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A N S W E R

To the OBJECTIONS of the late

LORD *BOLINGBROKE*

Against the HISTORIES of the

OLD and NEW TESTAMENT.



[Price Two Shillings.]

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A
VINDICATION
OF THE
HISTORIES
OF THE
OLD and NEW TESTAMENT.
IN
ANSWER

To the OBJECTIONS of the late
LORD *BOLINGBROKE*.

In Two LETTERS to a
YOUNG NOBLEMAN.

By the Right Reverend
Dr. *ROBERT CLAYTON*,
Lord Bishop of CLOCHER.

The SECOND EDITION.

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A
VINDICATION
OF THE
HISTORIES
OF THE
OLD and NEW TESTAMENT.
LETTER I.

MY DEAR LORD,

IN those Letters which I did myself the Honour of writing to your Lordship some few Years ago, wherein I committed my Thoughts to Paper, at your Request, with regard to some natural Curiosities of the fossil Kind, and was led from thence to a Philosophical Vindication of the *Mosaical* Account of the Creation and Deluge; I took it for granted that the Books of *Moses* were a genuine History undoubtedly written by *Moses* himself, and that the Authenticity of them had been sufficiently established so as to need no further Proof.

BUT, my Lord, as a great Genius hath lately thought proper to call these Things into Question, and, under the Pretence of shewing, that they are not sufficient Materials on which to found a general System, either of History or Chronology, has thought proper to make such Objections to the Books both of the Old

A

and

and New Testament, as must, if true, greatly invalidate their Testimony; I choose to renew my Correspondence at this Time, that I may have an Opportunity of giving you my Opinion of this Performance. And lest any Thing which Lord *Bolingbroke* hath advanced, of whose Abilities I know your Lordship hath an high Opinion, should make too strong an Impression on your Mind, with Regard to those sacred Writings; I shall regularly consider those Objections, which his Lordship hath industriously collected, and as artfully displayed under the Disguise of a Friend, without seeming to have any premeditated Design to hurt revealed Religion; and then I shall endeavour to support and vindicate the Authority of the History of the Bible in the very Method, and on the very Plan which he himself hath pointed out.

NOT, my Lord, as I before observed, that the noble Viscount has openly attacked Revelation as a professed *Theist*, but raises these Scruples only, as he expresseth it, *out of Zeal for Christianity (a)*: and yet in the self same Paragraph declares it as his positive Opinion, *that Christianity has been on the Decay ever since the Resurrection of Letters (b)*. Can any Thing in Nature be more insidious? Does your Lordship think, that Lord *Bolingbroke* could believe that Doctrine to be true, which, he declares, will not, in his Opinion, stand the

(a) Let. V. p. 182. London Edit. Printed for Millar, in two Vols.

(b) Let. V. p. 185.

Test of a free and open Enquiry : which flourisheth only under the Darkneſs of Ignorance, and vaniſheth away like Morning Dew on the Approach of the Sunſhine of Knowledge? Thoſe Things are *Evil*, my Lord, which *love Darkneſs rather than Light* : The true brilliant Diamond never gives forth its Luſtre to ſo much Advantage as in the brighteſt Sunſhine: And ſuch I truſt in GOD will Chriſtianity ſhew itſelf to be on the ſtricteſt Enquiry ; and that it will ſtill come out the brighter, the more it is ſcrutinized by the fiery Trial of a juſt and ſevere Criticiſm.

BUT, my Lord, why did not Lord *Bolingbroke* ſpeak openly and fairly ? why does he chooſe to attack Chriſtianity rather under the Character of a falſe Friend, than of an open Enemy? The Apology which he makes, or at leaſt which he ſeems deſirous ſhould be underſtood as ſuch, for this Proceeding, is inſerted in the ſecond Page of the firſt Letter, where he ſays, “ I think that a due Deference
 “ is to be paid to received Opinions, and
 “ that a due Compliance with received Cu-
 “ ſtoms is to be held ; although both the one
 “ and the other ſhould be, what they often
 “ are, abſurd or ridiculous. But this Servi-
 “ tude is outward only, and abridges in no
 “ Sort the Liberty of private Judgment. The
 “ Obligations of ſubmitting to it even out-
 “ wardly, extend no further, than to thoſe
 “ Opinions and Cuſtoms which cannot be
 A 2 “ oppoſed ;

“ opposed ; or from which we cannot deviate
 “ without doing Hurt, or giving Offence, to
 “ Society. In all these Cases, our Specula-
 “ tions ought to be free : in all other Cases
 “ our Practice ought to be so.”

AND now I appeal to your Lordship, whether you can think in your Conscience that the noble Viscount had that tender Regard for the Ease of the Ministry, the Tranquillity of the Bishops Bench, and the Peace of Society, as to choose upon that Account to propose his Objections against the Bible as a disguised Christian, rather than a professed Deist ? or whether he had not too much Sense to imagine, that the same Effect of the Disturbance of Society would not equally follow from both ? only with this Difference, that the Designs of a false Friend are not so easily discovered as those of an open Enemy ; and the Wounds that are given, are not only deeper but surer.

AND indeed the Force of his whole Performance lies in the Deceitfulness of it, in artfully substituting one Thing for another ; like a Juggler at Cards, who shews you one Card while he artfully whips another into the Place of it. Thus in the very Case before us, when Lord *Bolingbroke* says that *Christianity has been upon the Decay ever since the Resurrection of Letters*, Here it is manifest, if we look into his Reasoning, that he has palmed *Christianity* upon his Readers instead of *Poper*y ; for his Arguments all run against *Po-*

*per*y ;

pery; but, before he shews his Hand, he whips in *Christianity* in Lieu of it. That you may not think I also intend to deceive, take his own Words. “ Observe then, my
 “ Lord, says he, that the Demolition of *the*
 “ *papal Throne* was not attempted with Suc-
 “ cefs until the Beginning of the sixteenth
 “ Century.----A Multitude of Circumstances,
 “ which you will easily trace in the fifteenth
 “ and sixteenth Centuries, to go no further
 “ back, concurred to bring about this great
 “ Event.---Among these Circumstances, there
 “ is one less complicated and more obvious
 “ than others, which was of principal and
 “ universal Influence. The Art of Printing
 “ had been invented about forty or fifty
 “ Years before the Period we fix: From
 “ that Time the Resurrection of Letters
 “ hastened on a-pace; and at this Period they
 “ had made great Progress, and were culti-
 “ vated with great Application.----As soon as
 “ the Means of acquiring and spreading In-
 “ formation grew common, is is no Wonder
 “ that a System was unravelled, which could
 “ not have been woven with Success in any
 “ Ages, but those of gross Ignorance and
 “ credulous Superstition (*c*).”

AND yet this is the only Argument he produceth to prove that *Christianity* has been on the Decay ever since the Resurrection of

(*c*) Lett. V. p. 204. 205. 206.

Letters. Whereas it is really and truly a Proof of the direct contrary. For as it does prove that *Popery* hath been upon the Decay ever since the Resurrection of Letters, so will the same Method of arguing serve to prove that the Destruction of *Popery* has contributed to the Revival of *true Christianity*, which must and will be enlivened along with the Resurrection of Letters.

BUT, my Lord, this is not the only Place where he has proceeded in this deceitful Method of Reasoning, as will appear in the Sequel of this Letter. And I am sorry that I must say, although I hope to convince your Lordship of the Truth of it, that his whole Argumentation against the Authenticity of the Scripture History in the Old and New Testament, is one continued Piece of fallacious Sophistry. As for Instance: His Lordship takes a great deal of learned Pains to shew the Imperfection of ancient prophane History, as well as he does of ancient sacred History; which, at the same Time that it serves to make a great Shew of Impartiality, has likewise this further Use, that, by overturning the Credibility of ancient prophane History, he sets aside the Force of that Evidence, which the Vindicators of revealed Religion have produced in Support of the sacred Writings from the concurrent Testimony of the ancient prophane Historians; and yet through his whole Treatise, he re-

LET. I. *of the Old and New Testament.* 7

commends the Enquiry into ancient History, in order “ to establish those historical Facts “ in sacred History, which are the Foundation of the whole System, on clear and “ unquestionable historical Authority (*d*),” which is manifestly acting the Part of a faithless *Dalilah*, in first depriving us of our Strength, and then calling out in the Voice of a Friend, *The Philistines be upon thee, Sampson!*

AND the more effectually to do this, his Lordship sets out with ridiculing *Scaliger*, *Boschart*, *Petavius* and *Usher*, who have attempted to make this Enquiry into ancient prophane History; and declares “ a thorough Contempt for the whole Business of these learned Lives (*e*);” and pray observe the Reason; because, says he, “ The same Materials are “ common to them all; but these Materials “ are few, and there is a moral Impossibility “ that they should ever have more (*f*).”

AND what then? Surely the fewer these Materials are, the more Reason there is for considering them in all the various Lights that are possible. He recommends an Enquiry into ancient History, and then declares his Contempt for those that do so; and why? Because the Materials are few. That is, because there were not as many Books written before the Invention of Letters, as there have been since the Art of Printing has been discovered.

(*d*) Let. V. p. 183. (*e*) P. 6. (*f*) P. 6.

His Lordship observes (g), that “ the Divines
 “ object in their Disputes with Atheists, and
 “ they object very justly, says he, that these
 “ Men require improper Proofs.” And may
 not they make the same Objection at present
 against his Lordship as a Theist? when he
 contemns these Authors for not producing
 more Materials than, according to his own
 Assertion, it is possible for them to produce.

BUT how does he know that there is a moral
 Impossibility they should ever have more?
 was it not owing to *Usher* that we now have
 the Copy of the *Samaritan* Pentateuch, which
 is a living Evidence that the five Books of *Mo-*
ses have not been corrupted in any material
 Point since the Defection of *Samaria*, and the
 violent Animosities that arose on that Account
 between the *Jews* and *Samaritans*. But his
 Lordship says further, that these Authors have
 “ supposed, have guessed, have disjointed
 “ Passages of different Authors, and broken
 “ Traditions of uncertain Originals, &c. (h)”
 That *Scaliger*, *Bochart* and *Marsham*, have
 sometimes indulged their Imaginations too
 much, I will readily allow; but I absolutely
 deny the Charge against *Petavius* and *Usher*.
 And as there are no Instances produced, he
 has left me no other Means of refuting him.

His Lordship then says, *Julius Africanus*,
Eusebius, and *George the Monk*, opened the
 principal Sources of all this Science; but they

(g) P. 175.

(h) P. 6.

corrupted the Waters. In Proof of which, he says, “ The Dynasties of *Manetho*, for Instance, are broken to Pieces by *Eusebius*, “ and such Fragments of them as suited his “ Design are stuck into his Works. We “ have, we know, no more of them (i).” Which Assertion, although false in itself, *for we know that we have more of them*, than what are in *Eusebius*, yet seems to carry with it this insidious Infination, as if *Eusebius* after he had picked out what made most for his Purpose, had then destroyed the Remainder to prevent their rising in Judgment against him ; whereas, I doubt very much whether ever *Eusebius* had seen the Works of *Manetho* ; as Books were then by no Means so easy to be come at, as they have been since the Invention of the Art of Printing. For that Work of *Eusebius*, which is here alluded to, is his *Chronicon*, in which Work he endeavours to synchronize the sacred and prophane History, and to reduce them into one regular Series of Chronology ; and the Books which he mentions as having consulted upon this Head are, *Hyginus*, *Clemens Africanus*, *Tatianus*, *Josephus* and *Justus* ; but does not say one Word about *Manetho*. *Julius Africanus* had indeed made a Kind of Abstract out of *Manetho*, in which *we know* he did not exactly copy after *Manetho* in his List of the *Egyptian* Princes, because by comparing him with some other Ex-

(i) P. 8.

tracts made out of *Manetho*, which are preserved in *Josephus*, we know he has very justly omitted the Names of the Queens, that are mentioned by *Manetho*, it being now universally acknowledged among the learned, that *Egypt* was then an elective Kingdom, and that the *Egyptians* always chose their Princes, either out of their Priesthood, or out of the Army. So that if Lord *Bolingbroke* had read *Josephus*, whom he nevertheless quotes very frequently, he would have found that we know more of *Manetho* than what is in *Eusebius*. And what inclines me to think that *Eusebius* had not seen the Works of *Manetho*, or at least had them not in his Possession, is, that speaking in his *Præparatio Evangelica* of the Affairs of *Egypt*, he barely mentions *Manetho*, as an Author who had written largely on that Subject, but makes his Quotations, and those no small ones, out of *Diodorus Siculus*.

THEN his Lordship proceeds and says,
 “ The *Codex Alexandrinus* we owe to George
 “ the Monk : We have no other Authority
 “ for it; and one cannot see, without Amaze-
 “ ment, such a Man as Sir *John Marsham*
 “ undervaluing this Authority in one Page, and
 “ building his System upon it in the next (k).”
 When Men of Learning speak of the *Codex Alexandrinus*, they are generally supposed to mean the famous *Alexandrian* MS Copy of the Old and New Testament: But this is a Book

(k) Euseb. Præp. l. ii. c. 1.

which

which was not known to *George the Monk*, who flourished about 100 Years ago, in an Age when that Book and the Value of it were unknown. *George the Monk*, otherwise much better known by the Name of *Syncellus*, does indeed mention *an ancient Chronicle*, which, notwithstanding its boasted Antiquity, must have been written, as Sir *John Marsham* justly remarks, since the third Year of the hundred and seventh Olympiad, because it mentions *Nectanebo*, whose Flight was about fifteen Years before the Expedition of *Alexander*. Which Book, *Syncellus* supposes, led the subsequent Authors, and particularly *Manetho*, into all his Errors about the Antiquity of the *Egyptian Dynasties* (1). And where is the great Harm, if Sir *John Marsham* sometimes receives and sometimes rejects the Authority of this *ancient Chronicle*, as he finds it agree or disagree with other Authorities, which he imagines to have either better or worse Foundation for what they assert? Does not his Lordship take this Liberty even with the holy Scriptures, and reject the historical Part, while he is pleased to honour the Doctrines of original Sin, the Trinity, and the coming of the *Messiah*, with seeming Tokens of his Approbation? But why his Lordship mentions this Book, which *Syncellus* only intitles *Vetus Chronicon*, under the Denomination of *Codex Alexandrinus*, I choose to refer to the Conjectures

(1) Sync. P. 51. Ed. Par.

of the Reader, rather than to offer any Reflections of my own.

BUT the noble Viscount in his next Letter goes on, and tells the Story of *Abgarus* (m), and of the Beasts, which when turned loose ran each of them immediately to that Part of the *Circus*, where a Parcel of Earth taken from their native Soil had been laid; and then adds, “ This Tale might pass on *Josephus*; “ for in him, I believe, I read it.” He tells the same Story in another Place, with the additional Fable of the Letters which passed between *Abgarus* and *Jesus Christ* (n). Which I only mention now to set your Lordship right with Regard to the Author’s Name in whom these Stories are told, and that is *Eusebius*, not *Josephus*: And likewise to desire you would remark, that the greatest Authors may be guilty of small Mistakes, without impeaching their Veracity, or their Judgment in other Particulars; and to acknowledge that I think *Eusebius* was a little too credulous, in some other Instances as well as these; but that he must nevertheless be esteemed as a Person of great Veracity, Learning, and Judgment, in the general. *Matthew Paris* is an Historian of undoubted Authority in most Cases, and yet he was much more credulous than *Eusebius* in many Particulars. That there were pious Frauds committed in, and before the Days of *Eusebius*, is not to be denied; but it is the

(m) Let. II. p. 31.

(n) Reflect. on Exile, p. 240.

Business of *Criticism*, as his Lordship justly expresseth it, “to separate the Ore from the Dross (o).” For says his Lordship again, “We strike out Truth by the Confrontation of different Accounts: As we strike out Sparks of Fire by the Collision of Flints and Steel (p).” Which has been tolerably well performed since the Revival of Letters, and is every Day improving since the Reformation. Infomuch, that our learned Author is forced to acknowledge, that “the Moderns have invented new Methods of Defence, and have abandoned some Posts that were not tenable (q).”

In his third Letter (r), Lord *Bolingbroke*, speaking of the Uncertainty of ancient History says, “*Berosus* for Instance, and *Manetho*, one a *Babylonian* and the other an *Egyptian* Priest, had published the Antiquities of their Countries in the Time of the *Ptolemies*. *Berosus* pretended to give the History of four hundred eighty Years. *Pliny*, if I remember right, for I say this on Memory, speaks to this Effect in the *sixth* Book of his Natural History: And if it was so, these Years were probably Years of *Nabonassar*.” And here I cannot but observe, that this noble Author quotes often upon Memory, in order, I suppose to give these Letters the Air of a slight and cursory Performance; although it is manifest from Lord *Bolingbroke*’s last Will, that

(o) Let. IV. p. 133.

(q) Let. V. p. 182.

(p) Let. IV. p. 136.

(r) P. 81.

the four first of these Letters were *privately printed* during his Life Time, *though not published*, and, if I am rightly informed, were distributed among some of his learned Friends for their critical Revival, who might have set him right if they pleased, where he made any Mistakes. But however, though the Mistake here made is no great one, I think it proper to inform your Lordship and the Reader of these Letters, that it is in the seventh Book of *Pliny's* Natural History, that *Berosus* is mentioned by him in two Places (s). In the first of which he takes Notice of the great Honours that were paid to *Berosus* by the *Athenians*, to whom, though a Foreigner, they erected a Statue in the publick Gymnasium, with a golden Tongue, on Account of his Skill in Astrology. And in the other, arguing for the great Antiquity of the Art of *literary* Writing, he says, that *Berosus* mentions the *Babylonians* as being in Possession of Astronomical Observations for upwards of 480 Years before his Time; which is very different from what his Lordship asserts, that “*Berosus* pretended to give the History of four hundred eighty Years.” Whereas *Berosus* wrote a chronological History of *Chaldæa* and the adjacent Countries, from the Flood of *Noah* to the Conquest of *Babylon* by *Cyrus*, comprehending a Period at least upwards of 1700 Years. Of which I shall have Occasion to

(s) Plin. Nat. Hist. l. vii. c. 37. 56.

speak more fully in the Sequel of this Work. But supposing that *Berosus* had given, or pretended to give, an *History of four hundred eighty Years*; What is the Meaning of the following Remark? *And if it was so, these Years were probably Years of Nabonassar.* Where is the Sense of this? or what is it to the Purpose? One would be apt to imagine, in order to make Sense of it, that the Years of *Nabonassar* were different from, and were either longer or shorter than common Years. Whereas that is not the Fact. *Nabonassar* was a famous King of *Babylon*, from the Commencement of whose Reign the *Babylonians* began the Date of that remarkable Astronomical *Æra*, which from him was called the *Æra of Nabonassar*, and commenced about seven Years after the *Æra* of the Building of *Rome*, 235 after the Death of *Solomon*. So that although the *Æra* of *Nabonassar* differed from other *Æras*, yet *the Years of Nabonassar* did not differ from other *Years*. Upon all which I shall only remark, that it is a very difficult Thing for those Persons, who have more of the Shadow than the Substance of Learning, and yet are willing to make an ostentatious Parade with it, to keep themselves from being detected, and rendering themselves the Objects of Ridicule to the more knowing Part of their Readers.

