manetho (as quoted by Josephus)³ that this identical Ramses Mei-Amoun reigned sixty-six years and two months. Are not these unexpected agreements between sacred and profane history evident proofs of truth? Who then has falsified the ancient lists of Egyptian dynasties, the lists written on papyrus, and the ruins of Egypt, to make them agree so well with a few sentences uttered by a Christian named Stephen (Acts vii. 18. *et seq.*), and with a few lines written by a Jew named Moses?⁴ Lastly, the Pharaoh, who witnessed

¹ Bryant's Analysis of Ancient Mythology, vol. iii. pp. 46, 47. 8vo. edit. In the fifth volume, pp. 289—313. he has satisfactorily vindicated the genuineness of the Apamean medal. Seven or eight of these medals are known to be extant, the genuineness of which is acknowledged by Eckhel, the most profound of all modern numismatologists. See his Doctrina Nummorum Veterum, tom. iii. pp. 132, 140. Mr. Murray has given an engraving of this medal after a cast in the Royal Library at Paris. Truth of Revelation demonstrated by an Appeal to existing Monuments, &c., p. 209.

² Revue Protestante, Juillet, 1827, p. 12.

³ Josephus against Apion, book i. c. 15.

⁴ Revue Protestante, Juillet, 1827, p. 14. Coquerel, Biographie Sacrée, tom. iii. p. 361.