

THE  
CAUSE  
OF THE  
DELUGE  
DEMONSTRATED.

**B**EFORE I proceed to my present *Demonstration of the Cause of the Deluge*, I must premise this, That in my *New Theory of the Earth*, especially as improv'd and corrected in the Second Edition, I have evidently shewn, that in Case a Comet pass'd by, before the Earth, in its annual Course, on the 17<sup>th</sup> Day of the Second Month, from the Autumnal Equinox, or Nov. 28. in the 2349<sup>th</sup> Year before the Christian Æra, the Phænomena of Nature and History, and particularly the *Mosaic* Account of the Deluge of *Noah*, which are no otherwise to be accounted for, are exactly explain'd; that the Calculations and Proportions, where-ever we can come to them, are on that Hypothesis right, agreeable to one another, to Ancient, especially Sacred History, and to the System of Astronomy; that there are Traces in Ancient Books of a Tradition, that a Comet should appear at the very Beginning of the Deluge; that the very Month and Day mentioned by *Moses* for such its Beginning, is attested to by other Old records, and, on this Hypothesis, by Astronomical calculations also: whence I concluded that it was

A most

## The Cause of the Deluge

most highly probable, or rather physically demonstrable, that a Comet did pass by at that time, and was, under the Conduct of the Divine Providence, and as his Instrument in punishing a wicked World, the Cause of that Deluge. The only thing wanting, was, to demonstrate from the Period of some Comet, and its Situation in the Heavens, Astronomically stated and computed, that such a Comet did actually come by at that very time : which if it could be once shewn, the whole must be own'd as certain, and demonstrated, and all the natural Corollaries therefrom must be allow'd as true, even by the Obstinate and Incredulous. This indeed at first was look'd upon by me as not at all to be expected; since we then barely began to know, or rather strongly to conjecture that Comets did revolve about the Sun in settled Periods, but without being able to determine any one of those Periods. But of late God has so bless'd the Labours of the Learned; and this Part of Astronomy is so much improv'd, especially by the farther Pains and Observations of the great Inventor himself, *Sir Isaac Newton*; whose Name will never be forgotten while Mathematicks and Astronomy are preserved among Mankind; and by the laborious Calculations of the acute *Dr. Halley*, on the Principles laid down by the former, that what was a few Years ago almost despair'd of, is now in great Measure discover'd, and we know, not only that one Comet has come round three or four times already in later Ages, *viz.* A.D. 1456, 1531, 1607, and 1682, and will no doubt come round again A. D. 1758, as making its Period in about 75 Years; that another has probably come round in the same later Ages twice already, *viz.* A.D. 1532, and 1661; and so is to return A. D. 1789, or 1790, as making its Period in about 129 Years: But, which is the greatest Discovery of all, that the last most remarkable Comet,

met, whose Descent into our Regions has occasion'd almost all the modern solid Knowledge we have relating to the whole Cometick System it self, has also several times been seen already within the time of certain Records; I mean in the 44<sup>th</sup> Year before Christ, and again *A. D.* 531, or 532; and yet again *A. D.* 1106, besides this its last Appearance *A. D.* 1680, whereby we know that it revolves in about 575 Years. This last Comet I may well call the *most remarkable one* that ever appear'd; since besides the former Consideration, I shall presently shew, that it is no other than that very Comet which came by the Earth at the Beginning of *Noah's Deluge*, and which was the Cause of the same. Now considering the Premises, I shall only have occasion, in order to my present Design, to prove these five Things concerning it. (1.) That no other of the known Comets could pass by the Earth at the Beginning of the Deluge. (2.) That this Comet was of the same Bigness with that which pass'd by at that time. (3.) That its Orbit was then in a due Position to pass by at that Time. (4.) That its descending Node was then also in a due Position for the same Passage by. (5.) That its Period exactly agrees to the same time. Or, in short, that all the known Circumstances of this Comet do correspond, and that it actually pass'd by on or about that very Year, and on or about that very Day of the Year when the Deluge began. All which Things I shall demonstrate in their Order.