BUT, says the noble Viscount “ had they
 “ (meaning *Berosus* and *Manetho*) given par-
 “ ticular

“ ticular and historical Accounts conformable
 “ to the Scriptures of the *Jews*; *Josephus*,
 “ *Julius Africanus* and *Eusebius* would have
 “ made quite other Abstracts from their Writ-
 “ ings, and would have altered and contra-
 “ dicted them less (*t*).” *Julius Africanus*
 was indeed Fool enough to be at the Trou-
 ble of making Abstracts out of *Manetho*,
 and both *Josephus* and *Eusebius* and Sir *John*
Marsham, have paid too much Regard to
 some of his Assertions; but it would have
 been a Shame for them, if they had not con-
 tradicted him in others: The *Egyptians*
 themselves being so little content with that
 Work of his, that it was but a few Years
 afterwards when *Ptolemy Euergetes* thought
 it proper to employ *Eratosthenes* to under-
 take a new History of *Egypt*, in order to
 supply the Defects and Imperfections of *Ma-*
netbo. But with Regard to *Berosus*, I can
 assure your Lordship, that *Josephus* is so far
 from contradicting him, that he appeals to
 his Work in Support of the History of the
 Bible: And *Eusebius* is so far from either
 contracting him or contradicting him, that
 he has literally and faithfully copied him in
 his List of the *Assyrian* Kings, and has given
 them in the same Order of Succession, and
 has allowed the same exact Period of Time
 for the Duration of each Reign. And I now
 leave it to your Lordship, to make your

(*t*) Let. III. p. 82.

own Reflections, on the Treatment given these great Historians.

THE noble Viscount comes then to give us his Sentiments upon Sacred History, in which he draws a burlesque Picture enough of the miraculous Stories told by some *Hellenistical Jews*, in Favour of the Septuagint Version of the Bible. And then concludes.

“ Thus you see, my Lord, that when we
 “ consider these Books barely as Histories,
 “ delivered to us on the Faith of a supersti-
 “ tious People, among whom the Custom
 “ and Art of pious Lying prevailed remark-
 “ ably, we may be allowed to doubt, whe-
 “ ther greater Credit is to be given to what
 “ they tell us concerning the Original, com-
 “ piled in their own Country, and as it were
 “ out of the Sight of the rest of the World.”

BUT what is all this to the Purpose? What does it signify what silly Stories are told either by the *Hellenistical*, or *Hebrew*, *Jews* in Favour either of the Original or the Copy? And what does it signify in reality, whether the Translation was made by one Man, or by five, or by seventy? The Books are both of them in being, let them speak for themselves. Compare them together; and see whether they agree in the main Points. If they do, is it not an undoubted Proof of the Original being extant and in great Credit so long ago as the Time of *Ptolemy Philadelphus*, when this Translation of it was first made? But why should any silly Stories told in Favour of a

Translation prejudice us against the Original? Because, says the noble Viscount, “ we may
 “ be allowed to *doubt* whether greater Credit
 “ is to be given to what they tell us concern-
 “ ing the Original.” And so we ought; it
 is *Doubt* alone that leads to *Truth*. And if we
 had no better Proof in Favour of what they tell
 us concerning the Original, than for those fil-
 ly Stories that are told of the Copy, I would
 join with the noble Viscount in rejecting the
 one as well as the other. But before I have
 finished this Paper, I hope to convince your
 Lordship, that our Belief in the Original is
 founded on such rational and undeniable Evi-
 dence as cannot fairly be rejected.

NOT that I shall quote *Alexander Polybis-*
tor, though of undoubted Authority, because
 his Lordship makes a slight Objection against
 him: “ For, says he, even *Alexander Poly-*
bistor is called in, he is quoted by *Josephus*
 “ and praised by *Eusebius*,” [His Lordship
 might have said that *Eusebius* quotes him as
 well as *Josephus*, for he makes much larger
 Quotations out of him than *Josephus* does]
 “ as a Man of Parts, and great Variety of
 “ Learning. His Testimony, about the De-
 “ luge and Tower of *Babel* is produced by
 “ St. *Cyril* in his first Book against *Julian*:
 “ And *Justin* the Apologist and Martyr, in
 “ his Exhortation to the *Greeks*, makes Use
 “ of the same Authority, among those that
 “ mention *Moses* as a Leader and Prince of
 “ the *Jews*. Though this *Polybistor*, if I
 “ remem-

“ remember right what I think I have met
 “ with in *Suidas*, spoke only of a Woman he
 “ called *Moso* (*u*).” It is certain that *Suidas*
 under the Word *Μωϋσῶς* does say, according
 to the *Latin* Translation quoted by his Lord-
 ship, *Mulier Hebræa, cujus est scriptum ipsa*
Lex apud Hebræos, ut ait Alexander Milesius
Polyhistor. And under the Title *Ἀλέξανδρος*,
 where he is speaking of the Works of *Poly-*
histor, he says, *In his dicit fuisse mulierem He-*
bræam nomine Moso cujus scriptum sit Lex illa
quæ est apud Hebræos. But then I am sure
 that Lord *Bolingbroke* did not believe *Suidas*;
 as the Thing is absurd to a Degree of Ridi-
 cule; and in which Light I am confident the
 noble Viscount even quoted it in this Place;
 as he could not but have read the just Cha-
 racter which is given of *Suidas* by his Friend
 Mr. *Pope*, in his Notes on the *Dunciad*.

The Works of *Polyhistor* are lost, but in
 those Quotations which remain out of him,
 there is no such thing to be found as *Suidas*
 mentions; but on the contrary he speaks with
 Respect of *Moses*, as being a wise Man and
 the Legislator of the *Jews*. He was an Au-
 thor of great Repute; and is not only spoken
 of as such by *Eusebius*, and *Josephus*, and the
 other Authors mentioned by his Lordship,
 but also by *Pliny* in his Natural History; and
 indeed I should have thought it beneath the
 Genius of Lord *Bolingbroke* to retail so poor a

(*u*) Let. iii. p. 89.

Joke as that of *Suidas*, in making only an old Woman of *Moses*.

But says the noble Viscount, “ In short, “ my Lord, the *Jewish* History never obtained any Credit in the World, ’till *Christianity* was established (*w*).” What not among the *Jews*? Did not they believe it? And if they did, was not all that was then intended by it? His lordship seems to be under a great Mistake, when he imagines the Books of the Old Testament were designed to instruct Men in Arts or Science, or in the general Knowledge of Geography, History, or Chronology; for they were designed primarily and chiefly for the Use of the *Jews*, to point out to them their *Messiah*, to establish a Set of Laws for their particular State, to inform them in the Knowledge of God and his Laws, and to excite them to Obedience, by convincing them, that he was the Creator of this World, that he was their daily Preserver, and that they were under his immediate Inspection both with Regard to Rewards and Punishments. And therefore this History, which concerned itself about Religion more than Politicks, passed unregarded by Strangers, because it was not written like other Histories, where the Success of all human Affairs is attributed to, and by which it can only be accounted for in all prophane History, the Wisdom, the Courage, or the Conduct of Ministers, of Generals, or of Soldiers, and *vice ver-*

(*w*) Let. iii. p. 91.

sa. Whereas in this History all Events are attributed to the immediate Direction of GOD, and the Success or Reverse of all the Actions of the *Israelites* is manifestly shewed to depend upon him; and the secret Springs of all their good as well as bad Fortune are revealed unto them, and are demonstrably shewed to arise, not from their worldly Wisdom, or worldly Folly; not from their own Power or Weakness; not from their Courage or Cowardice; but from GOD, whose Favour or whose Frowns depended on their Obedience or Disobedience to his Laws; which is the great Moral that is inculcated through the whole Tenor of the Old Testament. And whereas his Lordship truly observes, that in prophane History, “an
“ingenious Writer may very innocently ac-
“count for Events after they have happened,
“by a System of Causes and Conduct that did
“not really produce them (x);” in this History it is quite otherwise, since whoever carefully consults it will from thence learn, *to vindicate the Ways of GOD with Man*, not according to Appearances only, but according to Truth.

BUT, says our Author, “I apprehend that
“the Zeal of both (*Jews* and *Christians*) has
“done much Hurt, by endeavouring to extend
“their Authority much further than is necessary, for the Support perhaps of *Judaism*,
“but to be sure of *Christianity* (y).” And then he proceeds to explain himself, and en-

(x) Let. v. p. 167.

(y) Let. iii. p. 92.

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 deavours to shew that this Extension of their
 Authority consists in attributing a divine *Inspi-*
ration to the Authors of these Books. Which
 he seems in some Places willing to confine to
 such Parts of Scripture as concern the *Law*,
 the *Doctrines*, or the *Prophecies*. And consents
 to allow, for Example, that the Doctrine of
Original Sin, the *Trinity*, and the *Coming of*
the Messiah, may be established by it, together
 with *the Infallibility of Scripture Authority as*
far as Religion is concerned (z). But he then
 raises such Objections against this Distinction,
 by hinting, that by this Means “ the greatest
 “ Part of their Chronology, and the far great-
 “ est Part of their History would be exclud-
 “ ed (a); ” and that “ this Notion of Inspi-
 “ ration, which came occasionally, and that
 “ illuminated the Minds and guided the Hands
 “ of the sacred Penmen while they were writ-
 “ ing one Page, and restrained their Influence,
 “ while the same Authors were writing an-
 “ other, may be cavilled against (b); ” that he
 plainly shews to a considerate Reader, he does
 by no Means design or desire to “ *adhere to*
 “ *these Distinctions* (c), ” but that this Distin-
 ction is only ironically produced, or in plain
English, that the aforementioned Concession,
 in Favour of *Original Sin*, &c. is only a Piece
 of *Double-Dealing*.

I shall therefore endeavour to set before you
 the true Nature and Extent of Inspiration as

(z) Lett. iii. P. 98. (a) P. 99. (b) P. 93.
 (c) P. 96.

far as occurs to me; however, I must premise, that the Doctrine of Inspiration, together with the true Limits of it, is attended with great Difficulties, and is in reality a Dispute between Divines themselves who believe revealed Religion, rather than a dispute between Believers and Dis-believers of Revelation; because if the Doctrine and History contained in the Scripture be true, we are in Duty and Conscience obliged to believe it, although the Authors were not inspired. I shall therefore venture to give my own private Opinion on this Head, which is this.

ST. Paul in his Epistle to *Timothy* says, *All Scripture is given by Inspiration of GOD; and is profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Instruction in Righteousness; that the Man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good Works (d).* Whence it plainly appears, that the main End and Use of Inspiration is not to gratify our Curiosity, or for the Information and Improvement of our Minds in Arts and Sciences, or in History and Chronology, but for our Instruction in Righteousness, that the Man of GOD, that is, the Servant of GOD, or the Man who is willing to dedicate himself to the Service of GOD, may be thoroughly furnished with all manner of Instruction, in Righteousness, necessary to excite him to the Performance of good Works. And therefore, if *the Infallibility of Scripture Authority, as far as Religion is concerned, be but*

(d) 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17.

secured, as the noble Viscount expresseth it, I am humbly of Opinion that That is sufficient. But then how can this be secured, while the same infallible Pen which is dictating Truth in one Page is declaring Falsehoods in the next? And how shall we distinguish the one from the other? This therefore cannot be allowed. It must either be all true or all false.

BUT it is objected, and with too much Reason, that “these Scriptures are come down
 “to us broken and confused, full of Additions
 “and Interpolations, and Transpositions, made
 “we neither know when, nor by whom;
 “and such, in short, as never appeared on the
 “Face of any other Book on which Men have
 “agreed to rely (*e*).” The Reason of which is, because there never was any other Book in the World, notwithstanding all these Objections, on which Men had so much Reason to *rely*. For though there are manifestly some small Additions, Interpolations, and Transpositions in the sacred Writings, of no great Consequence, which have been detected, and are daily detecting, as Learning encreases in the World, yet these are by no Means of such Purport, as to impeach the Veracity of the Whole, or to prevent these Scriptures from taking Effect with Regard to the general Design of instructing the Man of God in Righteousness, for which they were originally intended. And indeed was it not “*for the peculiar Care of*
 “*Providence in preserving them through all*

(*e*) Let. iii. p. 95.

“ *the*

“ *the Changes and Chances to which these Books*
 “ *were exposed (f);*” it would have been impossible for them to have come so entire to our Hands as they are at present, notwithstanding all their Imperfections: For, was it not for the particular Directions given by *Moses* of having his Writings placed in the Ark, and kept in the Sanctuary, it is morally impossible they could have been preserved at all; if we do but consider the early Age of the World, in which these Books were written; that it was before the Invention either of Paper or Parchment; when the Art of literary Writing was in its Infancy; and the Scribes were obliged to make Use of the Leaves or Barks of Plants or Trees, which could not be so completely tacked together, but that the Ligatures would easily fail. And indeed, in such a Multitude of detached Pieces, as these Books must have been composed of, and which, of Consequence were very liable to have been put in Disorder, it is impossible, had they not been very carefully preserved at first, until several Copies had been taken of them on Materials of more lasting Duration, that at the recovering them by *Esdra*s, at the Restauration of the *Jewish* Temple, they should be *found*, or, to please the noble Viscount, shall I say, *renewed (g)*, in so complete a Manner, as will be proved in the Sequel of these Letters, that they really were.

(f) Let. iii. p. 97.

(g) Let. iii. p. 100. 101.

And probably it was on this Account, that is, to supply the inconveniencies which might happen by the Dislocation or Transposition of any of the smaller Parts, that there are so many Receptions of the same kind of Advice in the several Books of *Moses*, as the Prophet *Isaiah* expresses it, *Precept upon Precept, Precept upon Precept, Line upon Line, Line upon Line, here a little and there a little* (b). And for the same Reason it also probably was, that God was pleased to send forth so many Prophets under the *Jewish* Dispensation, and to call forth several Evangelists under the *Christian*, that if, by the Mistake of Transcribers or any other accident, an Error should creep into one Part, it might be rectified by comparing it with others.

NOT that I think all the Books which are in the Canon of the *Jewish* and *Christian* Scriptures, or all the Passages in the same Book, are to be put upon a Level. Let me explain myself. I do not mean that they are not all true; but that all the Truths are not of equal Consequence. I have in those Letters, which I formerly wrote to you on the *Mosaical* History of the Creation and Deluge, given you my Opinion of those Passages which relate to Arts and Sciences, and to which I shall refer the Reader of this Letter, as I intend to revise those Letters, as soon as I have finished this, and shall give them to the Publick, as a proper Sequel to what

(b) *Isai.* xxviii. 10.

I propose writing to your Lordship at present. But as Lord *Belingbroke* is pleased to say, when speaking of the Scriptures of the Old Testament in general, “ that these Histories are nothing more than Complications of Old Traditions, and Abridgments of old Records made in later Times, as they appear to every one who reads them without Prepossession, and with Attention (*i*).” This, I own, may be true with Regard to some of them ; but I must beg leave to contradict his Lordship in the most positive Manner, with Regard to others ; and do appeal to the unprejudiced and attentive Reader whether the Books of *Moses* and the Prophets are not to be excepted out of this Assertion. For as to what *Moses* relates in the Books of *Exodus*, *Leviticus*, *Numbers* and *Deuteronomy*, he was himself the chief Actor, and delivers you the History of *his own Times*. And as to the Book of *Genesis* I appeal to all Mankind, whether it is written in the Style of a Compiler of old Records, and whether it is not written in the Style and Manner of a Person well informed in the Truth of what he wrote, and with the Firmness of one who either saw by Vision or was informed by some other Kind of Inspiration, of the very Matters of Fact which he there certifies?

As to the Books of *Kings* and *Chronicles*, how far they may appear to be Collections of old Records I cannot say. It is enough

(*i*) P. 96.

for

for us, that they were esteemed as authentic and sacred Records, by the most learned and holy Persons who lived nearest to those Times, in which they were written: And as such we have inserted them and some others into our Canon. But, if these were lost, the *Jewish* and the *Christian* Religion would still remain safe against all the Attacks of Infidelity; although they add, by their Conformity, great Strength to the Evidence; and especially those that are appealed to in the Scripture of the New Testament.

AND here I must beg leave to add, that when we speak of inspired Writers, and inspired Writings, we do not mean that every Word or every Thought is directly and immediately inspired by God. When *Moses* wrote the History of the *Exodus*, he wrote what he saw, and what he knew of it, as any other Man would have done. When he was informed by God, either in Vision or by Inspiration, of any Thing which he could not otherwise know, he likewise wrote this, or spoke it in his own Words, unless where the Words, as in a few Cases, were dictated unto him, and it is enough for us, that he has told us what he knew either of his own Knowledge, or by Inspiration, with Truth and Fidelity. And this was also the Case with the rest of the Prophets, whose Minds Almighty God might please to illuminate, either by shewing them Visions, or by impressing and communicating Ideas immediately

ly to their Thoughts, and yet leave the inspired Person to the Exercise of his own natural Faculties in relating this Vision, or discovering those Thoughts to others. So that, when the Person thus inspired came to describe the Vision, or explain his Thoughts, he would unfold his Mind in his own Language, in the same Words and Images, that he would naturally use either in common Conversation, or in any literary Composition. And hence it comes to pass, that those Scriptures which are said to be inspired by God, are written in such a great Variety of Styles, according to the different natural, or improved, Abilities of the Person inspired. Thus, for Example, the Language in which the Prophet *Isaiab* writes, who was of royal Extraction, and was bred at a Court, is lofty and high, his Metaphors strong, and his Images sublime: Whereas, on the other Hand, the Language of the Prophet *Amos*, who was by Profession a shepherd, and bred in the Country, is humble and low, his Sentiments easy, and his Images frequently pastoral; and therefore the Style of the Scriptures must be liable to all the Mistakes and Incorrectnesses of that Kind, with which other human Compositions abound.

NOR is it to be supposed that there was any need for the Spirit of God to inspire the sacred Writers with the Knowledge of those things which their own Eyes, or their own Ears, or their own Judgment could inform them
in

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 in without such Inspiration. It is sufficient that in such Cases, the sacred Writers should say nothing but the Truth, as it appeared unto them. As in the Case of the extraordinary Continuance of the Light of the Sun, which *Joshua* mentions as the Effect of the Sun's *standing still* (k), because it appeared unto him so to do, which, although not *physically* true, was undoubtedly a *moral* Truth. And hence it is, that St. *Paul* frequently makes a Distinction between those Precepts which he had received by Inspiration, and those that arose from the Result of his own Prudence. For, in writing to the *Corinthians*, with Regard to some Part of their Conduct in the married State, he says, *This I speak by permission, and not by Commandment* (l); that is, I speak it by permission as my own private Advice, but not by Inspiration from the Lord. But where a Matter of consequence arose, and the Question was about Separation; whether a believing Wife or Husband should separate from an unbelieving Wife or Husband, having felt the divine Inspiration inwardly dictating to him, what his own Judgment was unable to determine, he then speaks positively, as by Inspiration from God, and says *Unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord. Let not the Wife depart from the Husband, and let not the Husband put away his Wife* (m). Something

(k) *Josh.* x. 13. (l) *1 Cor.* vii. 6.