I. None of the other Comets yet known, I mean of the 21 in *Dr. Halley's Table* and my *Solar System*, could be that which pass'd by the Earth at the Beginning of the Deluge. This appears by these certain Arguments following.

(1.) None of them appear to have been of a due Bigness: For the Phænomena of the Deluge, as I



New Theor.  
2d Edit.  
Corol. 2.  
Lett. 25.  
& p. 203,  
204.

have elsewhere shew'd, require a small one in Comparison of the Earth, whereas the rest of the Comets seem to have been commonly larger than it.

(2.) None of their descending Orbits are duly situate, I mean between 90 and 100 Degrees from *Aries*: which Position is yet absolutely necessary in this Case. For the Precession of the Equinox, which is about 50 Degrees, added to the 46 Degrees that the Earth was distant from *Aries* when the Flood began, must suppose the descending Orbit of the Comet to be now between 90 and 100 Degrees from *Aries*: at which place none of the descending Orbits of the other Comets are now situate; as Dr. *Halle*'s Table, and my Solar System grounded thereon, will readily shew. (3.) None of the other's Nodes are so situate, as is necessary to bring the Comet near enough to our Earth: I mean between 90 or 100 Degrees from *Aries*; and so as to cross the Plane of the Ecliptick very near to the Distance of the Earth from the Sun; as is also plain from the same Table and System. Nay indeed, the wrong Situation of the descending Orbits, noted under the last Head, renders this due Situation of the Nodes plainly impossible. For it being necessary, that the Orbit it self intersect the Ecliptick it self in the 17<sup>th</sup> Degree of *Taurus*; this cannot possibly be in such a Situation of the Orbit, as that we have already mention'd to belong to all the rest of the known Comets. So that these other Comets were utterly incapable of being instrumental in the Deluge, even tho' their Periods should any of them agree; which yet we know not that any of them do.

II. This Comet was of the same Bigness with that which pass'd by at that time; I mean a very small one, and only 10 times as large as the Moon. This appears by Mr. *Flamsteed*'s Determination of its apparent Diameter, about 20" when it was nearly

ly

ly as far off as the Sun : whereas he supposes that of the Moon at the same Distance to be about 6". So that if due Allowance be made for that large and dense Part of the Atmosphere, which hides the Nucleus or Comet it self from us, suppose 7", the Diameter of the solid Body it self will be only 13". Now the Cube of 13, or 2197, is to the Cube of 6, or 216, as about 10 to 1. Whence it appears, that this Comet is about ten times so great as the Moon, or  $\frac{1}{4}$  so great as the Earth, as the real Comet that occasion'd the Deluge ought to be.

III. The descending Part of the Orbit of this Comet was about the 17<sup>th</sup> deg. of *Taurus* at the Time of the Deluge, as that of the Comet at the Deluge must have been. For this descending Orbit is now in the 2<sup>d</sup> Degree of *Cancer* ; and if we allow 46 Degrees for its apparent Motion since the Deluge, which is very little different from the real Precession of the Equinox, the main, if not only Occasion of it, it will appear to have been in the 17<sup>th</sup> Degree of *Taurus* at that Time, according to the foregoing Computation.

IV. The Descending Node of this Comet, which is of the greatest Consideration here, and liable to the greatest Variety of all, does also exceeding well agree in the present Case. For this is now in the 3<sup>d</sup> Degree of *Cancer* ; and if we allow, as before, 46 Degrees for its apparent Motion since the Deluge, or for the real Precession of the Equinox, the main, if not only Cause of it, it will appear to have been in the 17<sup>th</sup> of *Taurus* at that Time also. Nay, if we allow the least Inequality in these two Motions, or the least Alteration of the Planes either of the Ecliptick or of the Comets Orbit, or of both, as we justly may, both from the Physical Causes, and Astronomical Observations, we may suppose them still nearer the Earth's Distance from the Sun, and so more exactly suitable to the Case of the Deluge.

Princip.  
 Edit.  
 405.

Gen. Nat.  
 Quest. I.  
 Vol. C. 17.  
 Mem. in  
 Vol. C. 22.  
 Plut. in Ca-  
 sar. Tit.  
 H. B. Mar.  
 I. H. C. 24.  
 Great. op.  
 Cypri.  
 Annal.

V. The Period of this Comet most exactly agrees to the same Time, I mean to 7 Revolutions in 4028 Years, the Interval from the Deluge till its last Appearance 1680. For, as Sir *Isaac Newton* first observ'd, from its Elliptick Curvature before it disappear'd, that its Period must be in general above 500 Years; so has he and Dr. *Halley* since observ'd, that the same Comet has been seen four times, viz. the 44<sup>th</sup> Year before Christ. A. D. 531 or 532, A. D. 1106, and A. D. 1680, and that by consequence it makes a Revolution in about 575 Years. Now if we make a very small Allowance for the old Periods before Christ, and suppose that, one with another, it has revolv'd in 575 $\frac{1}{2}$  Years, we shall find that 7 such Periods amount to 4028 Years, exactly, according to that Number since the Deluge. This is so remarkable an Observation, and so surprizing, that it will deserve a particular Demonstration from the original Authors themselves. To begin then with the first of the Appearances recorded in later History, I mean that in the 44<sup>th</sup> Year before Christ, the Year that *Julius Cæsar* was slain, we have no fewer nor lesser Persons than *Seneca*, *Suetonius*, *Plutarch* and *Pliny*, to attest it; and the last, as bringing *Augustus's* own Words for his Voucher. Take the Account in those Words, as being the most authentick and remarkable. 'On those very Days, says *Augustus*, when I was exhibiting some Games to the People, [begin about Sept. 26.] a Comet appear'd for 7 Days, and was seen in the Northern Part of Heaven. It rose about the 11<sup>th</sup> Hour of the Day: It was a remarkable one, and visible all over the World. The common People believ'd, that it signify'd the Reception of the Soul of *Cæsar* into the Number of the immortal Gods. On which Account the Image of this Star was added to that Statue representing *Cæsar's* Head, which we a while after con-

'secra-

‘secrated in the Forum’. Accordingly it is known that some of *Cæsar’s* Coins have a Star upon them, for a Memorial of this Comet ; and observable that *Virgil* hints at the same also, *Patrium aperitur & r-tice sidus*. *Plutarch’s*, *Seneca’s* and *Suetonius’s* Words are almost the very same that are included in the Passage from *Augustus*, and so need not be distinctly set down. Only the Time of its Rising is by *Suetonius* set down about the 11th Hour, without the Words of the Day, which the other two have ; and its Northern Position is only mentioned by *Augustus* himself. Now if we interpret the 11<sup>th</sup> Hour, or 11<sup>th</sup> Hour of the Day, to be either 11 a clock before Noon, or an Hour before Sun-set, this will render the whole almost incredible : it being next to impossible, that this Comet should be seen in the Day-time. But the *Romans* then accounting Midnight the Beginning of their Day, as is well known by Chronologers, we may reckon this 11<sup>th</sup> Hour to be 11 at Night, and all will agree to the Comet before us ; and it will shew, that as it had been conceal’d by cloudy Weather for some time, so it now appear’d ascending from the Sun, with its long and splendid Tail for a Week, before the like cloudy Weather, or the Comet’s too great Remoteness rendred it no longer observable. Accordingly the Northern Position of this Comet, noted here by *Augustus*, secures us still farther, that it must have been the same with that *A. D. 1680*, which is ever in the same Position, at the same Place of its Orbit : to say nothing of its remarkable Brightness, which I take to belong to its Tail, and which rendred it so very remarkable then in the World : In which Point it as well or better agrees with this, than with any other in the whole Cometary System. So that on all these Accounts, the Comet seen then by the *Romans*, and that seen *A. D. 1680*, must have been one and the same Comet. The next Period