(m) *1 Cor.* vii. 10, 11. See also *1 Cor.* vii. 12.
2 Cor. viii. 8. *1 Thess.* i. 15. And *2 Cor.* xi. 17.
 of

of the same Nature happened to *Moses* in the Case of the Man that was found gathering Sticks on the *Sabbath* Day, and in the Case of the Daughters of *Zelophehad*; which Cases *Moses* not being able to determine by his own private Judgment, went to consult the Lord, and had his Doubts accordingly resolved. So that when any Person, under the Influence of the Spirit of God, declares any Thing as a Truth, we may safely acknowledge it as such, although he was not particularly inspired with it; because, we may depend upon it, that the Spirit of God, were it otherwise, would, in that Case, over-rule him, and correct his Judgment, and make him cry out with *St. Paul*, *Yet not I, but the Lord.*

BUT, says the noble Viscount, “The principal and decisive Reason for separating in such Manner the legal, doctrinal, and prophetic Parts, from the historical, is the Necessity of having some Rule to go by.—It is strange, but it is true; not only the *Jews* differ from the *Christians*, but *Jews* and *Christians* both differ among themselves concerning almost every Point that is necessary to be certainly known and agreed upon.—Who were the Authors of these Scriptures, when they were published, how they were composed and preserved, or renewed, &c. (n)” With regard

1 Cor. xiv. 13.

(n) Let. iii. p. 100, 101.

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to the Necessity of having some Rule to go by if our Author means some infallible Rule or Guide to go by, such as the *Roman* Catholicks have, from the same Method of arguing, erected the Pope into ; so as to fix and necessitate our Assent, and to prevent Mankind by its infallible Influence, from erring ; I cannot help being of a very different Opinion from him : But if he means such a Rule as, with an honest Heart and due Application, will be sufficient to instruct the Man of God in Righteousness, and conduct him to Happiness, then indeed, “ *If we suppose that God*
“ *acts towards Men according to the moral*
“ *Fitness of Things (o),*” there is a Necessity for such a Rule to go by. Which Necessity, God hath in his Goodness complied with, in giving his *written* Word ; having also given to every Man such a Portion of Reason as, if duly applied, will undoubtedly conduct him to a suitable Portion of Happiness ; since it is undeniably true, that every Man’s Endeavours will be *accepted according to that a Man hath, and not according to that he hath not (p)*.

FOR, my dear Lord, I would have you always bear in Mind, that Mankind are placed here in this Life, neither as necessary Agents that cannot err, nor yet, like the *Leviathan*, barely to take his Pastime in the Deep ; but that we are placed here in a State of Proba-

(o) P. 95.

(p) 2 Cor. viii. 12.

tion and Trial, to see *whether we love the Lord, or have Pleasure in Unrighteousness*; and that, according to our Behaviour under this Trial, we shall, in the final State of our Existence, be either eternally rewarded or eternally punished. And therefore, among the various Kinds of Probation, which we are liable to undergo, this of believing upon reasonable Grounds is one; and for this Cause it is, that Almighty God has not fixed the Grounds of our Belief on such self evident Principles, as to necessitate and force our Assent; but so as to leave some Room for the *Virtue* of believing. For although it is undoubtedly true, that our Assent must necessarily follow Conviction, and that our Faith or Belief will necessarily preponderate on that Side of the Question where the greatest Evidence lies; yet must it also be allowed to be a Virtue, and a Happiness, to be able to preserve the Mind in such a due Ballance and Frame of judging, as to give its Assent only upon reasonable Grounds. Could our Passions never get the better of our Reason, there would be no such Thing as Vice; could our Reason never get the better of our Passions, there would be no such Thing as Virtue; and, of Consequence, no Foundation for Rewards or Punishments; which naturally and necessarily belong to free Actions. And therefore, the Evidence of our *Belief* in the Word of God, is not laid before us and written in such legible Characters as that he that runneth may read, but in such,

as that he who searcheth for it with Diligence, Impartiality and Industry, and is of an humble and teachable Disposition, may discover it with sufficient Ease. For although Almighty God hath framed Mankind for Happiness, yet this Happiness is not to be acquired without some Labour and Industry on our Part. The Earth will bring forth Briars and Thorns, if we do not take Care to cultivate and till it: The Ore lies hid in the Bowels of a barren Mountain, and is to be discovered by a few Marks in the Surface, known only to the curious and inquisitive. And why is all this Wealth so artfully concealed? Only to try and prove the Industry of Man. Knowledge also in general, as well human as divine, lieth deep, it must be dug for before it is found. And why? Only to prove us, and try whether we think it worth the searching for.

AND as to the Objection raised from the different Sentiments of *Jews* and *Christians*, concerning almost every Point that is necessary to be known and agreed upon: this is not true. They do indeed differ about the Interpretation of some Passages in the Scriptures, which is the necessary Consequence of a Freedom of Will: But they are sufficiently agreed about those Questions here mentioned by the noble Viscount, "*Who were the Authors? when were they published? how were they composed and preserved, or renewed,*" &c.? even so sufficiently agreed, as to make them a Rule of Faith. And surely it is no small Proof of the Truth of those Things

Things wherein they agree, when they shew so great an Inclination to quarrel about other Things, and to find all the Fault with one another that they possibly can.

BUT, says Lord *Bolingbroke*, “If we could
 “believe with the *Rabbies* that *Moses* wrote
 “every Word of the *Pentateuch*, or with *Philo*
 “and *Josephus*, that *Moses* wrote the Account
 “of his own Death and Sepulchre, — yet
 “would I venture to assert, that he who expects
 “to find a System of Chronology, or a Thread
 “of History, or sufficient Materials for either,
 “in the Books of the Old Testament, expects
 “to find what the Authors of these Books,
 “whoever they were, never intended (*q*),
 Which is undoubtedly true. And I believe it never before entered into the Head of any Man to suppose otherwise. But how should the noble Viscount have an Opportunity of introducing all the sarcastical Jokes which he has here in these Letters thrown out, with Regard to the ridiculous Opinions of some of the *Jewish Rabbins*, or against the Histories of the Old and New Testament, if he did not consider them in this Light? His original Design in writing these Letters, seems to have been to vindicate the Treaty of *Utrecht*, and to shew his own great Knowledge of the History of *Europe* for some Centuries past, and of the separate Interests of the principal Actors in this great Scene, which, how he hath performed, I leave to the Politicians to determine. But, I

(*q*) Let. iii. p. 102.

own, I cannot see what need there was for him to go back beyond that Period of Time, which he very justly fixes as the proper Æra for beginning his Enquiry, that is the Invention of the Art of Printing, and the Resurrection of Literature from thence ; were it not that it furnished him with an Opportunity of giving some Strokes at the ancient Histories in the Canon of the Old Testament, and some few Flings at the New ?

AND in order to shew “ that the Author
 “ or Authors of the Pentateuch answer as little
 “ the Purpose of Antiquaries in History, as in
 “ Chronology,” he desires his Reader to consider that the History of two thousand Years
 “ is comprised in eleven short Chapters of *Genesis* (r). He then proceeds to give a droll Abstract of them, and *inter alia* tells us, that
 “ the Sons of God lay with the Daughters of
 “ Men, and begat Giants (s),” which he imagines will appear ridiculous to the Reader, because it is not every body that understands *Hebrew*, and the true Force of the Expressions in that Language ; whereas to those who do, it is well known, that the *Jews* were used to style any thing that was high and elevated, by the Expression of being *A Thing of God*, or *a Godlike Thing*. Which they carried so far, as not only to give this Title to Men and Angels, but even to the inanimate Creation. Thus they styled the great Disputes or Struggles, or Wrestling, which *Rachael* had with her Sister

(r) Let. iii. p. 106. (s) P. 107.

Leah, the Wrestlings of God (*t*), as well as a mighty Prince, *a Prince of God* (*u*), &c. This Expression therefore, here alluded to, signifies no more than this, that the Sons of God, *i. e.* the Men of Power and Authority in those Days, began to abuse that Power, and forcibly to take away the Daughters of Men, that is, of the poorer Sort of People, by whom, having illegitimate Children, who were frequently Men of *Strength*, as the original Word, which we translate *Giant*, literally signifies; these illegitimate Children, having no Inheritance of their own, addicted themselves, for a Livelyhood, to Rapine and Plunder.

HE then proceeds to give an Account of the Conduct of the Children of *Noah* at *Babel*, and says, that “these Children of one Family
“were divided into several Languages, even
“whilst they lived together, spoke the same
“Language, and were employed in the same
“Work (*w*).” There is no body that can express himself more properly, or more clearly, than Lord *Bolingbroke*, when he pleases; but in this Sentence he seems to be industriously confused. Does he mean to say, what his Words seem to imply, that while the Children of one Family spoke only one Language, and were employed in the same Work, they yet at the same Time spoke different Languages, and continued to carry on the same Work? If he does, he means to say what neither is, nor can be, true. But if he means, that

(*t*) Gen. xxx. 8. (*u*) Gen. xxiii. 6. (*w*) Let. iii. p. 107.

the Children of one Family, who, while God thought proper to keep them united, spoke only one Language, and were employed in the same Work ; yet, when God thought proper to disperse them, and oblige them to leave off their Work, that he confounded their Language, and by Virtue of his supernatural Power, deprived the Majority of the Remembrance of their native Tongue ; and inspired the several lesser Families of which that Majority was composed, with the Knowledge of various and distinct Languages, one of which each lesser Division might understand, but was unintelligible to the rest ; by which Means these several Families, being rendered useless to each other, because they could not understand one another, were obliged to disperse and people the whole Earth, according to their Tongues, in their Lands, after their Nations ; If this be what he means, then indeed he means what is reasonable and true, but his Meaning is ill expressed.

BUT, “ upon the whole Matter, says he, if
 “ we may guess at the Design of an Author
 “ by the Contents of his Book ; the Design
 “ of *Moses*, or of the Author of the History
 “ ascribed to him in this Part of it, was to in-
 “ form the People of *Israel* of their Descent
 “ from *Noah* by *Sem*, and of *Noah*’s from *A-*
 “ *dam* by *Seth* ; to illustrate their Original ;
 “ to establish their Claim to the Land of *Ca-*
 “ *naan*, and to justify all the Cruelties com-
 “ mitted by *Joshua* in the Conquest of the
 “ *Ca-*

“ *Canaanites* (x).” Then the noble Lord proceeds to specify the Curse given by *Noah* to *Canaan* for an Offence committed by his Father *Ham* : and observes, that “ *Ham* alone
 “ offended : *Canaan* was innocent. *Canaan*
 “ alone was cursed : and he became, accord-
 “ ing to his Grandfather’s Prophecy, a Ser-
 “ vant of Servants, that is, the vilest of Slaves
 “ to *Sem*, although not to *Japhet* ; when the
 “ *Israelites* conquered *Palestine* ; to one of his
 “ *Uncles*, not to his *Brethren*. Will it be said
 “ — it has been said — that where we read
 “ *Canaan*, we are to understand *Ham*, whose
 “ *Brethren Sem* and *Japhet* were ? At this
 “ Rate we shall never know what we read,
 “ as these Criticks never care what they say.”
 “ Will it be said — this has been said too —
 “ that *Ham* was punished in his Posterity,
 “ when *Canaan* was cursed, and his Descen-
 “ dants were exterminated. But who does
 “ not see, that the Curse and the Punishment,
 “ in this Case, fell on *Canaan* and his Poste-
 “ rity, exclusively of the rest of the Posterity
 “ of *Ham* (y) ? ” And now I appeal to your
 Lordship whether any Thing can be more un-
 fair than the Treatment given to this Passage
 by the noble Viscount. *At this Rate we shall*
never know, says he, *what we read*. And how
 is it that we know what we read ? Is it by in-
 sisting on every literal or verbal Mistake that is
 made in copying of Manuscripts ; or when we
 find a manifest Mistake, is it not by comparing

(x) Let. iii. p. 109. (y) P. 110.

what we read with the Context, and correcting any Error of the Pen or Press, so as to make the Sense of the whole Passage entire? And, if the noble Viscount would have allowed himself Patience to have done this, he might easily have rectified the Mistake. For, as he observes, it was *Ham* alone offended; and yet it is *Canaan* alone that is cursed. And that the Words of the Curse are, that the Person cursed *shall be a Servant of Servants to his Brethren, viz. Sem and Japhet.* Hence it is manifest, that *Canaan* could not be the Person cursed; because, as the noble Viscount also remarks, he would then be made a Servant of Servants, not to his *Brethren* but to his *Uncles*. It is also to be observed, that in the preceding Verses, where *Ham* is spoken of as being guilty of the Offence, he is particularly specified by the Name of *Ham, the Father of Canaan* (2). For says Moses, *Ham the Father of Canaan, saw his Father's Nakedness, &c. And Noah awaked from his Wine, and knew what his younger Son (Ham) had done unto him. And he said, Cursed be Canaan, &c.* Whereas, is it not plain that this last must be a Mistake in the Transcriber of the Copy, and that the whole Passage must, in the Original, have run thus? *Ham, the Father of Canaan saw his Father's Nakedness: and Noah awaked from his Wine, and knew what his younger Son had done unto him. And he said, Cursed be [Ham the Father of] Canaan; a Servant of Servants*

(v) Gen. ix. 18, 22.

shall be be unto his Brethren. And he said, Blessed be the Lord GOD of Shem; and [Ham the Father of] Canaan shall be his Servant. GOD shall enlarge Japhet, and he shall dwell in the Tents of Shem; and [Ham the Father of] Canaan shall be his Servant. But, says the noble Viscount, “who does not see that the Curse “and the Punishment, *in this Case*,” (that is in the Extirpation of the *Canaanites*) “fell on “*Canaan* and his Posterity, exclusively of the “rest of the Posterity of *Ham*?” And without Doubt, so it did in that *one Case*; but the Curse was general, and included *Ham* and all his Posterity, as well as *Canaan*, and was accordingly fulfilled in them all, directly contrary to the express Assertions of the noble Viscount; when he says, “The Descendants of *Misraim*; another of his Sons, were the *Egyptians*; and “they were so far from being Servants of Servants to their Cousins the *Semites*, that these “were Servants of Servants to them, during “more than fourscore Years.” Whereas it is manifest on the contrary, that *Egypt*, or *the Land of Ham*, was made tributary to the Offspring of *Shem* in the Person of *Cambyses* and his Successors, who reduced *Egypt* as well as *Canaan*, under the *Persian Yoke*; under which it continued until the Reign of *Darius Nothus*, when the *Egyptians* having driven the *Persians* out of that Country, regained their Liberty; until they were again reduced by *Ochus King of Persia*, and remained in Subjection to that Empire, until *Darius Codomanus* was defeated

by

by *Alexander* the Great ; when *Egypt* fell under the Power of that Prince, with the rest of the Provinces of the *Persian* Empire. By which Means, *Ham*, with his Posterity, became a *Servant of Servants unto his Brethren*, having been first brought into Subjection by the *Persians* that were of the Line of *Shem*, and being again subdued by the *Greeks* who were the Descendants of *Japhet*. This Part of the Curse was therefore literally fulfilled, it being manifest, that the whole Posterity of *Ham* was made a *Servant of Servants* when the *Greeks* and *Romans*, who were the Posterity of *Japhet*, enlarged their Borders by conquering the *Persians*, and taking Possession of the Tents of *Shem*, both in *Egypt* and *Canaan*. But the Reason why the Name of *Canaan* alone, of all the Children of *Ham*, was particularly mentioned at that Time by *Moses*, as being included in the Curse pronounced by *Noah*, was, because the *Israelites*, who were the Offspring of *Shem*, were then going to fulfill that Part of the Curse, and to take Possession of the Land of *Canaan*, for the first Time.

AND as to *all the Cruelties committed by Joshua on the Conquest of the Canaanites* ; I know not one that *Joshua* was guilty of, but such as were the natural and necessary Consequences of the Fate of War. The Insinuation, however, to which this Observation leads, is easily seen ; whereas, if the noble Viscount had but considered, that God is the Governor of this Universe, and that he has an absolute Right to dispossess
any

any of the Inhabitants of it, either on Account of their Wickedness, or for any other Reason which he may see good in his unerring Wisdom, and to give their Possessions to other People; then the Extirpation of the *Canaanites* by *Joshua*, would not have appeared so unrighteous a Thing in the righteous Eyes of this noble Viscount. Because, *in this Case*, *JOSHUA* and the *Israelites* are to be considered only as so many Instruments in the Hand of GOD, which were made Use of by him for the Execution of his Vengeance. And in this very Sense it is, that GOD was pleased to explain the Determinations of his Will, with Regard to this very Event of the Extermination of the *Canaanites*, when he promised their Land unto *Abraham*. For, says *Moses*, GOD said unto *Abraham*, *Know of a Surety that thy Seed shall be a Stranger in a Land that is not theirs, and shall serve them, and they shall afflict them 400 Years. And also that Nation whom they serve will I judge: and afterwards shall they come out with great Substance. And thou shalt go to thy Fathers in Peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old Age. But in the fourth Generation they shall come hither again: FOR THE INIQUITY OF THE AMORITES IS NOT YET FULL (a).* And for the same Reason it was, that is, on Account of their *Iniquity*, that GOD so strictly prohibited the *Israelites*, from entering into Leagues, or making any Covenants with the *Canaanites* when they were going to

(a) Gen. xv. 13—16.

Possession of that Country: For, says *Jehovah* unto the *Israelites*, *Take heed unto thyself, lest thou make a Covenant with the Inhabitants of the Land, whither thou goest, lest it be for a Snare in the midst of thee. But ye shall destroy their Altars, break their Images, and cut down their Groves. Lest thou make a Covenant with the Inhabitants of the Land, and they go a Whoring after their Gods, and do Sacrifice unto their Gods, and one call thee and thou eat of this Sacrifice. And thou take of their Daughters unto thy Sons, and their Daughters go a Whoring after their Gods, and make thy Sons go a Whoring after their Gods (b).*

BUT Lord *Bolingbroke* proceeds and says, “it would not be worth while to lengthen
“this tedious Letter, by setting down any
“more of the Contents of the History of the
“Bible. Your Lordship may please to call
“the Substance of it to your Mind, and your
“native Candour and Love of Truth, will oblige you then to confess, that these sacred
“Books do not aim in any Part of them at
“any Thing like universal Chronology and
“History (c).” And who of common Sense ever said they did? The Writers of universal History and Chronology are obliged to have Recourse to the sacred Books, on Account of their Antiquity, as they are the only Books of any Authority, imperfect as they are, which treat of the Affairs of *Palæstine* and *Egypt* with any Manner of Certainty, in those early Ages

(b) *Exod.* xxxiv. 12, &c. (c) *Let.* iii. p. 112.

of the World; but I never yet heard it suggested before, that these sacred Books were canonized, as Treatises of universal History and Chronology.

BUT, continues his Lordship, “ They contain a very imperfect Account of the *Israelites* themselves; of their Settlement in the Land of Promise, of which by the Way, they never had entire, and scarce ever peaceable Possession; of their Divisions, Apostasies, Repentances, Relapses, Triumphs, and Defeats (*d*).” If his Lordship means that they contain a very imperfect Account, with Regard to the Views with which his Lordship seems at present to have consulted those sacred Books, only to collect from thence a political History for the Instruction of Statesmen, with Regard to the Treaty of *Utrecht*, he in some Measure says true. But, if his Lordship had read them with the View for which they were written, which was to instruct us in a due Obedience to our Creator, he might have learned from the *Experience* of the *Israelites*, that the due Observance of the Commands of GOD, was the best Policy which it is possible for any Man to pursue; of which he would meet in those sacred Books with so *perfect* an Account, that he could not but have seen that the *Triumphs* of the *Israelites* were owing to their *Repentances*; and their *Defeats* to their *Divisions*, *Apostasies*, and *Relapses*. And if, “ *by the Way, they never had entire, and scarce ever peaceable Posses-*

(*d*) P. 113.