*Æneid.*  
VIII.



when this Comet might be seen again, according to the foregoing Time of its Revolution, was *A. D.* 531, or 532. When yet we hear nothing of it in *Hevelius's* History of Comets. But then we have it in *Lubienietz's* more exact Catalogue, out of *Zonaras*, the Original Historian, whose Words are these, *Annal. L. xiv. p. 61.* ' In the 5<sup>th</sup> Year of the Emperor *Justinian* [*A. D.* 531, or 532.] a Comet appear'd, of that Sort which is called *Lampadius*. ' It sent its bright Tail upward, and continued to ' shine 20 Days. Which Words exactly agree to this Comet. The next Period when it was to be expected, was *A. D.* 1106. at which Time the Historians are full of their Accounts of it. Take those Accounts in their own Words, as they stand in *Hevelius* and *Lubienietz*, who have given us a most compleat Collection of them in their Histories of Comets.

*A. D.* 1106. We saw a Comet of wonderful Brightness, from the first Week in *Lent*, until the Passion of our Lord. An extraordinary Star was seen to shine this Year on *Friday* in the Evening, Southward and Westward, and appeared bright for 25 Days together, and always at the same Hour.

*A. D.* 1106. in the Month of *February*, two Days after the New Moon, a great Comet appear'd South-Westward. *A. D.* 1106. a Comet appear'd like a Fire, almost all the Month of *February*.

A very great Comet was seen in the Time of *Lent*. *Prætorius* adds, that the Emperor *Henry IV.* died the same Year; which *Calvisius* also agrees to.

*A. D.* 1106. a Star, which we call a Comet, appear'd.

*A. D.* 1106. a dreadful Comet appear'd, from the first Week in *Lent*, till the Vigil of *Palm-Sunday*. The same Year the Emperor *Henry IV.* died.

On the Year of our Lord 1106, the 14<sup>th</sup> of the Calends of *March*, [*Feb. 16.*] a certain strange Star was



was discovered, and was seen to shine between the *South* and *West* for 25 Days, after the same manner, and at the same Hour. It seemed to be small and obscure; but that Light which went out from it was exceeding bright, and a Splendor, like a great Beam, proceeded from the *East* and *North*, and shot it self upon the same Star.

In these Testimonies, we may see that all the Circumstances of this Comet agree to that of *A. D.* 1680. I mean the Smallness and Obscurity of its Nucleus, the Brightness and Remarkableness of its Tail, its Position *South-West*, and the Direction of its Tail *North-East*. So that there is no Reason to doubt, but it was the very same. Only we must here note, that these two Periods were, one with another, three Quarters of a Year shorter than the last Period. For from *September*, in the 4<sup>th</sup> Year before Christ, till *February* or *March* *A. D.* 1106. are but 1148½ Years, or two Periods of 74¼ a-piece, one with another: whereas from the same *February* or *March* *A. D.* 1106. till *February* or *March* 1680, when this Comet was about the same Position again, there are just 575 Years. 'Tis rather a Wonder, that the three last Periods of our Famous Comet are so very nearly equal, than that there is this small Inequality among them. Nor is it, by the way, any Wonder therefore, that the four first Periods after the Deluge are to be suppos'd one with another rather above 576 Years, to agree exactly to that Time. 'Tis rather a Question whether the rest of the Comets Periods will prove any of them near so equal in Proportion, even that Allowance makes these to be. Accord-

*Princip.*  
p. 480.  
*Prælect.*  
*Physico.*  
*Math.*  
p. 358,  
CON- 359.

considerable Inequalities are to be expected among them.