“*sion of the Land of Canaan,*” does it not appear to a Demonstration as plain as Words can make it, that this was owing to their own Indolence and Disobedience to the Commands of GOD? For which they paid very dearly afterwards, and of which they had early and timely Notice; for, said *Moses* unto them, *Ye shall dispossess the Inhabitants of the Land, and dwell therein. — But if ye will not drive out the Inhabitants of the Land from before you; then it shall come to pass, that those which ye let remain of them, shall be Pricks in your Eyes, and Thorns in your Sides, and shall vex you in the Land wherein you dwell (e.)*

BUT, says the noble Viscount, “One particular Observation, and but one, I will make, to shew what Knowledge in the History of Mankind, and in the Computation of Time, may be expected from these Books. The *Assyrians* were their Neighbours, powerful Neighbours, with whom they had much to do. Of this Empire therefore, if of any Thing, we might hope to find some satisfactory Accounts. What do we find? The Scripture takes no Notice of any *Assyrian* Kingdom, till just before the Time when prophane History makes that Empire to end. Then we hear of *Phul*, of *Tiglath-Phalaser*, who was perhaps the same Person; and of *Salmanaser*, who took *Samaria* in the twelfth of the *Æra* of *Nabonassar*, that is, twelve Years after the *Assyrian* Empire was

(e) Numb. xxxiii. 55, 56.

“ no more. *Senacherib* succeeds to him, and
 “ *Afferbaddon* to *Senacherib*. What shall we
 “ say to this apparent Contrariety? If the Si-
 “ lence of the Bible creates a strong Presump-
 “ tion against the first, may not the Silence
 “ of prophane Authority create some against
 “ the second *Assyrian* Monarchs? The Pains
 “ that are taken to persuade, that there is
 “ Room enough between *Sardanapalus* and
 “ *Cyrus* for the second, will not resolve the
 “ Difficulty (*f.*)”

I CHOOSE to quote this whole Passage, for fear I should be thought to lessen any Thing of the Force of the Objection. In answer to which, it is first to be observed, that the noble Viscount takes it for granted, that the sacred Writings were designed as a Treatise of universal History and Chronology, and then argues against them upon this Supposition. Which is very unfair. Whereas, it is manifest from the whole Tenor of those sacred Books, that neither the Affairs of *Assyria* nor *Egypt* are taken Notice of, but just so far as they had Relation to the *Israelites*, when they are spoken of as Enemies raised up by God for their Punishment, or as Friends for their Protection; or when some remarkable or supernatural Operation is wrought upon them for the Preservation of the *Israelites*, when they, upon their Repentance, applied seriously to God for his Protection. And this is the Reason why *the Scripture takes no Notice of*

(*f.*) Let. iii. p. 114, 115.

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any *Assyrian* Kingdom, until just before the Time when prophane History makes that Empire to end. Because there was no such Event as is above-mentioned, that happened between the *Assyrians* and *Israelites*, until about that Time. But, says he, “ then we hear of *Phul* and “ *Tiglath-Phalasser*, who was perhaps the “ same Person, and of *Salmanasar*, who took “ *Samaria* in the *twelfth* of the *Æra* of *Nabonassar*, that is, twelve Years after the “ *Assyrian* Empire was no more.” Whence it is manifest, that his Lordship takes it for granted, that the Kingdom of *Assyria* was at an End, when *Nabonassar* began to reign in *Babylon*. Which is just the same Method of arguing as if any one should say, That there was an End to the Kingdom of *Judah*, when *Jeroboam* revolted, and erected the Kingdom of *Israel* at *Samaria*; or, that there was an End to the Kingdom of *Spain*, when the Kingdom of *Portugal* was separated from it.

THE Kings of *Assyria* were, during the full Grandeur of that Empire, Kings of *Babylon*, as well as of *Nineveh*, and the rest of *Assyria*; but, towards the Decline of the Empire, *Nabonassar* arose, and separated the Kingdom of *Babylon* from that of *Assyria*, the King of *Assyria* still living at *Nineveh*, and the King of *Babylon* at *Babylon*; which Separation continued, however, but for a few Generations, *Babylon* being recovered again, and re-united to its ancient Empire, by *Nebucadnezzar*, King of *Assyria*. Where then is the Contrariety

riety or Contradiction to say, in the Language of the Scriptures, that *it came to pass in the fourth Year of Hezekiah, King of Judah,* (which was the seventh Year of *Hosea, Son of Elah, King of Israel*) *that Sbalmeneser, King of Assyria, came up against Samaria, and besieged it* (g); although this Event also came to pass in the twelfth Year of the Reign of *Nabonassar King of Babylon*? If there is any, I own I am blind enough not to see it.

BUT, saith his Lordship, “ If the Silence of
 “ the Bible creates a strong Presumption against
 “ the first, may not the Silence of prophane
 “ Authority create some against the second
 “ *Assyrian Monarchs* ?” By the first *Assyrian*
 Monarchs, I suppose he means the *Assyrian*
 Monarchs that reigned from *Nimrod* to *Tiglath-Pilasser*, during whose Reign it was that *Nabonassar* erected the separate Kingdom of *Babylon*. And by the second *Assyrian* Monarchs, I suppose, he means those who reigned from *Tiglath Pilasser* until the *Assyrian* Monarchy was entirely destroyed, and was absorbed by *Cyrus* in that of *Persia*. And if so, I cannot see the least Reason why the Silence of the Bible should create any Presumption against the first of these Monarchs, since the Bible neither took Notice either of the first, or second, but just so far as the Affairs of *Assyria* were intermix’d with the Affairs of the *Israelites*, as hath been already observed; and as to the Silence of the prophane Histories with Regard to the second, I do not think myself under any Obligation to

(g) 2 Kings, xviii. 9.

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vindicate

vindicate either their Silence or Mistakes. But, says our Author, “The Pains that are
 “ taken to persuade, that there is Room enough
 “ between *Sardanapalus* and *Cyrus* for the se-
 “ cond, will not resolve the Difficulty.” And why not? For, if the prophane Historians are silent about the Succession of Princes in the Throne of *Nineveh* from *Sardanapalus*, or rather from *Phul* or *Tiglath-Pilasser*, who was the next Prince but one after *Sardanapalus*, on the *Assyrian* Throne, until the Time of *Cyrus*, which makes up a Period of about two hundred Years, ought not we, if possible, to supply this Defect? And suppose we only put the Credibility of the sacred Writings upon the same Footing with prophane Histories, if we can supply it no where else, ought we not to borrow it from thence? And, if there is *Room enough*, ought not this Void to be filled up?

BUT, says the noble Viscount, “ I agree
 “ then that History has been purposely and
 “ systematically falsified in all Ages, and
 “ that Partiality and Prejudice have occasioned
 “ both voluntary and involuntary Errors, even
 “ in the best.” Let me say, without Offence, my Lord, since I may say it with Truth, and am able to prove it, that ecclesiastical Authority has led the Way to this Corruption in all Ages and all Religions. Then after taken Notice of the Absurdities that the Priesthood imposed upon the Ignorance and Superstition of Mankind, in the *Pagan* World, he adds. “ That the *Jews* have been guilty of
 “ this, will be allowed: And to the Shame of
 “ Christians,

“ Christians, if not of Christianity, the Fathers
 “ of one Church have no Right to fling the
 “ first Stone at the Fathers of the other (*b*).”

AND here, my Lord, I bow my Head, not
 being able to deny the Truth of this Accusa-
 tion; and I do acknowledge, that “ the same
 “ Spirit which prevailed in the Eastern Church,
 “ prevailed in the Western, and prevails still (*i*).”
 That is, so far, as that all the Forgeries that
 were formerly made, are not yet sufficiently
 discarded. And I do also allow, that it some-
 times hath happened, that “ the Charge of
 “ corrupting History, in the Cause of Reli-
 “ gion, has been committed to the most fa-
 “ mous Champions, and greatest Saints of the
 “ Church (*k*).” But here I must make a
 Distinction, with Regard to the Word *Saints*,
 which is much too general a Word in this
 Place. Because it may cast a Reflection upon
 some Persons, who being really *Saints*, that is,
holy Men, would have suffered Death rather
 than corrupt History. But if it be understood
 to mean only such Persons as have been cano-
 nized for Saints by the Church of *Rome*, on
 Account of their Attachment to that Church,
 and for having been Champions for the Pope
 of *Rome*, such as *Athanasius* and others, I do
 acknowledge they have corrupted History;
 and shamefully corrupted it,

BUT, if there are false Histories and false
 Medals, are there not also true Histories and
 true Medals? And are there not certain Cri-
 terions by which the Criticks in each Science

(*b*) Let. iv. p. 122, 123, (*i*) P. 125. (*k*) P. 128.

are enabled to distinguish what is true from what is false? Although *Amadis of Gaul* is a Romance, are not *Davila* and *Guicciardin* true Historians? And if we do but follow the Rule laid down by his Lordship in another Place, with Regard to Party Pamphlets, we need not fear being deceived, where he gives this Advice: “ Read them with Suspicion, for they
 “ deserve to be suspected: pay no Regard to
 “ the Epithets given, nor to the Judgments
 “ passed; neglect all Declamation, weigh the
 “ Reasoning and advert to Fact. With such
 “ Precaution, adds his Lordship, even *Burnet’s*
 “ History may be of some Use (1).” And to which I will beg leave to add, that with such Precaution, even the Champions of the Church may be read, as well as the Champions of the State. For, my dear Lord, I must again repeat what I recommended to you once before, and that was to beseech you never to let this Observation depart from your Mind; That we are placed here in this World only in a State of Probation and Trial, as well with Regard to our Thoughts as our Deeds; and that it is according to our Conduct here, that the Proportion of Happiness, which will be allotted to us in the last and ultimate State of our Existence, will be duly regulated: That the proper Use of our natural Faculties in the disentangling of Truth from Error, is one of those Tests with which it hath pleased the Almighty to permit the Adversary of Mankind to *sift us*, *that they which are approved, may be made ma-*

(1) Vol. II. Let. viii. p. 172,

nifest amongst us ; and therefore, that it must needs be that Offences come ; but Woe to him by whom the Offence cometh.

I do also acknowledge, that “ religious
 “ Zeal may boast this horrid Advantage over
 “ civil, that the Effects of it have been more
 “ sanguinary ; that different Religions have
 “ not been quite so barbarous to one another,
 “ as Sects of the same Religion ; and in like
 “ Manner, Nation has had better Quarter
 “ from Nation, than Party from Party (*m*).”

But, my Lord, this is not peculiar either to *Judaism* or *Christianity*. It is human Nature. Zeal will always arise in Proportion to the Value Men put upon those Things which are the Objects of their Zeal ; and hence it is, that Bigottry, whether *Pagan*, *Jewish*, *Mahometan*, or *Christian*, will always be attended with Cruelty ; which will also encrease in Proportion to the Nearness of the Alliance which these furious Disputants bear to each other ; and hence also it is, that Civil Wars and Family Disputes are generally carried on with more Violence than any others whatsoever.

I do also allow, that “ the Church hath
 “ sometimes destroyed the Works of those
 “ who have writ against her (*n*).” But I must likewise observe, that the burning of Books did not begin with Christianity. For the noble Viscount may find in his favourite Author *Tacitus*, that this Practice began in *Rome* before Christianity was established there. Upon which *Tacitus* has this Remark, when speak-

(*m*) Vol. II. Let. viii. p. 127. (*n*) Let. iv. p. 128.

ing of some Books that were ordered to be burnt, *In this very Fire they imagined that they should abolish the Voice and Utterance of the Roman People, with the Liberty of the Senate, and all the Remembrances of human Kind. For they had besides expelled all the Professors of Philosophy, and driven every laudable Science into Exile, that nothing which was worthy and honest might any where appear* (o). So that when Constantine the Great, at the Head of the Council of Nice, ordered the Works of Arius to be burned, he only followed the Precedent, which he found among the Roman Records.

AND now that I am in a conceding Mood, I will allow also to his Lordship, that “when
 “there is not a total Want of Memorials,
 “when some have been lost or destroyed, and
 “others have been preserved and propagated,
 “then we are in danger of being deceived (p).” But then, as his Lordship also acknowledges, that “a small Gleam of Light, borrowed
 “from foreign Anecdotes, serves often to
 “discover a whole System of Falsehood: And
 “even they, who corrupt History, frequently
 “betray themselves by their Ignorance or In-
 “advertency (q):” And that, “when Hi-
 “stories and historical Memoirs abound, even
 “those that are false serve to the Discovery

(o) *Illo igne vocem populi Romani, & libertatem senatus, & concientiam generis humani aboleri arbitrabantur; expullis insuper sapientiæ professoribus, atque omni bona arte in exilium acta, ne quid usquam honestum occurreret. Tacit. in Vit. Agric.*

(p) Let. iv. p. 132.

(q) Ibid.

“ of Truth ; because, being inspired by dif-
 “ ferent Passions, and contrived for opposite
 “ Purposes, they frequently contradict, and
 “ contradicting convict one another (*r*).” The
 Conclusion I would draw from hence is, not
 that which the noble Viscount seems to point
 out, that it is more eligible to be uninformed
 than deceived (*s*) ; but this, that it is more
 eligible for us to be furnished even with this
 Kind of Materials, than to remain quite *unin-*
formed, because there is no Necessity of being
 deceived, although there is a Possibility or
 Danger that we may.

I LIKEWISE approve of “ the Order in
 “ which his Lordship rangeth those Objects
 “ of himself, his Family, the little Commu-
 “ nity of his own Country, and the great
 “ Community of the World (*t*).” To which
 I shall beg Leave to add another, by much the
 greatest Community of all, and that is, the
 Community of *Spirits* through the whole
 Universe, which may all contribute to com-
 pose one grand System, with God at their
 Head, in which an infinite Number and Va-
 riety of intelligent Beings besides Mankind,
 may be concerned, and which we must take
 into the Account, before we can frame any to-
 lerable Notion of the Administration of God’s
 Providence, in the *Jewish* or *Christian* Dis-
 pensations ; that is, either of the Fall of Man
 by the Temptation of *Satan* ; or of the Re-
 demption of Mankind by the Sufferings of the
Messiah.

(*r*) Let. iv. p. 133. (*s*) P. 132. (*t*) Let. v. p. 147.

MR. *Hume* in his *Essays moral and political* (u), when speaking of *philosophical Devotion*, which he says, is “the Effect of high
 “Spirits, great Leisure, a fine Genius, and
 “an Habit of Study and Contemplation,” adds, “But, notwithstanding all these Cir-
 “cumstances, an abstracted invisible Object,
 “like that which natural Religion alone pre-
 “sents to us, cannot long actuate the Mind,
 “or be of Moment in Life. To render the
 “Passion of Continuance, we must find some
 “Method of affecting the Senses and Imagi-
 “nation, and must embrace some historical,
 “as well as some philosophical Accounts of
 “the Divinity.” Now as Mr. *Hume* inge-
 nuously acknowledges, that natural Religion
 will not furnish us either with historical or
 philosophical Accounts of the Divinity, if we
 would have any such Accounts, we must there-
 fore have Recourse to Revelation. And, if we
 believe with Lord *Bolingbroke*, that “God
 “acts with Men according to the moral Fit-
 “ness of Things (x);” we cannot but suppose
 that God hath given us some such Accounts
 of the Divinity, in order to actuate the Mind
 with Devotion, and has discovered to us some
 Method of affecting the Senses and Imagina-
 tion, in order to render that Passion of Con-
 tinuance, and to be of Moment in Life.
 Which I hope to convince your Lordship hath
 really been performed in the Books of the Old
 and New Testament, whenever I publish those
 additional Letters which I gave you some

(u) Essay xxi.

(x) Let. 3. p. 95.

Reason to expect at the Close of our last Correspondence.

AND now, after several ingenious Observations, on the Use of the various Kinds of History, his Lordship comes to instance in Divinity, and says, “ Surely the Clergy have a
 “ better Title than the Sons of *Apollo* to be
 “ called *Genus irratabile vatium* (y).” Upon which I shall only observe, that his Lordship; to the *Dairo*, the *Mufti*, and the *Pope*, might have added, the *Druid* the *Augur*; and the *Pontifex*. In short, all Persons of what Nation, Opinion, or Sect soever, that make a *Trade* of Religion, and “ who regard nothing
 “ more than the Subsistence it affords them,
 “ or in higher Life, the Wealth and Power
 “ they enjoy by the Means of it (z).” For in this Respect, the *Priests of all Religions are the same*, the *Zeal* of such Persons not being so much moved *pro Aris* as *pro Focis*, or as *Demetrius* expresseth it, but because *you know, Sirs, that by this Craft we have our Wealth* (a), And therefore the Ambition or Covetousness of the Priesthood ought not to be brought as an Argument against *Christianity* any more than it ought to be against natural Religion. For Men are Men, whether Laity or Clergy, and are all fond of Power: And therefore, whenever the Clergy are suffered to exert their vindictive Spirit, I own, I do not so much wonder at *the Tyranny of the Clergy*, as at *the Scrivility of the Laity* (b).

(y) Let. v. p. 174.

(z) P. 184.

(a) Acts xix. 24.

(b) Let. iv. p. 130.

BUT, supposing there are some, as his Lordship allows there are, who act more upon spiritual, than temporal Principles, he then says, that “ it has been Matter of Astonishment to
 “ him, how such Persons as these could take
 “ so much silly Pains to establish Mystery on
 “ Metaphysicks, Revelation on Philosophy,
 “ and Matters of Fact on abstract Reason-
 “ ing (c)?” And, indeed, if any one attempted to *establish* Mystery, Revelation, or Matters of Fact on such Foundations, it would certainly be absurd, and their *Pains* would be *silly*. But when some Scepticks have made Use of Metaphysicks, either in Opposition to Mystery, or to give a wrong Explanation of it; and of Philosophy to overturn Revelation; and of abstract Reasoning to confound Matters of Fact; is it not proper that such Persons should be answered, their Objections obviated, and Mystery, Revelation, and Matters of Fact, vindicated from all the *silly* Cavils that have been raised against them? Or in short, is it not fitting that, suitably to the Advice of *Solomon*, *A Fool should be answered according to his Folly. lest he be wise in his own Conceit?*

I do acknowledge with the noble Viscount, that “ a Religion founded on the Authority
 “ of a divine Mission, confirmed by Prophe-
 “ cies and Miracles, appeals to Facts: And
 “ the Facts must be proved as all other Facts
 “ that pass for authentick are proved; for
 “ Faith, so reasonable after this Proof, is absurd
 “ before (d).” Which undoubtedly is true,

(c) Let. v. p. 175.

(d) Let. v. 175.

and therefore I hope, by the Blessing of GOD, to be able to perform this Task with Regard to the Evidence on which the Veracity of the Matters of Fact in the Old and New Testament are founded, before this Letter is finished. And do promise, as far as lies in my Power, to avoid all those *unfair* Methods of Proof, which his Lordship hath very justly censured, in producing *false History*, or *sham Miracles*, or in *copying after others in those Mistakes*, which having been invented by one, have been adopted by hundreds (e).

I do likewise acknowledge, that though
 “ the Fathers of the first Century do men-
 “ tion some Passages that are agreeable to what
 “ we read in our Evangelists, it does not fol-
 “ low, that these Fathers had the same Gospel
 “ before them (f). But it must be allowed
 to be a strong corroborating Circumstance, at
 the same time, that those parallel Passages in
 the Evangelists are true. And, although it
 should also be acknowledged, that “ the Fa-
 “ thers of the first Century do not expressly
 “ name the Gospels we have of *Matthæw*,
 “ *Mark*, *Luke*, and *John* (g):” Yet is this
 no Proof, either that they are false, or that
 they were not composed by those very Per-
 sons, and within that period of Time.
 Because in that early Age of the World,
 the publishing of Books was a very tedious
 Affair: For before the Art of Printing was
 invented, there were no other methods of get-
 ting the Copies of any Books, but the tedious

(e) Let. v. p. 177. (f) Let. v. p. 178. (g) Let. v. p. 178.

Method of writing them over, Letter by Letter : And as thirty three Years and a half of the first Century was spent before the Death of our Saviour, it would take some Time afterwards, before these Gospels were composed ; and after they were composed, it would still take up a longer Time before Copies enough could be written of them, and spread abroad, and published to the World, so as to gain them any Kind of Repute. For, as St *Luke* mentions, what of itself is very probable, that *many had taken in Hand, to set forth in Order, a Declaration of those Things which were most surely believed amongst them* (b) : It would take still longer Time, even after they were published, to compare these several Works together, and choose out those that were best. And of Consequence, it would necessarily take up a long Series of Time, before those three Gospels of *Matthew*, *Mark*, and *Luke*, which were written in different Parts of the World, could gain so universal a Reputation for their Excellency, as to be generally approved of ; and therefore, it is no Wonder, if it should be towards the Close of the first Century, before these Books should be in such high Repute, as to be thought worthy to be sent to St. *John*, who was then alive, for his Approbation. Who thereupon wrote his own Gospel, in Order to supply the Deficiency of those Passages, which were omitted by the others. And as this Event did not happen, until towards the End of the first Century, it is no wonder, if we should

(b) Luke i. 1.

not meet with the Names of these four Evangelists, in any of the Fathers of that Century, or even until the Middle of the Second; considering the Tedioufness and Expence, with which a literary Correspondence must be attended, before the Institution of regular Posts was established.

HIS Lordship further observes, that “ Wri-
 “ ters of the *Roman* Religion, have attempted
 “ to shew, that the Text of the Holy Writ is,
 “ on many Accounts, insufficient to be the sole
 “ Criterion of Orthodoxy: I apprehend too,
 “ says he, that they have shewn it (*i*).” Where
 the whole Force of this Remark, if it has any
 Force in it consists in the double Meaning that
 is put upon the Word *Orthodoxy*. Which
 Word, in its original and true Meaning, signifies *Right-Thinking*: Whereas, the common
 and technical Sense, in which it ought generally
 to be understood, is, thinking according to the
 established Notion of that Country, in which
 such orthodox Person lives; in which Sense
 his Lordship is pleased in another Place to explain
 the Expression of *Orthodox Clergy*, by
 calling them *the Clergy then in Fashion* (*k*).
 And hence it is, that a Man may be thought
Orthodox at *Rome*, who would be thought very
 far from being *Orthodox* in *England*, in order
 therefore, to establish *the Criterion of Orthodoxy*,
 for one of *the Roman Religion*, it will not be
sufficient to prove the Veracity of those Things,
 which are plainly and clearly revealed in Holy
 Writ; but also the Supremacy of the Pope,

(*i*) Let. v. p. 179.

(*k*) Let. iv. p. 131.

the Doctrine of Transubstantiation, Adoration of Images, &c. &c. &c. And I cannot but own with his Lordship, although that is not what he would have been thought to mean, that, to the Establishment of this Kind of *Orthodoxy*, the Writers on the Side of the *Roman Religion* have *shewn*, that the Text of the Holy Writ is on many Accounts *insufficient*.

WHEREAS in my humble Opinion, and I should indeed have expected also in his Lordship's, had he been a *Protestant*, or even a *Christian*, that he never would have allowed either that the *Romanists*, or any other Writers, could shew that Holy Writ was insufficient to instruct Mankind in *Orthodoxy*, or, which is the same Thing, to conduct them in the *right Way of Thinking*. That there are Difficulties in the Scriptures, cannot be denied; and that there will be Disputes about the Interpretations of them, perhaps to the End of the World, is more than probable. But the Knowledge and Understanding of those Difficulties is not necessary, towards rendering the Generality of Mankind truly *orthodox*; since it cannot be denied, but that there is enough in Holy Writ, that is sufficiently manifest and plain to every sincere Enquirer after Truth, to make a good *Christian* of him, and to conduct him to Heaven and Happiness, through Faith in *Jesus Christ*, which is the only Use of all true *Christian Orthodoxy*. And therefore it may be truly said, as *Moses* beautifully expresth it, that *the secret Things belong unto the LORD our GOD; but those Things*

Things which are revealed (l) belong unto us and to our Children for ever, that we may do all the Words of this Law (m).

BUT, says his Lordship, "The Writers of
 " the reformed Religion, have erected their Bat-
 " teries against Tradition; and the only Diffi-
 " culty they had to encounter in this Enterprize,
 " lay in levelling and pointing their Cannon so
 " as to avoid demolishing, in one common Ru-
 " in, the Traditions they retain, and those they
 " reject. Each Side has been employed, they
 " have jointly laid their Axes to the Root of
 " Christianity: for thus Men will be apt to rea-
 " son upon what they have advanced, *If the*
 " *Text has not that Authority, Clearness and*
 " *Precision, which are necessary to establish it as*
 " *a divine and a certain Rule of Faith and Prac-*
 " *tice; and if the Tradition of the Church from*
 " *the first Ages of it, until the Days of Luther*
 " *and Calvin, has been corrupted itself, and has*
 " *served to corrupt the Faith and Practice of*
 " *Christians, there remains at this Time, no*
 " *Standard at all of Christianity. By conse-*
 " *quence, either this Religion was not originally*
 " *of divine Institution, or else GOD has not pro-*
 " *vided effectually for preserving the general Pu-*
 " *rity of it, and the Gates of Hell have actually*
 " *prevailed, in Contradiction to his Promise, a-*
 " *gainst the Church.—The Dilemma is ter-*
 " *rible (n)."*

HIS Lordship seems to have reserved this Di-

(l) The original Word which is here rendered *revealed*, properly signifies *manifest* and *plain*.

(m) Deut. xxxix. 29. (n) Let. v. p. 179, 180.

lemma

lemma for his last Effort, and imagines that this Argument may serve as a *Coup de Grace* for *Christianity*. Whereas the Mistake lies here, that his Lordship had conversed so long with the Divines in *Paris*, that, as I observed on another Occasion, towards the Beginning of this Letter, he takes *Popery* and *Christianity* to be the same Thing, and imagines *Christianity* as well as *Popish Orthodoxy*, to be founded on *Tradition*; and therefore he sets out, in the Introduction to this *terrible Dilemma*, with mentioning, that “ the
 “ only Difficulty which the reformed Divines
 “ had to encounter, in their Enterprize against
 “ *Traditions*, lay in pointing their Cannon, so
 “ as to avoid demolishing in one common Ruin,
 “ the *Traditions* they retain, and those they re-
 “ ject.” Whereas his Lordship ought to have known, that the reformed Divines utterly reject all *Traditions*, and do not retain any. Their Faith is built upon the firm Foundation of Holy Writ. So that if *the Traditions of the Church, from the first Ages of it, until the Days of Luther and Calvin, have been corrupted*; while *there remains* the written Word of God, this they assert to be a sufficient, as it is indeed the only proper *Standard of Christianity*. Which if it be once allowed, then this *terrible Dilemma* is no more.

HOWEVER, I sincerely join with his Lordship in declaring, “ That it is high Time that
 “ the Clergy of all *Christian* Communions,
 “ (whether *Popish* or *Protestant*) should join
 “ their Forces, and establish those historical
 “ Facts, which are the Foundations of the whole
 “ System,

“ System, on clear and unquestionable histo-
 “ rical Authority, *such as they require in all*
 “ *Cases of Moment from others*; reject candidly
 “ what cannot be thus established; and pursue
 “ their Enquiries in the same Spirit of Truth,
 “ through all the Ages of the Church; with-
 “ out any Regard to Historians, Fathers or
 “ Councils, more than they are strictly enti-
 “ tled to on the Face of what they have trans-
 “ mitted to us, on their own Consistency, and
 “ on the Concurrence of their Authority (o).”

BUT though this is more to be wished for than expected, I shall proceed to throw in my Mite, towards such a Performance; and shall endeavour *to establish those historical Facts, which are the Foundations of the whole System, both in the Old and New Testaments, on such clear and unquestionable Authority, as is required in all other Cases of Moment.* Which it will be the easier for me to do, as I have already pursued this very Plan, in some Letters lately published, for the Use of the *Jews*, and from which, as that Book is now out of Print, I shall borrow what I find necessary for my present Purpose. And as the noble Viscount hath observed, that “ the Authority on which we re-
 “ ceive the Books of the New Testament, is so
 “ far from being founded on the Authority of the
 “ Old Testament, that it is quite independent
 “ on it (p);” I shall therefore consider these Systems separately, and to comply as much as ever lies in my Power, with all the Scruples of the noble Viscount, I shall begin first with the New Testament, and shall not consider it in the least as *being founded on the Authority of the Old*

(o) Let. v. p. 183. (p) Let. iii. p. 94.

Testament, nor shall pay any Regard to Historians, Fathers or Councils, more than they are strictly entitled to on the Face of what they have transmitted to us, on their own Consistency, and on the Concurrence of their own Integrity. And shall endeavour to establish these historical Facts on such unquestionable Authority, as I should require in all Cases of Moment from Others.

Now, as in all our Dealings between Man and Man, when we want to be certified of the Truth of any Matter of Fact, of which, either on Account of the Distance of Time or Place, we are incapable of being satisfied by the Evidence of our own Senses, we are necessarily obliged to have Recourse to the Testimony of others; so, of Consequence, in the Case now before us, we must apply for our Satisfaction to the Testimony of others; according to the Degrees of which, we shall be obliged in Reason, either to restrain, or to yield our Assent.

AND as no Person ought to expect a greater Degree of Belief to be given to his Testimony, than the Nature of the Evidence demands; so ought no reasonable Man ever to require any more, or other Kind of Proof, to be given for any Matter of Fact, than the Nature of the Thing will bear.

WHERE the Proof of a Matter of Fact depends upon Testimony, the highest Degree of Proof, that can be given, hath been reduced, by one of the strictest (*q*) Reasoners of the last Age, to the Consideration of these Six Particulars. First, the Number of Witnesses. Secondly, Their Integrity. Thirdly, Their Skill. Fourthly, The Design of

(*q*) Locke of Hum. Under. l. iv. c. iv. xvi.

the Author, where it is a Testimony out of a Book cited. Fifthly, The Consistency of the Parts, and Circumstances of the Relation. And, Sixthly, Contrary Testimonies. I think therefore, we cannot possibly take a fairer Method, in the Proof of those Matters of Fact, which we want to evince, than by producing our Evidence, and trying it according to the Rules here prescribed.

MR. *Hume*, although he had this Precedent to follow, is far from treating this Subject in as masterly a Manner, as Mr. *Locke*; for, says he, “ The Contrariety of Evidence may be derived
“ from several different Causes; from the Op-
“ position of contrary Testimonies, from the Cha-
“ racter or Number of the Witnesses; from the
“ Manner of delivering their Testimony; or
“ from the Union of all these Circumstances.
“ We entertain a Suspicion concerning any Mat-
“ ter of Fact, when the Witnesses contradict each
“ other; when they are but few, or of a suspi-
“ cious Character; when they have an Interest
“ in what they affirm; when they deliver their
“ Testimony with Doubt and Hesitation, or,
“ on the contrary, with too violent Affirma-
“ tions (*r*).” And indeed, wherever he chooses to differ from Mr. *Locke*, he generally does it to his own Disadvantage. As for Example, where he is speaking of innate Ideas, and says, “ I de-
“ fire to know what can be meant by asserting,
“ that Self-Love, or Resentment of Injuries, or
“ the Passion betwixt the Sexes, is not innate (*s*)?” Whereas Mr. *Locke* does not say that our Passions

(*r*) Essay on Miracles.

(*s*) Essay on the Origin of Ideas.

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are not innate, but that the *Ideas* which these
Passions excite in our Minds, are not innate.
But Mr. *Hume* mistakes the Objects of our Ideas
for our Ideas. For Instance, although Self-Love
is allowed to be an innate Passion, yet the
Mind can have no *Idea* of Self-Love until after
our Self-Love hath begun to operate. For these
Reasons, I shall at present take Mr. *Locke* for
my Guide, and shall consider the several Cri-
terions by which the Validity of our Testimony
is to be tried, according to the Method prescribed
by him: But shall not, however, neglect taking
Notice of those additional Circumstances of Con-
trariety, which are mentioned by Mr. *Hume*.

1. *First* then as to the Number of our Wit-
nesses; which would be too large to produce,
if we were to bring in the Epistles which were
written by the Apostles of *Jesus* to their several
Churches; and therefore, for Brevity sake, we
shall insist only upon *Four* Witnesses, as being
a sufficient Number for establishing of Truth.
Two of which were the Eye Witnesses, and
Companions of the Life of *Jesus*, and the other
two were Contemporaries with him, and had
their Accounts from those who were Eye Wit-
nesses. All which four have left the History
of the Life and Conversation of *Jesus*, in Wri-
ting, behind them. The Names of these four
Historians, who were all *Jews*, are *Matthew*,
Mark, *Luke* and *John*.

Matthew was a Publican, that is, one who
received the Customs, or Tribute, that was at
this Time paid by the *Jews* to the *Romans*:
which was no advantageous Part of his Charac-
ter, those who undertook that Employment,
be-

being rendered by that Means very odious to the rest of the *Jews*. His *Hebrew* Name was (t) *Levi*, the Son of *Alpheus*, who having followed *Jesus*, and having been an Eye Witness of the Miracles which he performed, and being from thence convinced that he was the *Messiah*, wrote an (u) Account of them for the Use of the Inhabitants of *Palestine*. Which Account having been written in the *Hebrew*, or rather *Syriac* Tongue in the *Hebrew* or *Chaldee* Character, was soon translated into *Greek*, for the Use of those who did not understand the other Language; which is the Copy that is now come to our Hands.

MARK was a Disciple, and Auditor, and Companion of *Peter*, who was one of the Apostles, and most early Disciples of *Jesus*.

LUKE was in the same Circumstance with *Mark*, not an Eye Witness himself, but having conversed with those that were, he wrote an History of the Life and Transactions of *Jesus*, for the Use of one *Theophilus*, as he himself informs us, in the Introduction to his History, in this Manner: *For as much as many have taken in Hand to set forth in Order, a Declaration of those Things which are most surely believed among us; even as they delivered them unto us, which from the Beginning were Eye-Witnesses, and Ministers of the Word: It seemed good to me also, having had perfect Understanding of all Things FROM THE VERY FIRST, to write unto thee, in order, most excellent Theophilus, that thou mayest know the Certainty of those Things wherein thou hast been instructed.*

(t) Mat. ix. 9. 11. Mark ii. 14. Luke v. 27.

(u) Euseb. Eccles. l. iii. c. 24.

THE Words here rendered *from the very first*, are in the Original expressed by the Word *Ἀνωθεν*, which may very fairly and honestly be translated *from above*, according to its literal Signification, which would give his Testimony still greater Weight; for, according to *Stephens* *Ἀνωθεν* exponitur *Desuper, superne, e superiori loco, e superioribus, vel supernis locis, ab alto*. And that this is the Sense in which it is chiefly used, in the Language of the Scriptures, appears from *Mat. xxvii. 51. Mar. xv. 38. John iii. 3, 7, 31. xix. 11, 23. Jam. i. 17. iii. 15, 17.* where it will not bear any other Interpretation. But to avoid Disputes, I have quoted the Words of *St. Luke* according to the vulgar Translation; and will suppose his Testimony to have no other Force than that of an Inquisitive Reporter of what he had heard: Although, if the whole Paragraph here quoted, be rightly considered, the Strength of his Argument for writing to *Theophilus*, upon a Subject which had been handled by others, according to the Report of those *which from the Beginning were Eye Witnesses, and Ministers of the Word*, must depend upon this, that he had a stronger Assurance of the Truth of what he reports, than barely hearsay Evidence; having also been confirmed of the Truth thereof, by Inspiration *from Above*.

LUKE was a Physician by Profession, and of Consequence a Man of Letters; and being one of the many who expected the Coming of the *Messiah*, about that Time, if we suppose, that he was only attentive to the Accounts which he heard of the Miracles of *Jesus from*
the

the very first; and though no Eye Witness himself, yet having taken his Information from those that were; must be allowed to be a good corroborating Evidence. Which also probably was the Case of *Mark*, who although he does not mention it, yet it is very likely, that he was also attentive to those Things *from the very first*.

John was the favourite Disciple of *Jesus*, and having lived to a great Age, was pressed by his Friend (*w*), to set down, before his Death, an Account, in Writing, of the History of *Jesus*; upon which, having revised those Accounts which had been written by the three aforementioned Persons, he set down those Particulars of Moment, which had been omitted by them. So that two of our Witnesses, being Eye Witnesses, and the other two having been attentive Enquirers, *from the very first*, into those Matters of Fact, which they relate, as told them by other Eye Witnesses, there can be no Objection made to *the Number* of our Witnesses; since, if these two last mentioned should be rejected, there would still remain *two*, who were themselves Eye Witnesses; and according to the (*x*) Law of *Moses*, as well as the subsequent Practice of all Nations, two Witnesses are sufficient to establish the Truth of any Matter.

2. WE must now therefore proceed in the *second Place*, to consider *the Integrity* of the Witnesses; for although their Numbers were ever so great, if there is Reason to suspect their

(*w*) Euseb. Eccles. Hist. L. iii. c. xxiv.

(*x*) Deut. xvii. 6. xix. 15.

Integrity, the Degree of Assent which we are to yield to their Assertions, ought certainly from thence to be regulated. Now the Integrity of these Witnesses will appear, if we do but consider, in the first Place, the artless and undisguised Manner in which their Narrations are related; so as not to conceal the Failings and Infirmities either of themselves, or of their best Friends. Thus it is fairly acknowledged, that *Matthew* was a Publican; nor is there the least Disguise thrown over the Ambition of the Sons of *Zebædee*; the Diffidence of *Thomas*; or the Backslidings of *Peter*, and the Timidity of the rest of the Apostles of *Jesus*; all which are set forth in the strongest Light. And what gives no small Proof of their Integrity, is the Consideration, that although these four Witnesses agree in their Evidence, with Regard to the principal Matters of Fact, they yet disagree so much in the Manner of their Narration, as to remove all Suspicion of any Collusion among them.

BUT what proves their Integrity beyond all Manner of Dispute, is that they could have no Interest in publishing these Matters of Fact, but barely the Love of Truth; and the distant Expectation of a future Reward in another World. For as to this World, they must have given *that* up from the Moment that *Jesus* declared in the Face of the whole *Jewish* People, at the Time of his Trial, that his *Kingdom was not of this World*.