*Note, (1.)* That it is highly remarkable, that this is the only Comet yet known, whose Node renders it capable of approaching very near the Body of the Earth; and that the same Node is still so little remote from the Earth's Orbit, as Dr. *Halley* well observes, that it brought this Comet about as near to the same as the Moon this very last time. Hear his remarkable Words, and consider the Consequence of them in this Matter. 'No Comet, says he, has hitherto threatned the Earth with a nearer Appulse than that of 1680. For by Calculation, I find that *November 11<sup>th</sup> 1<sup>h</sup> 6'* after Noon, that Comet was not above a Semidiameter of the Sun, (which I take to be equal to the Distance of the Moon) to the *Northwards* of the Way of the Earth. At which time, had the Earth been there, the Comet would, I think, have had a Parallax equal to that of the Moon'. Nor can I pass over his following Words without setting them down, they are so apposite to my present Purpose. 'The former Observations, says he, are to be suppos'd as spoken to Astronomers. But what might be the Consequences of so near an Appulse, or of a Contact, or lastly of a Collision of these celestial Bodies, (which are none of them impossible) I leave to be discuss'd by the Philosophers.

(2.) Since this Comet's Period is 575 Years, its middle Distance must be about 5,600,000,000 Miles from the Sun; its longer Axis and greatest Distance twice so long, or nearly 11,200,000,000 Miles; its Aphelion Distance about 14 times as great as the Distance of *Saturn*; its greatest Distance to its least, as above 20,000 to 1: and so its greatest Light and Heat to its least, as above 400,000,000 to 1.

(3.) Since

*Synops.  
Comet. in  
calce.*

(3.) Since 575 Years appears to be the Period of the Comet that caus'd the Deluge, what a Learned Friend of mine, who was the Occasion of my Examination of this Matter, suggests, will deserve to be considered, *viz.* Whether the Story of the Phoenix, that celebrated Emblem of the Resurrection in Christian Antiquity; [that it returns once after 5 Centuries, and goes to the Altar and City of the Sun, and is there burnt; and another arises out of its Ashes, and carries away the Remains of the former, &c.] be not an Allegorical Representation of this Comet; [which returns once after 5 Centuries, and goes down to the Sun, and is there vehemently heated, and its outward Regions dissolv'd; yet that it flies off again, and carries away what remains after that terrible burning, &c.] and whether the Conflagration and Renovation of things, which some such Comet in its Ascent from the Sun may bring upon the Earth, be not hereby prefigur'd. I will not here be positive; but I own that I don't know of any Solution of this famous Piece of *Egyptian* Mythology and Hieroglyphicks, which seems to be, that can be compared with it.

*Note,* (4.) That none of those Comets whose Orbits are yet known, can come near enough to our Earth in their Ascent from the Sun to cause the Conflagration. This is evident to those who consider Dr. *Halley's* Table, or my Solar System built upon it; since none of them move in or very near the Plane of the Ecliptick; and those four which have their Nodes nearest the Earth's Orbit, and so might approach nearest to the Earth, are either such as have these Nodes so near only in their Descent to the Sun; as that in 1472, and that in 1618, and that in 1680; or go not any time much nearer to the Sun than the Earth it self, as that in 1684, and so are on all Accounts utterly incapable of affording

fording Heat enough for such a Conflagration.

Note (5.) That therefore the Period of Time for that Conflagration, upon the Supposition that it is to be caused by a Comet, cannot now be discover'd by any natural Means; but must still remain, as formerly, only knowable from Divine Revelation.

*New The-*  
*ory, p. 452,*  
*453.*

Note (6.) That hence those remarkable Corollaries, drawn from the accurate Solution of such Difficulties now, as formerly were plainly insoluble; I mean, the great Regard due to the Ancientest Sacred and Prophane Records, and to the inspired Method whence they must have been deriv'd; the Imperfection of Human Knowledge; the Folly of rejecting Revealed Truths, out of regard to uncertain Human Reasonings; the Wisdom of adhering to the most obvious Sense of Scripture; the Reasonableness of believing Scripture-Accounts and Scripture-Mysteries, tho' not fully comprehended by us; the Justness of expecting Satisfaction in moral Difficulties in due time from the like Satisfaction afforded already in those that are Philosophical, and the like, do all receive a new and surprizing Confirmation; and will therefore deserve a new and serious Consideration.