BUT after his Death, there could be no Hopes at all left, whatever Hopes they might have had until then, of any worldly Profit, in being a Disciple

Disciple of *Jesus*. For then daily Experience convinced them, of the Truth of what *Jesus* had in his Life Time often declared unto them, that they should be as (y) *Lambs and Sheep in the midst of Wolves*. That they should not escape better than their Master ; but that as his Enemies had persecuted him, so should they (z) persecute his Disciples also : That they should be put out of the Synagogues, nay, (a) *the Time cometh, said he, when whosoever killeth you, will think that he doeth GOD Service*. Which Sayings were probably verified in the particular Case of every one of these four Historians ; who certainly subjected themselves to Ignominy, Reproach and Persecution, for the Sake of that Doctrine, which they published to the World : And two of them undoubtedly suffered Death, rather than retract that Truth, which they had so publickly declared. So that after this, there is no room left to doubt of the *Integrity* of these Witnesses ; since the Sufferings of Death, or even Persecution, in Justification of one's Opinion, whether true or false, is the strongest Proof which it is possible for any Man to give of his *Integrity* at least.

AND therefore, although the Matters of Fact, which they bore Testimony of, were undoubtedly miraculous, and above the common Laws of Nature, yet as they *could have no Interest in what they relate* (b), the Evidence of their *Integrity* is so glaring and manifest, that one would think it sufficient to overcome, even the Diffidence of Mr. *Hume*. Because, to use his own

(y) Mat. x. 16. Luke x. 3. (z) John xv. 20.

(a) John xvi. 2. (b) *Hume's Essay on Miracles*.

Words, *The Falsehood of their Testimony would be more miraculous, than the Event which they relate (c).*

3. BUT, as it may be urged, that a Man's Honesty is no Proof of his Ability; and that these poor well meaning Men may have been deceived; therefore, it will be necessary, in the *Third Place*, to consider *the Skill of our Witnesses*. And here it must be acknowledged, that it does not appear, that these Persons were bred up to any great Share of Literature, if we except *St. Luke*, who was a Physician: But then it is to be observed on the other Hand, that the Evidence to which their Testimony is produced, requires no great Skill, either in judging of, or in the Narration. Whereas, the Simplicity of their Lives and Conversations, as it renders them the freer from all Suspicion of attempting to impose upon their Readers; so does it make their Evidence the more credible; provided they had but *Skill* enough to prevent being imposed upon themselves, in the Things which they relate. Now, as the History which they have written, consists only in reporting certain Matters of Fact, which they saw and heard, every Man, that has but Eyes and Ears, and common Sense, has

(c) *Id. ibid.* This Author, in Imitation of the Academic Philosophers, doubts every Thing, and determines nothing. And is more employed in finding out what can be said on both Sides, and in raising Objections, than in pointing out the Truth: Which seems to be the Effect of a diffident and a timid Genius. The Traveller who is overtaken by a Mist, or by the Night, and cannot see his Way clearly, as he is afraid of every Step he takes, so he makes but little Way: Whereas he who has Light sufficient to see his Road, springs forward with Alacrity, regardless of those Doubts which hinder the Progress of the benighted Traveller.

Skill

Skill enough to be a Judge of such Kind of Things. They tell you the Facts that *Jesus* did : They tell you the Words that he spoke. The Consequence to be deduced from thence, belongs to the Reader as well as to them.

THEY tell you that he was born at *Bethlehem*, and that he lived at *Nazareth*, and that he went about, during the last three Years and a half of his Life, doing certain Works, which appeared to them to be miraculous; and that *Jesus* argued from thence to prove the Divinity of his Mission: But, it is the Reader's Business to judge whether those Acts as they are there related, were miraculous, or not; and whether they can be accounted for by natural Means; and whether the Argument deduced from thence in Favour of a divine Mission, be conclusive. They tell you what those Works were: Feeding thousands of People with two Loaves of Bread, and a few small Fishes; healing the Sick in an Instant; curing the Leprous; the Blind; the Deaf; and the Lame: And what is more than all, bringing the Dead back again to Life, not only after they had been dead some Hours, but some Days; one when he was actually carrying upon the Bier to the Grave; and another after he had been some Days in the Grave. They tell you, that he was crucified by Order of the *Roman* Governor *Pontius Pilate*, at the earnest Sollicitation of the *Jews*; and that he was buried in the Tomb belonging to one *Joseph of Arimathæa*; that he rose from thence on the third Day, and was seen and felt by his Disciples, and conversed frequently with them for forty Days afterwards.

Now

Now it requires no great Skill in any Witness to be a Judge of all these Kinds of Things, and to tell whether a Man be blind, or has his Eyesight; whether he be leprous or clean; alive or dead: And with a very small Degree of Attention, any Person, with the meanest Abilities, hath Skill sufficient to judge, whether these wonderful Cures which they saw performed by our Saviour and his Apostles, were done according to the ordinary Rules of Physick, or were effected in a Moment, by a Touch of the Hand, or even by the Speaking of a Word. So that, with Regard to such Transactions as these, although ever so extraordinary in their own Nature, no Objection can lie against *the Skill* of these Witnesses.

4. HENCE we come in the *Fourth* Place to consider the *Design of these Authors*, which certainly could not be bad; as the whole Purport of the Religion which they inculcate, is evidently calculated to recommend Piety towards God, and good Will towards Man. Nor is it credible that these Books could have been written with an evil Design of imposing on the World, when we consider that the Authors could be no Gainers by such an Imposture. When the Christian Religion began to be countenanced by Princes and Potentates, and had once gotten some Footing in the World, Interest, or Vanity, or a misguided Zeal, might have excited some weak Men to the Practice of pious Frauds, in privately composing some Books, or forging some Miracles, to propagate their own Opinions.

For when a Doctrine hath once gained some Credit, and Men begin to be prejudiced in Fa-
 your

vour of the Propagators of it; the Zeal of the Multitude, already prepossessed in Favour of such Leaders and such Doctrine, may prevail upon them to believe whatever such Leaders report, or indeed, any Report which tends to confirm them in their present Sentiments, without giving it a due Examination. Which seems to have been the Case of some Persons in the Christian Church soon after the Death of the Apostles, whose Credulity is not always to be vindicated, nor their Report to be credited; as hath been undoubtedly proved by Dr. *Middleton*; who, although he may have pushed his Argument with too much Violence, and have gone too far in some Particulars, is undeniably right in too many others. And as the Prejudice of the Multitude, and the Gain of the Leaders, was by this Means encreased, so also did the Practice of these *pious Frauds* encrease; and have continued from that Time to this; as manifestly appears from the Regard paid by some Party-Zealots to the Miracles reported to have been performed at the Tomb of *Abbé Paris*; who was “*a little Priest undistinguished during his Life, but dubbed a Saint by the Jansenists after his Death.*” And who, as Lord *Bolingbroke* justly observes, “*had the Prime Minister been a Jansenist, might have been a Saint still (d).*” Whereas, this was not the Case of those Miracles which are recorded by our Authors, as performed by our Saviour and his Apostles; which were of various Kinds; were done in their Life Time; publickly in the Face of their Enemies; and subject at the Time of

(d) Let. iv. p. 125.

their Performance to the Scrutiny of the most learned Persons in the *Jewish* Nation, the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, who set themselves in Opposition to *Jesus*. For, as the Bulk of the *Jews* were in Expectation of a triumphant *Messiah* and not of a *lowly* one, instead of being prejudiced in Favour of *Jesus*, they were prejudiced against the Belief of a *Messiah*, who only appeared as *the Son of a Carpenter*. This was what neither suited their Interest, nor their Inclinations; and therefore it was no easy Matter to persuade them, that *any good Thing could come out of* so poor a Place as *Nazareth*; and for the same Reasons, the Doctrine of *Christ crucified* was a *stumbling Block to the Jews, and to the Greeks Foolishness*; until their Prejudices, and among the rest the Prejudices of our four Historians, whose Testimony is here produced, were entirely removed by the irresistible Force of several wonderful Facts; which could no otherwise be accounted for than as being done by a Person empowered and commissioned from *GOD*. Which Matters of Fact, two at least of these Historians were Eye Witnesses of, and wrote the History of them at a Time when they could have no View either of worldly Profit or Praise.

NOR is it reasonable to think, that, had they known the Christian Religion to have been false, their Zeal would ever have allowed them to proceed so far in the Cheat, as to be real Sufferers themselves, only that others might be the Gainers. Nor would they have endured Persecution rather than retract, or suffer Death rather than deny, the Truth of what they asserted. And when we consider that the general

Purport

Purport of these Books is to recommend the Practice of Virtue and Goodness, and the Love of Truth, we may be sure, that real Falsehood would never take Pains to bring about these Purposes; since whatever Guise it may assume, and put outwardly upon itself, something very different from all these would lie hid underneath; and that, let the Pretences be ever so specious, something of worldly Interest would be couched at the Bottom. Whereas, these Authors, who wrote the History of a Person after he was dead, whom they acknowledge and declare to have been ignominiously crucified, and to have owned, that his *Kingdom was not of this World*, must be acquitted from having any such *Design*.

5. So that we may proceed in the *Fifth Place*, to consider *the Consistency of the Parts, and the Circumstances of the Relation*. Which will bear but very little Controversy; since whoever will give himself the Trouble of reading these four Authors, will see one general Scheme carried on through each of them; wherein they give us a short Account of the Life of *Jesus*, from his Birth to the Time of his Ascension into Heaven. In which they *deliver their Testimony without Doubt and Hesitation*, and yet not with *too violent Asseverations* (e); and are so consistent with themselves, as well as with each other, as to produce a wonderful and surprizing Harmony, whenever they are compared together; although they were written at different Times, and in very different Parts of the World. And whoever compares them, will find a sufficient Difference in the circum-

(e) Hume Ess. on Miracles.

stantial Parts of the Narration, although not in the material, to prevent the Suspicion of the least Possibility of Combination. Thus for Example, the three Evangelists, *Matthew*, *Mark*, and *Luke*, are principally employed in relating the plain practical Discourses upon moral Subjects, which our Saviour spoke to his Auditors in general; of which *Matthew*, who was an Ear Witness, is much more copious and particular in the Narration than the other two; but *Mark* and *Luke* are more exact and regular in specifying the Time and Place. Whereas St. *John*, who was his beloved and favourite Disciple, and attended upon him in his most retired Hours, does not only mention some Discourses that were omitted by them, but enters into the more mysterious and recondite Part of his Life and Character. He begins therefore with affirming, that He was *in the Beginning with God*, and that He *was God*; and that *all Things were made by him*, &c. But then, he is, for the same Reason, more explicit than all the rest of the Evangelists taken together, in declaring, that this Power was given into his Hands by God the Father, and in asserting the Dependency of the Son on God the Father, both before he took human Nature upon himself, and afterwards. Which renders the Gospel of St. *John* more elevated, as well as more mysterious, than any of the others. And if there are some few Places and small Circumstances, which at first View seem to disagree, they are of such a Nature, that they either admit an easy Reconciliation, or must be ascribed to a Mistake in the Transcribers of the Copies.

AND

AND indeed there is one Circumstance attending these Histories, to the Veracity of which the *Jews* themselves, as well as the City of *Jerusalem*, are a standing and a living Evidence; which is, that they contain a Prophecy relating to the (*f*) Dispersion of the *Jews*, and the Destruction of the Temple, which continues daily to be fulfilled. The Force of which was attempted to be eluded by the Emperor *Julian*, who employed the Power of the *Roman* Empire in endeavouring to rebuild the Temple, and replace the *Jews* in their own Land; but was defeated of his Purposes, by the visible, but supernatural, Eruption of Globes of Fire through the Foundations of the Temple, which never ceased scattering Destruction about them, until the Undertakers desisted from their Attempt. Which is a Matter of Fact, in which all Historians, who mention those times and Transactions, whether *Christian*, *Jewish*, or *Heathen*, unanimously agree in.

(6.) HAVING thus considered the Consistency of the Parts, and the Circumstances of the History of the Life of *Jesus*, as related by the four Evangelists, we come now to the *Sixth* and last Criterion by which the Truth of this History is to be tried, which is *the contrary Testimonies*. And under this Head I am sure it does not yet appear, that any have ever been produced, which will, in the least, invalidate their Testimony.

(*f*) Mat. xxiv. 1, 2, 15. Mark xii. 2, 14. Luke xix. 14, 43, 44. xxi. 24.

stantial Parts of the Narration, although not in the material, to prevent the Suspicion of the least Possibility of Combination. Thus for Example, the three Evangelists, *Matthew*, *Mark*, and *Luke*, are principally employed in relating the plain practical Discourses upon moral Subjects, which our Saviour spoke to his Auditors in general; of which *Matthew*, who was an Ear Witness, is much more copious and particular in the Narration than the other two; but *Mark* and *Luke* are more exact and regular in specifying the Time and Place. Whereas St. *John*, who was his beloved and favourite Disciple, and attended upon him in his most retired Hours, does not only mention some Discourses that were omitted by them, but enters into the more mysterious and recondite Part of his Life and Character. He begins therefore with affirming, that He was *in the Beginning with God*, and that He *was God*; and that *all Things were made by him*, &c. But then, he is, for the same Reason, more explicit than all the rest of the Evangelists taken together, in declaring, that this Power was given into his Hands by God the Father, and in asserting the Dependency of the Son on God the Father, both before he took human Nature upon himself, and afterwards. Which renders the Gospel of St. *John* more elevated, as well as more mysterious, than any of the others. And if there are some few Places and small Circumstances, which at first View seem to disagree, they are of such a Nature, that they either admit an easy Reconciliation, or must be ascribed to a Mistake in the Transcribers of the Copies.

AND

AND indeed there is one Circumstance attending these Histories, to the Veracity of which the *Jews* themselves, as well as the City of *Jerusalem*, are a standing and a living Evidence; which is, that they contain a Prophecy relating to the (*f*) Dispersion of the *Jews*, and the Destruction of the Temple, which continues daily to be fulfilled. The Force of which was attempted to be eluded by the Emperor *Julian*, who employed the Power of the *Roman* Empire in endeavouring to rebuild the Temple, and replace the *Jews* in their own Land; but was defeated of his Purposes, by the visible, but supernatural, Eruption of Globes of Fire through the Foundations of the Temple, which never ceased scattering Destruction about them, until the Undertakers desisted from their Attempt. Which is a Matter of Fact, in which all Historians, who mention those times and Transactions, whether *Christian*, *Jewish*, or *Heathen*, unanimously agree in.

(6.) HAVING thus considered the Consistency of the Parts, and the Circumstances of the History of the Life of *Jesus*, as related by the four Evangelists, we come now to the *Sixth* and last Criterion by which the Truth of this History is to be tried, which is *the contrary Testimonies*. And under this Head I am sure is does not yet appear, that any have ever been produced, which will, in the least, invalidate their Testimony.

(*f*) Mat. xxiv. 1, 2, 15. Mark xii. 2, 14. Luke xix. 14, 43, 44. xxi. 24.

WHEREAS, if the Adversaries of *Christianity*, who lived at that Time, when the Gospels were written, had not been sure, that those Things were really true, as they are set down, we may be certain that, as they wanted not Abilities, so neither would they have wanted Inclinations to have exposed them.

BUT, if the Evidence of those Persons who were bred up in a contrary Opinion, and continued to be Adversaries to *Christianity* until they were advanced in Years, although afterwards convinced of their Errors, may be comprehended under the Character of *contrary Testimony*; then some of the strongest Proofs, which are to be produced for the corroborating and confirming of the Truth of the History, as related by these four Evangelists, are of this Kind: For of this Sort were all the early Converts to *Christianity*: But, in particular, *Paul of Tarsus*; who was at first not only not a Friend to *Christianity*, but a bitter Enemy to it; *persecuting the Church, and binding and delivering into Prison both Men and Women*: Whole Epistles are come down to our Hands, giving an Account of his Conversion; and the History of the principal Part of whose Life is likewise still extant, in the Book entitled, *The Acts of the Apostles*, written by his Companion *Luke*, who is one of the four Evangelists.

BUT, if under the Head of *contrary Testimonies*, those only are to be comprehended, who lived and died of a contrary Persuasion; we have great Reason to lament the Loss of
that

that account, which *Pontius Pilate* sent to *Tiberius Cæsar*, the then Roman Emperor, of the Transactions which passed during his Government of *Judæa*. For that *Jesus* was mentioned in it in an extraordinary Manner, we have great Reason to believe, from the Works of *Justin Martyr*, who lived about 100 Years after the Death of *Jesus*, and who appealed to this Record for the Truth of what he affirm'd in Favour of *Jesus*, in his Apology for the *Christian* Religion, which he (g) dedicated to the Emperor *Antonius*, to the *Cæsars* his Sons, and to the whole Senate and People of *Rome*; and which he delivered in, being then an Inhabitant of that City himself.

THE Works, however, of *Tacitus*, *Suetonius*, and *Dion Cassius*, all Heathen Writers, are come down to our Hands, and they confirm that Circumstance mentioned by the four Evangelists, of an Order being issued from *Augustus Cæsar*, that the whole Empire should be taxed. And (h) *Tacitus* particularly mentions, that in the Reign of *Tiberius* when *Pontius Pilate* was Governor of *Judæa*, *Jesus* was brought in Judgment before him, condemned and crucified. And both (i) he and (k) *Suetonius* mention the current (l) Report then prevalent, that some Person coming out of *Judæa* should obtain the Dominion of the Earth. Which, although they, as well as *Josephus*, as Lord

(g) Fusch. Eccles. Hist. l. iv. c. xi. xii. (h) Tacit. Annal. l. xv. sect. 44. (i) Tacit. Hist. l. v. (k) Suet l. viii. sect. 4. (l) Percrebuerat rumor.

Bolingbroke (*m*) observes, applied wrongly to the then reigning *Roman* Emperors, who had been in *Judæa*, is an undoubted Proof, however, that there was a general Expectation, which prevailed about that Time, of some extraordinary Person appearing in *Judæa*. And whence should this Report arise, but from the prophetic Writings of the *Jews*, which gave them Expectations of the coming of the *Messiah* about that Time, whom they, as well as the afore-mentioned Historians, at first, falsely understood to be a temporal Prince, and a triumphant worldly Hero?

AND I think I may venture to affirm, that where any Heathen Writers have mentioned any of the Particulars which are recorded by the four Evangelists, instead of contradicting them, they always confirm their Testimony.

BUT, it is not to be wondered at, if many Instances are not to be produc'd of this Nature. First, because there were few or no Historians who lived in *Judæa*, where these Transactions happened. And secondly, because the Actions performed by *Jesus* are not such, as are the proper Subjects of History; which concerns itself more with Politics, than Religion. But where the Subject of any of the prophane Historians hath led them to treat about those Affairs which referred to the History of *Jesus*, there we always find a remarkable Confirmation of the Veracity of these four Evangelists,

(*m*) Lett. 3. p. 91.

without

without any one Instance that I have ever yet heard of to the contrary.

EVEN *Celsus*, *Julian*, *Porphyry*, and *Hierocles*, who were all not only Pagans, but professed Enemies of Christianity, acknowledge the Matters of Fact, and allow the Miracles recorded of *Jesus* to have been performed ; but only deny them to have been done by the Power of God, and ascribe them to the Power of Art-Magic.