N. B. *Dr. Halley having himself given an Account of this Comet lately in Dr. Gregory's English Astronomy, P. 901, 902, 903, I here present it to the Reader verbatim, that he may compare the two Accounts together, for his more entire Satisfaction.*

“ But as far as Probability from the Equality  
 “ of Periods, and similar Appearance of Comets,  
 “ may be urged as an Argument, the late won-  
 “ drous Comet of 1682, seems to have been the  
 “ same, which was seen in the Time of our King  
 “ Henry I. Anno 1106, which began to appear in  
 “ the



the *West* about the middle of *February*, and continued for many Days after, with such a Tail as was seen in that of 168<sup>o</sup>. And again in the Consulate of *Lampadius* and *Orestes*, about the Year of Christ 531, such another Comet appeared in the *West*, of which *Malela*, perhaps an Eye-witness, relates that it was *μῆγας καὶ φοβερῆς*, a great and fearful Star; that it appeared in the *West*, and emitted upwards from it a long white Beam; and was seen for 20 Days. It were to be wish'd the Historian had told us what Time of the Year it was seen; but 'tis however plain, that the Interval between this and that of 1106, is nearly equal to that between 1106 and 168<sup>o</sup>, viz. about 575 Years. And if we reckon backward such another Period, we shall come to the 44th Year before Christ, in which *Julius Cæsar* was murder'd, and in which there appear'd a very remarkable Comet, mentioned by almost all the Historians of those Times, and by *Pliny* in his Natural History, lib. 11. c. 24. who recites the Words of *Augustus Cæsar* on this Occasion, which lead us to the very Time of its Appearance, and its Situation in the Heavens. These Words being very much to our purpose, it may not be amiss to recite them. *In ipsis Ludorum memorum diebus, sydus crinitum per septem dies, in regione Cæli quæ sub Septentrionibus est conspectum. Id oriebatur circa undecimam horam diei, clarumq; & omnibus terris conspicuum fuit.* Now these *Ludi* were dedicated *Veneri genetrici*, (for from *Venus* the *Cæsars* would be thought to be descended,) and began with the Birth-day of *Augustus*, viz. Sept. 23. (as may be collected from a Fragment of an Old Roman Calendar extant in *Gruter*, pag. 135.) and continued for 7 Days, during which the Comet appeared. Nor are we to suppose that it was

“ seen

*The Cause of the Deluge demonstrated.*

“ seen only those 7 Days, but possibly both before  
 “ and after. Nor are we to interpret the Words  
 “ *sub Septentrionibus*, as if the Comet had appear’d  
 “ in the North, but that it was seen under the *Sep-*  
 “ *tem triones*, or brighter Stars of *Ursa major*. And  
 “ as to its rising *Hora undecima diei*, it can no ways  
 “ be understood, unless the word *diei* be left out,  
 “ as it is by *Suetonius* ; for it must have been very  
 “ far from the Sun, either to rise at Five in the  
 “ Afternoon, or at Eleven at Night ; in which  
 “ Cases it must have appeared for a long time, and  
 “ its Tail have been so little remarkable, that it  
 “ could by no means be call’d, *Clarum & omnibus*  
 “ *Terris conspicuum Sydus*. But supposing this Co-  
 “ met to have traced the same Path with that of  
 “ the Year 1680, the ascending part of the Orb  
 “ will exactly represent all that *Augustus* hath said  
 “ concerning it ; and is yet an additional Argu-  
 “ ment to that drawn from the Equality of the  
 “ Period. Thus ’tis not improbable but this Co-  
 “ met may have four times visited us at Intervals  
 “ of about 575 Years : Whence the Transverse  
 “ Diameter of its Elliptic Orb will be found  
 “  $\sqrt{3575 \times 575}$  times greater than the annual Orb ;  
 “ or 138 times greater than the mean Distance of  
 “ the Sun ; which Distance, tho’ immensely  
 “ great, bears no Proportion to that of the Fixed  
 “ Stars.

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*W. W.*