AND thus having gone through the Six Criteria, which are fixed by Mr. *Locke*, as sufficient Tests for ascertaining and establishing the Degrees of Probability ; and having shewn, that the *Number* of our Witnesses is such, as hath been thought sufficient, in all Ages, to determine our Assent, even in the Courts of Judicature ; that their having suffered Persecution and Death rather than retract their Assertions, is a sufficient Proof of their *Integrity* ; that they had *Skill* equal to their Undertaking, which was only to relate Matters of Fact ; that the *Design* of these Authors could not be to deceive, as there was no Possibility of their gaining any Thing thereby ; that the *Parts*, as well as *Circumstances* of their Relation, were all consistent together, and concurred in carrying on the general Scheme of a *Messiah* ; and that no *contrary Testimonies* can be produced, but what rather tend to prove that *Jesus* was that *Messiah* ; I think we may, in the Words of Mr. (u) *Locke*,

(u) *Locke* of Hum. Und. l. iv. c. xvi.

also assert, that “ where all these concur in
 “ the Proof of any one Thing, there Proba-
 “ bility upon such Grounds carries so much
 “ Evidence with it, that it naturally deter-
 “ mines the Judgment, and leaves us as little
 “ Liberty to believe or disbelieve, as a De-
 “ monstration does whether we will know, or
 “ be ignorant.”

So that the only Difficulty which seems to remain is this ; which must indeed be acknowledged as a Thing at first Sight to be wondered at, that if these Things are true, and that they are true, I think can hardly be doubted, How it comes to pass, that the *Jews*, who were perpetually looking into and searching, the prophetic Writings ; and who were at the Time of the coming of *Jesus*, (*o*) *waiting for Redemption in Jerusalem* ; and were then in full Expectation of the Coming of the *Messiah* ; should not more universally, than they did, acknowledge the Completion of these Prophecies in the Person of *Jesus* ? The Reason, however, is not very difficult to assign ; if we do but consider the strong Impression which the Thoughts of a triumphant *Messiah*, in the Form of an heroick and worldly Prince, had made upon their Minds ; together with the strong Tendency which seems implanted by God in all Mankind towards that Religion in which they have been educated ; whence arise most of those Difficulties that every one meets with in his Attempt to make Converts from

(*o*) Luke ii. 38. John i. 41. iv. 25.

any one Religion to another ; especially to a Religion, which required the Mortification of their Passions, their quitting their worldly Interests, and which obliged them utterly to relinquish those Ceremonies, in which they had been bred up from their Infancy : Which, whoever tries, will find very difficult to bring about, even with those who are educated in the most absurd Doctrines of Popery, or Heathenism, or Mahometanism.

For although Almighty God in his Dispensations with Mankind, is willing to afford them a reasonable Degree of Conviction, such as is sufficient to prevail with Men of teachable, unprejudiced, and impartial Dispositions ; yet he hath not made the Investigation of Truth so easy, or so plain, in any one Branch of Knowledge, as to strike the indolent and uninquisitive ; or to necessitate and force the Assent of the prejudiced and perverse : Because, this would take away the Virtue and Merit of an impartial Enquiry, and remove all Claim and Title to Rewards and Punishments. And for this Reason, Almighty God was pleased to describe the Coming of the *Messiah*, in such a Manner, as that Men of unprejudiced Minds, whose Affections were not tied to this World, might know him and distinguish him from all others, and of Consequence believe in him, when he did come : But that Men of worldly Minds, and perverse Passions, might yet have Room to *meet with strong Delusion, and believe a Lie.* That none

of the Wicked should understand it, but that the Wise should understand it.

AND hence it came to pass, that although the coming of *Jesus* as the *Messiah*, in so mean a Character as that of a Carpenter's Son, and who was afterwards crucified, was acknowledged by *Anna* and *Simeon*, and some illiterate Fishermen, it was yet a *Stumbling-Block to the Jews, and to the Greeks Foolishness*. It seemed a Contradiction in Terms, to Men of worldly Minds, and who valued themselves for their worldly Wisdom, to suppose a *Deliverer* could be crucified ; and a *Redeemer* put to Death. They saw no Slavery in Sin ; and therefore thought of no *Deliverance* from thence ; nor of any *Redemption* from the Power of the Grave. They desired no Exemption, but from the *Roman Yoke* ; no Triumph but over worldly Enemies ; and no Victory but over Armies that opposed them. They never considered that they were greater Slaves to their own Passions, than they were to the *Roman Senate* ; that Death and Hell were the worst of Enemies ; and the Devil a greater Tyrant than *Cæsar*.

AND now having sufficiently tired your Lordship, I shall release you for the present ; and shall in my next endeavour to vindicate the Authenticity of the History of the Old Testament,

Who am, &c.

L E T T E R

LETTER II.

MY LORD,

HAVING in a former Letter gone thro' the Proof of the Veracity of the Facts recorded of *Jesus Christ*, in the History of the New Testament, I shall proceed to vindicate the Authenticity of the Old Testament, the chief Objections that are raised against which, by the noble Viscount, are, "that the law
"and the History were far from being blended
"together, as they now stand in the Penta-
"teuch, even from the Time of *Moses*, down
"to that of *Esdra* (*p*).^p" And that with
Regard to the other Parts of the Canon of the
Jewish Scriptures, "it is doubtful who were
"the Authors of these Scriptures, when they
"were published; how they were composed
"and preserved, or *renewed*, to use a remark-
"able Expression of the famous HUET in his
"Demonstration; in fine, how they were lost
"during the Captivity, and how they were
"retrieved after it, are all Matters of Con-
"troversy to this day (*q*).^q" That "*Philo* and
"*Josephus* believed that *Moses* wrote the Account
"of his own Death and Sepulchre (*r*).^r" And

(*p*) Lett. ii. p. 100. (*q*) P. 101. (*r*) P. 102.

accordingly his Lordship further observes, that the *Jews* “rely on Traditions compiled long “after the Canon of their Scriptures, but “deemed by them of equal Antiquity and “Authority. Thus, for Instance, *Daniel* “and *Simon* the Just, according to them, “were Members at the same Time of the “great Synagogue, which began and finished “the Canon of the Old Testament, under “the Presidency of *Esdra*s. This *Esdra*s was “the Prophet *Malachi*. *Darius*, the Son of “*Hystaspes*, was *Artaxerxes Longimanus*; he “was *Ahasuerus*, and he was the same *Darius* “whom *Alexander* conquered. This, says he, “may serve as a Sample of *Jewish* Chrono- “logy, formed on their Scriptures, which “afford insufficient Lights, and on their Tra- “ditions, which afford false Lights (s).” As for the Traditions of the *Jews*, I shall be as far from defending them as his Lordship himself. I will also, acknowledge, that they are exceeding bad Chronologers; and that they confound both Names and Times. But what is all this to the Purpose? The Books themselves are in Being. Let them speak for themselves; and your Lordship will find that these false Facts in History and Chronology are by no means *formed on their Scriptures*, as his Lordship asserts, but on their Traditions; for *their Scriptures* say no such Things as are here charged to their Account, as hath been evidently made to appear by Dr. *Prideaux*, in

(s) Lett. iii. p. 104.

his admirable Treatise on the Connexion of the Old and New Testaments, and to which Work I shall refer those who want any further Satisfaction upon those Particulars, which are specified by his Lordship. And, indeed, his Lordship does us the Justice to allow, that “we [*Christians*] are more correct, and come “nearer the Truth in these Instances, perhaps “in some others, because, says he, we make “use of profane Chronology to help us (*t*).”

HOWEVER, with regard to the Books themselves, his Lordship objects, that it is doubtful “who were the Authors of these Scriptures, when they were composed, and preserved or *renewed*; in fine, how they were “lost during the Captivity, and how they “were retrieved after it.” To all which I will give his Lordship as short and as full an Answer, as I possibly can; and if it be poor, it shall nevertheless be honest.

As to the five Books of *Moses*, they were composed by *Moses* himself. He was the Author of them. And they were by the positive Command of *Moses*, preserved in the Chest or Ark (*u*) in which the two Tables of the Law, *Aaron's* Rod, and the Pot of Manna, were kept with the utmost Care in the Sanctuary, or Holy of Holies. And with how much sacred Veneration that Place was approached once a Year by the High-Priest, I need not mention.

THE Book of *Joshua* was also written by *Joshua*, and was lodged by *Joshua* himself, a

(*t*) P. 104. (*u*) Deut. xxxi. 9. 24. 25, 26.

little before his Death, in the same Place with the Books of *Moses*. And probably it was *Joshua* also, that wrote not only *the last Chapter* of the Book of *Deuteronomy*, as the noble Viscount observes, but the two last Chapters of that Book and the nine last Verses of the 31st Chapter, wherein there is an Account of the Advice which *Moses* gave the *Israelites*, and the Blessings which he prophetically gave the several Tribes, when he was departing from them; and which, as Lord *Bolingbroke* remarks contain an Account of the Death and Sepulchre of *Moses*, together with a kind of funeral Panegyrick, which it is more than probable, *Joshua* might have added to the End of the Works of *Moses*; at the same Time that he wrote the Memorials of his own Transactions, and inserted them *in the Book of the Law of GOD* (*w*); so that the Book of the Law of God, at the Time of the Death of *Joshua* consisted of the Books of *Moses* and of *Joshua*.

It is certain, that *Philo* and *Josephus*, as his Lordship observes (*x*), do both express themselves as if the whole Book of *Deuteronomy* was finished by *Moses*. The Words of *Philo* are to this Effect: “ That *Moses*, when
 “ he was just going to depart from them, did
 “ speak of himself in a prophetic Manner,
 “ as if he was actually dead, and before his
 “ Death spoke of himself as being dead and
 “ buried, and that no one knew where it

(*w*) Josh. xxiv. xxv. xxvi. (*x*) Lett. iii. p 102.

“ was.

“ was (y).” And *Josephus* says, that *Moses* was in Reality taken from the Sight of the *Israelites* by a Cloud, and disappeared, *although he wrote in the holy Books that he died (z).* Which, however, is not quite so absurd as the noble Viscount has represented it: Because they suppose it to be done by the Spirit of Prophecy. But besides the Impropriety of assigning supernatural Causes, where natural Causes will be as effectual; the *funeral Panegyrick*, taken Notice of by Lord *Bolingbroke*, furnishes us with a Reason against supposing that the two last Chapters of *Deuteronomy* were written by *Moses*; for in the first Verse *Moses* is called *a Man of GOD*, which is far from the Style in which he used to speak of himself. He is likewise, Ver. 5, spoken of, as being KING in *Jeshurun* or *Israel*, which is a Title that he never gave to himself, any more than he did the former one.

AND here I cannot help taking Notice, that it may possibly be objected, from this last Expression, as if this Addition could not have been made to the works of *Moses*, until some Time after the Title of *King* had been given to the Rulers in *Israel*; and therefore must be deferred to the Times of *Saul* at least. But in Answer to this, it should be observed, that although the Title of *King* was not a regular and constant Title given to the chief Rulers in *Israel* until the Time of *Saul*, yet that it was

(y) Philo. lib. iii. de Vita Mosis.
lib. iv. c. 8.

(z) Jos. Ant.

a Title sometimes accidentally given them. Thus, in the Book of *Genesis*, *Moses* speaking of the Princes, or Commanders, or *Dukes* of the House of *Esau*, as he generally calls them, says, *These are the Kings that reigned in the Land of Edom, before there reigned any King over the Children of Israel* (a). Because before the Time of *Moses* and *Joshua*, and the *Judges*, the Children of *Israel* had no one Commander in Chief; but each Tribe was under its own Head, and those Heads were in Servitude to the *Egyptian* Task-masters; but as soon as they had one Commander in Chief, then the Title of *King* was sometimes applied to that Commander, as in the Case before us; which Title, though I do not apprehend that *Moses* would have given to himself, yet might have been given to him by his Successor *Joshua*, as it manifestly was to some of those *Judges* who were the Successors of *Joshua*. For that those Commanders in Chief of the Armies of *Israel*, who were sometimes called *Judges* were also called *Kings*, is manifest from hence. Because, in several of the Transactions which are mentioned in the Book of *Judges*, as coming to pass during the *Interregnum* of the *Judges*; the Author of that Book, speaking of those Transactions, says, in more Places than one, that they came to pass *when there was no King in Israel* (b). That is, during the *Interregnum* between the Reign of

(a) Gen. xxxvi. 31.
xix. 1. xxi. 25

(b) Judges xvii. 6. xviii. 1.

the *Judges* when there was no one particular *Judge* appointed to reign over the whole twelve Tribes, as frequently happened.

HAVING thus discovered who were the Authors of these Books of *Moses* and *Joshua*, and when and by whom they were composed, we shall proceed to consider, "*how they were afterwards preserved or renewed.*" And upon Enquiry it will be found, that we shall be able to trace them in the Hands of the *Jews*, whose municipal Laws they were, from their first Publication to the present Time. For as these were the Laws by which *Plea and Plea*, and *all Matters of Controversy*, Deut. xvii. 8. between Man and Man, were to be regulated; and by which the Civil, as well as the Ecclesiastical State of the *Jews* was to be governed; it is utterly impossible, that this State could have subsisted any Length of Time without them. And, for this Reason, among others, it was, that the Priests were commanded to *teach the Children of Israel all the Statutes which the LORD had spoken unto them by the Hand of Moses*, Lev. x. 11.

AND in Order the better to enable them to do this, the *Israelites* during their long Leisure in the Wilderness of *Kadesh*, for near forty Years together, seem in all Probability to have been employed in amusing themselves with learning to write and read; and probably were the Authors of those numerous Writings (c) which

(c) There is a particular Account of these Writings in an original Journal to Mount *Sinai*, now in my Possession,

which still remain engraved on the hard Rocks in that Wilderness, in Characters at present unknown, but which are in such infinite Quantities, as to give the Denomination of the Mountains of *Mokatab*, or *the written Mountains* to that Part of the Promontory. And indeed the prodigious Numbers that there are of those Writings, in a Place where there is neither Water nor Food to be gotten, cannot be accounted for in any other Manner, than as being done by the Operation of Multitudes of Persons, who were furnished both by Food and Water from Heaven.

AFTER which, when the *Israelites* were come into the Plains of *Moab*, and were going to enter into the Land of *Canaan*, *Moses* commanded them to keep these Words, which he had declared unto them, in their Hearts, and to teach them diligently unto their Children, and to write them, that is Portions or Sentences out of them, on the Posts of their Houses, and on their Gates, &c. (*d*) Then they were further ordered, as soon as they came into the Land of *Canaan*, to take great Stones, and set them upon Mount *Ebal*, and to plaister them with Plaister, and to write on them the Words of the Law (*e*). In which two last-mentioned Cases, although the Directions given, may be supposed to extend only to the Laws of the two Tables; yet in other Cases

sion, a Translation of which is printing in *London*, in a Letter from the Bishop of *Clogher* to the Society of Antiquaries.

(*d*) Deut. vi. 9. xi. 20. (*e*) Ibid. xxvii. 34.

Cases it is manifest, that the whole Law of *Moses* was intended to be made publick; as for Example, when the Priests, the Sons of *Aaron* are commanded *to teach the Children of Israel*; all the Statutes which the LORD had spoken unto them by the Hand of *Moses* (f). This Command certainly extends to all those Statutes, as well civil as religious, which it was not only proper, but, in their Circumstances, absolutely necessary for them to be acquainted with. And, as the Instructions, which related to the Sacrifices of Atonement; which every particular Person was obliged to offer, for their Purification; or for the Forgiveness of their Sins; or which related to the Conduct between Man and Wife, or between Father and Son; or between Man and Man, are irregularly interspersed through all the Books of *Moses*, as the Occasions on which they were ordered gave Rise to them; therefore, it was necessary that the Priests, who were to instruct the People, should have Copies of the whole Law, which Copies, though we may not suppose to be very numerous, one at least ought to have been lodged, if not in every City; yet in every head City of each Tribe. And besides all this, *Moses* ordered that, at the End of every seven Years; in the Solemnity of the Year of Release; in the Feast of Tabernacles, the Priests should read these Laws before all *Israel* in their Hearing (g): That the People as

(f) Levit. x. 11. (g) Deut. xxxi. 9, 11.

well as the Priests, should be acquainted with the Tenor of those Laws, by which they were to regulate their Conduct.

AND as these Laws of *Moses* were the Rule by which the Elders and Judges of the several Cities were to distribute Justice, between Man and Man (*b*), therefore it was necessary that the Lay-Magistrates should have Copies of these Laws as well as the Priests, in order to be able to regulate their Administration thereby. And as the supreme Court of Judicature, for the whole Kingdom of *Israel*, came at length to be fixed in *Jerusalem*, where every Dispute, either between Party and Party, or between City and City, was finally to be determined (*i*); there it was undoubtedly necessary, that one Copy of the Law at least, ought constantly to have been preserved. And that, not the one which was lodged in the Ark in the Holy of Holies; but one that could be daily applied to as Occasion required. For as the High Priest could go into the Holy of Holies, but once a Year, the Copy there lodged would be useless in general; and as it could only be consulted and referred to on extraordinary Occasions, would be insufficient for the common Purposes of Life.

AND therefore it is manifest, that, in the Times of King *David*, when this Court was first erected at *Jerusalem*, the great Officers of the *Sanhedrim* must have had the Books of

(*b*) Deut. xix. 12. xxi. 6, 20. xxii. 17. xxv. 8.

(*i*) Ibid. xvii. 9, 11. xix. 17.

the Law before them, whereby to regulate their Conduct. And in the early Times of *Solomon*, when the Temple was first built and dedicated to God, and the numerous Ceremonies which attended the Practice of Sacrifices were then regulated, it is certain, that the officiating Priests must have had the Books of the Law daily before their Eyes. Which a constant Practice might in a little Time render easy and habitual; and in Process of Time, might render them careless and negligent in the Performance of. And accordingly we find, towards the latter End of the Reign of *Solomon*, when his Heart grew corrupt, and was turned from the God of *Israel*, and he kept not that which the LORD commanded, but burnt Incense, and sacrificed to strange Gods, that the Laws of *Moses* were not then as strictly observed, either by King, Priests or People, as they ought to have been.

AND though it is mentioned, that in the Days of King *Asa*, who came to the Throne of *Judah* about 20 Years after the Death of *Solomon*, that for a long Season *Israel* had been without the true God, and without a teaching Priest, and without Law (*k*); does not this manifestly shew, that formerly there had been teaching Priests among the People, who, according to the Directions given by *Moses*, had taught the Children of *Israel* all the Statutes which the LORD had spoken unto them, by the

(*k*) 2 Chron. xv. 3.

Hand of Moses, and who must therefore have had Copies of this Law in their Custody, in order to be able also to read them all over, once every seven Years, at the Feast of Tabernacles, *before all Israel in their Hearing?*

AND although it is mentioned, that at this Time, in the Days of *Asa*, they were *without Law*, yet it is manifest that the Books of the Law of *Moses* were not lost, notwithstanding the Precepts contained in them had not been duly observed; as appears from the Conduct of his Son and Successor *Jehosaphat*, who in the third Year of his Reign sent to his Princes to teach in the Cities of *Judah*; and with them he sent Levites and Priests; and they taught in *Judah*, and **HAD THE BOOK OF THE LAW OF THE LORD** with them, and went about throughout all the Cities of *Judah*, and taught the People (1).

AND indeed, though it is natural to imagine that in a Succession of Princes, of which some were good and some bad, the Laws prescribed in the Books of *Moses*, would be sometimes more punctually observed, and sometimes less; yet it is not to be supposed, that while this Court of the *Sanhedrim* was permitted to sit in *Jerusalem*, in which the civil Property of the Subject was regulated according to the Laws of *Moses*, they could ever be without one Copy of the Law at least. And accordingly we find in the Days of good *Hezekiah*, King of *Judah*, that when God put

(1) 2 Chron. xvii. 17, 19.

it into the Heart of the King, to do that which is right in the Sight of the LORD; and to repair and cleanse the Temple, and to sanctify anew *all those Vessels which King Abaz in his Reign did cast away, in his Transgression, &c.* (m), the Sin-offering, and the Sacrifices that were then offered upon this Occasion, were exactly conformable to the Rules prescribed by *Moses* in the Book of *Leviticus*, whence it is manifest they then had by them a Copy of that Book to refer to.

AND when they were cleansing and sanctifying the Temple, it is further observed; that *Hezekiah the King and the Princes, commanded the Levites to sing Praises unto the LORD, with the Words of David, and Asaph the Seer* (n). Whence it appears, that the Psalms of *David* and *Asaph* were at this Time held in great Repute, and were made use of in Divine Service, but whether 'as a Part of the Canon of Scripture, cannot be inferred from hence. However, as the Prophet *Isaiab* flourished in the Reign of *Hezekiah*, this accounts for the many Allusions there are in the Prophecies of that Prophet, to the Psalms of *David*. But shews at the same Time, that the Prophecies of *Isaiab* could not then have been inserted into the Canon of Scripture, nor indeed in all Probability, until some Time after his Death, when the fulfilling of his Prophecies had thoroughly established his Character as a Prophet.

(m) 2 Chron. xxix. 19, &c.

(n) Ibid. 30.

It is further also observed of *Hezekiah*, that he sent to all *Israel* and *Judah*, and wrote Letters to *Ephraim* and *Manasseh*, to keep the Passover unto the LORD of *Israel*; the Reason given for which is, *Because they had not done it of a long Time, in such Sort as it was written* (o). Whence it is manifest, that the King had then in his Custody a *written Copy* of the Law of *Moses*, whereby to rectify the Manner of their keeping the Passover. And accordingly it is still more fully declared that *the Priests and the Levites were ashamed, and sanctified themselves, and brought in the Burnt-Offerings into the House of the Lord: And they stood in their Place after their Manner, ACCORDING TO THE LAW OF Moses, THE MAN OF GOD* (p). Whence it is apparent, that the Priests and Levites had then a Copy of the Law of *Moses* before them, whereby to regulate *the Manner* of their Standing, and of Offering up their Burnt-Offerings, according to that Law.

HOWEVER, when *Manasseh*, who was the Son and Successor of *Hezekiah*, was King, although he did Evil in the Sight of the LORD, after the Abomination of the Heathen, and built Altars for all the Host of Heaven, in the two Courts of the House of the LORD (q); and although his Son *Amon* did also that which was Evil in the Sight of the LORD, as his Father *Manasseh* did (r); yet even then was not

(o) 2 Chron. xxx. 5. (p) 1 Chron. xxx. 15.

(q) 2 Kings xxi. 1, &c. (r) 1 Kings xxi. 19.

the Book of the Law of *Moses* lost, for in the Reign of *Josiah*, the Son of *Amon*, in the eighteenth Year of his Reign, when he had purged the Land and the House, of the false Gods; he sent *Shaphan* the Scribe, and *Maa-seiah* the Governor of the City, and *Joab* the Recorder, to repair the House of the LORD. And *Hilkiab* the High-Priest found a Book of the Law of the LORD, given by *Moses*, in the House of the LORD. And *Hilkiab* delivered the Book to *Shaphan*, and *Shaphan* carried the Book to the King. And the King sent and gathered together all the Elders of *Judah* and *Jerusalem*. And the King went up into the House of the LORD, and all the Men of *Judah*, and the Inhabitants of *Jerusalem*, and the Priests and the Levites, and all the People, great and small; and he read in their Ears all the Words of the Book of the Covenant, that was found in the House of the LORD (s). And it is further observed, that all his Days, they departed not from following the GOD of their Fathers.

Now, from the End of the Reign of *Josiah*, to the *Babylonish* Captivity, when *Jechoniah* (t) was carried away Prisoner to *Babylon*, was but about twelve Years, and from thence to the End of the Captivity, was seventy more; when *Cyrus* King of *Persia*, in the first Year of his Reign, after he had subdued all *Persia*, being stirred up by the LORD, made Proclama-

(s) 2 Chron. xxxiv. 1—33.
Jer. xxix. 10.

(t) See Ezek. i. 2.

tion throughout his Kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, Thus saith Cyrus King of *Persia*, the LORD GOD of Heaven hath given me all the Kingdoms of the Earth, and he hath charged me to build him an House at *Jerusalem*, Who is there among you of all his People? His GOD be with him, and let him go up to *Jerusalem*, which is in *Judah*, and build the House of the LORD GOD of *Israel*, which is in *Jerusalem*. And when the seventh Month was come; and the Children of *Israel* were in the Cities, then stood up *Jeshua*, the Son of *Jozadak*, and his Brethren the Priests, and *Zerubbabel*, the Son of *Salatiel*, and his Brethren, and builded the Altar of the LORD GOD of *Israel*, to offer Burnt-Offerings on it, as written in the Law of *Moses the Man of GOD* (u). Whence it is manifest, that the *Jews* then had a Copy of this Law in their Possession, which they brought with them back from *Babylon* to *Jerusalem*.

BUT as the Order issued by *Cyrus* for the rebuilding of *Jerusalem*, was not compulsory, but was only a Permission for such to return to *Judæa*, as were of themselves inclined; it must be supposed, that many out of Age and Infirmary, many out of Indolence or Poverty, and many from other Attachments, would stay behind, at least until they were informed how the Work had succeeded, and that there were Conveniences prepared for their Reception; so we find accordingly, that Numbers of them

(u) *Ezra* i. i. ii. i, &c.

staid behind in *Persia*; and, as Adversity is the Mother of Devotion, these were so attached to the Observance of the Laws of *Moses*, that even during their Captivity, and under the Hands of their Enemies, they were zealously strict and rigorous in their Obedience to those Laws, which when in their own Country, and in Prosperity, they had so often neglected and trampled under Foot; and accordingly we find, in the Reign of *Abasuerus* or *Xerxes*, who came to the Throne of *Persia* about forty five Years after the Order issued by *Cyrus*, that *Haman* made Use of this Attachment of the *Jews* to their own Laws, as an Accusation against them to the King, saying, that *there is a certain People scattered abroad, and dispersed among the People in all the Provinces of thy Kingdom, and their Laws are diverse from all People, neither keep they the King's Laws* (w). Whence it is manifest that the remaining *Jews*, who staid behind in *Persia*, must also have kept some Copies of the Laws of *Moses*, whereby to regulate their Conduct, after the Departure of *Zerubbabel*.

BUT as this Complaint had no Effect, being quashed by the prudent and resolute Conduct of Queen *Esther*; so neither had another that was made, probably much about the same Time, by the *Samaritans* against the *Jews*, who were engaged in rebuilding *Jerusalem*: For they sent, in the Beginning of the Reign of *Abasuerus*, an Accusation against the Inha-

(w) *Esther* iii. 8.

bitants of *Judab* and *Jerusalem* (x); which Complaint not having met with Success, they applied again in the Reign of his Successor *Artaxerxes Longimanus*, and obtained an Order, to cause the Men to cease, and that the City be not builded. So it ceased unto the second Year of the Reign of *Darius Nothus*, King of *Persia* (y). At which Time Application having been made to *Darius*, and the Decree made by *Cyrus* being laid before him, the Elders of the *Jews* were permitted to proceed in their Work, and the House was finished in the sixth Year of *Darius* the King; and the Children of *Israel*, and the Priests and the Levites kept the Dedication of this House of God with Joy; and they set the Priests in their Divisions, and the Levites in their Courses, for the Service of God, which is at *Jerusalem*, according to the Writing of the Book of *Moses* (z). Whence it is manifest, that the *Jews* at *Jerusalem* had then the Writing of the Book of *Moses* in their Possession.

AND, about twenty Years after this, in the seventh Year of the Reign of *Artaxerxes Mnemon* King of *Persia*, *Ezra*, who was a ready Scribe in the Law of *Moses*, which the Lord God of *Israel* had given, obtained a Decree from the King, that all they of the People of *Israel*, and of his Priests and Levites, in the Realm, which were minded of their own free Will to go up to *Jerusalem*, might go along

(x) *Ezra* iv. 6.
v. 1, &c. vi. 18.

(y) *Ibid.* iv. 7—24.

(z) *Ibid.*

with him. And, says the Decree, for as much as thou art sent of the King, and of his seven Counsellors, to enquire concerning *Judah* and *Jerusalem*, according to the Law of thy God which is in thine Hand, &c (a). Hence it is manifest, that there were at this Time two Copies of the Law of *Moses*, at least, actually in being, one at *Babylon*, in the Hands of *Ezra*; and another at *Jerusalem*, in the keeping of *Zerubbabel* and his Companions.

IN about twelve Years after which Migration by *Ezra*, *Nehemiah*, who was Cup-bearer (b) to *Artaxerxes*, was in the twentieth Year of his Reign made *Tirshatha* (c), or Governor of *Jerusalem*, and being come to *Jerusalem*, he, with *Ezra* the Scribe, had the Book of the Law of *Moses* publicly read and expounded unto the People. And on the twenty-fourth Day of the Month, when the Reading of the whole Book of the Law had been finished, the Children of *Israel* were assembled with Fasting, and the Levites preached unto them; and what is remarkable is this, that in the Sermon, which is recorded, as being made upon this Occasion, there are References to the Book of *Genesis*; for it mentions the Creation of the World by God; the Vocation of *Abraham* from *Ur* of the *Chaldees*; and the Covenant that was made with him to give him the Land of the *Canaanites*, &c (d). Whence it is manifest, that at that

(a) *Ezra* vii. 1—14. (b) *Nehem.* i. 11. iii. 1.

(c) *Ibid.* viii. 9. (d) *Ibid.* ix. 6, 7, 8.

Time, the Book of *Genesis* was considered as a Part of the Book of the Law of *Moses*. So that, I think it very reasonable to suppose, that the Book, which at that Time went under the Denomination of the Book of the Law of *Moses*, or the Book of the Law of God, comprehended not only the Law, but all the Books of *Moses*, as well as the Book of *Joshua*, the Transactions in which, *Joshua* himself declares he had written in the Book of the Law of God (e).

BUT as to the rest of the Books of the Old Testament, which are now comprehended in the Canon of the *Jewish* Scriptures, I think the Probability is, that, although they might have been in Esteem, they were not gathered together, and established as a Canon, until about this Time of the Restauration of the *Jewish* Church under the Conduct of *Ezra* and *Nehemiah*; for as to the Book of *Judges*, as that is a continued History of the Judges of *Israel*, from the Death of *Joshua* to the Death of *Sampson*; therefore, it must have been composed some Time after that Event; and yet, before the eighth Year of King *David*, when he conquered *Jerusalem* (f); because the Author of the Book of *Judges* says, that, *the Jebusites dwell in Jerusalem to this Day* (g). And therefore the Probability is, that it was composed by *Samuel*.

(e) Josh. xxiv. 25.
xi. 6.

(f) 2 Sam. v. 8. 1 Cron.

(g) Judg. i. 21.

THE Book of *Ruth* is an History of some Transactions relating to the Family of *David*, written after the Birth of *David*, because that Circumstance is mentioned in it (*b*). But as it does not proceed to mention any Thing of *David's* personal History, therefore the Presumption is, that it was written not long after his Birth, and probably by *Samuel* on his being sent to anoint *David*, while *David* was yet a Stripling, and before he had done any Thing that was remarkable (*i*).

THE Books of *Samuel* are of more uncertain Authority, the first Book of which was, however, probably written by *Samuel*, because he mentions himself as being a Writer of Books (*k*), which he may have composed so far, as until it comes towards the Time of his Death; and after that, it may have been continued by his Disciples the Prophets at *Naioth* in *Ramah* (*l*); as the Books of *Moses* were by *Joshua*.

THE Books of *Kings* and *Chronicles*, are undoubtedly Collections made out of other Authors, and are not original Histories, but may, to gratify Lord *Bolingbroke*, be called *Extracts of Genealogies, not Genealogies; Extracts of Histories, not Histories* (*m*). They bring down the History of the Kings of *Judah* and *Israel*, to the Time of the *Babylonish* Captivity; and therefore could not have been written until

(*b*) Ruth iv. 7, 22.

(*i*) 1 Sam. xvi. 1, &c.

(*k*) 1 Sam. x. 29.

(*l*) 1 Sam. xix. 18, 19, 20.

(*m*) Lett. iii. p. 102.

after that Event. And, as these Books of *Kings* and *Chronicles* refer to each other, and quote one another, it is more than probable, that they were either written by *Ezra* or *Nehemiah* (*n*), or some Scribes under their Directions, at one and the same Time. Who, I also suppose, to have been the Collectors of all those Prophecies which pass under the Names of the several Prophets whose Names they bear, from *Isaiah* to *Malachi*; and which were all written a little before, or during, the Time of the Captivity.

THE Book of *Psalms* is a Collection of such Psalms of *Moses*, *David*, *Asaph*, and others, as were in Repute among the *Jews* before and at the Time of the *Babylonish* Captivity, which were also, as well as the Books of *Job*, *Proverbs*, *Ecclesiastes*, and *Canticles*, gathered together by *Ezra* and *Nehemiah*, and inserted into the Canon of the *Jewish* Scriptures (*o*).

Nehemiah was the last *Tirshatha*, or Governor, that was expressly sent by the Kings of *Persia* to preside in *Jerusalem*; for after his Death, *Judæa*, being added to the Præfecture of *Syria*, was subjected to the Rulers of that Province; and under them the Administration of all publick Affairs, both civil and ecclesiastical, was committed to the High-Priest; which made that Office much more coveted than it used to be, and sometimes tempted those to invade it, who were by no Means qualified for

(*n*) See 2 Mac. ii. 13.

(*o*) Id. *ibid*.

that Employment. From which Period of Time we may date the Commencement of the Corruption of the *Jewish* Religion. For the High-Priest being now engaged, as a temporal Magistrate, in the Conduct of the Affairs of Government, the Thoughts about Religion gave Way to those of Politicks, by which Means many groundless Traditions were suffered to take Root, until, like Weeds in a Garden that is neglected, they encreased and gained Ground to that Degree, before the Time of our Saviour's coming into the World, as *to render the Word of God of none Effect* (p).

HOWEVER, when *Alexander* the Great had defeated *Darius Codomannus* at the Battle of *Issus*, and, after the Destruction of *Tyre*, was marching towards *Jerusalem*, with an Intent to punish the Disobedience of the *Jews*, who had refused to submit to him while *Darius* was alive, *Jaddus* or *Jaddua*, the High-Priest, having cloathed himself in his pontifical Habit, and with the Priests also in their proper Habits, and the People in white Garments, went out of the City to meet the approaching Conqueror. Which had such an Effect on the angry Monarch, that his Resentment was immediately turned into a religious Veneration, and being conducted into *Jerusalem*, he offered Sacrifices to God in the Temple; where *Jaddua* having conducted him, shewed him the Prophecies of *Daniel*, relating to the

(p) Mat. xv. 6.

Overthrow of the *Persian* Empire by a *Græcian* King. Whence it is manifest, that at that Time the Prophecies of *Daniel* were preserved in the Temple, as a Part of the Canon of the holy Scriptures.

BUT, in Process of Time, that is, in about 161 Years after this, *Antiochus Epiphanes* having, for the Sake of the Riches that were in the Temple of *Jerusalem*, broke his Faith with the *Jews*, and spoiled the Temple, he commanded the *Jews* to forsake the Law, upon Pain of Death; and caused the sacred Books to be torn or burnt, or otherwise prophaned, wherever they were found (*q*).

NOTWITHSTANDING all which, it is manifest, that *the Books of the Law* were not even lost at that Time, but were preserved by the Care and Firmness of the Family of the *Maccabees*, who assembled the Children of *Israel* together at *Mapsa* over-against *Jerusalem*; for in *Mapsa* was the Place where they prayed afore-time in *Israel*. Then they fasted that Day, and put on Sackcloth, and cast Ashes upon their Heads, and rent their Cloaths; and laid open *the Books of the Law*, for the which the Heathens had made diligent Search, that they might paint in them the Likeness of their Idols (*r*).

AND, when *Judas Maccabæus* had, after the Defeat of the Army of *Lysias*, recovered the City and Temple of *Jerusalem*, he appointed

(*q*) 1 Maccab. i. 41, &c. (*r*) 1 Maccab. iii. 42—48.
a Day

a Day for solemnizing anew the Dedication of the Temple, after the great Prophanations that had been committed in it; *and gathered together all those Things that were lost by Reason of the War which they had* (s). And this is the true Footing, upon which the Canon of the Scriptures of the Old Testament stands at present.

It is an Observation of Lord *Bolingbroke's*, that "the Authority on which we receive the
 " Books of the New Testament, is so far from
 " being founded on the Authority of the Old
 " Testament; that it is quite independent on
 " it; the New being proved, gives Authority
 " to the Old; but borrows none from it; and
 " gives this Authority to the particular Parts
 " only (t)." That is, I suppose, to those particular Parts which are quoted and referred to, as being of divine Inspiration. In Submission to which Assertion, I have, to avoid Disputes, proved the Authenticity of the Scriptures of the New Testament *independently* of the Old Testament; and now, I think, I may justly lay claim to the Concession made in the latter Part of this Quotation; that the New being proved, gives Authority to the Old; but to the particular Parts only. — Be it so.

I Must, however, before I proceed, enter my Protest with a *salvo Jure*; to that Part of this Proposition which may be contested, and that is, that the Authenticity of the New

(s) 2 Mac. ii. 14.

(t) Lett. iii. p. 94.

Testament is quite independent on the Old, and borrows no Authority from it: Because, I look upon the Old and New Testament to be like the two Sides of an Arch, which mutually aid and support one another. I allow that the first publishing of the Words of a Prophecy, where, as Lord *Celingbroke* observes, *the Narration is before the Fact* (u), is indeed no Proof of divine Inspiration, although the fulfilling of it is; however, when any Prophecy is once fulfilled, the Publication and the Completion, mutually enlighten and vindicate the divine Authority of each other. But, as I have already given up this Piece of Advance-ground, I will not now resume it; but shall be content to take whatever his Lordship is pleased to allow. *Quod das accipio*. I shall therefore content myself at present with this Concession, that the Authenticity of the New Testament once proved, gives Authority to those Particulars in the Old which are quoted in it, as being of divine Inspiration. And if so, then the Proof which I have already made of the divine Authority of the New Testament, will sufficiently prove the divine Authority of the Old; because, the whole Canon of the *Jewish* Scriptures, as then established in the *Jewish* Church when *Jesus Christ* was upon Earth, is there appealed to, both in general and in particular. The Books of *Moses*, the *Law*, the *Prophets*, and the *Psalms*, are ap-

(u) Lett. II. p. 49.

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pealed to by Name (*w*). And, indeed, if the Law, or be Books of *Moses* alone; had been mentioned; it would have been sufficient to have proved the divine Authority of the Jewish Religion; as the rest of the Canon may, if his Lordship pleases, be only considered as so many Commentaries towards the Explanation, or as Exhortations to the Performance of it.

BUT his Lordship makes a Distinction between the Degrees of Credibility that are to be given to the Law and the History in the Books of *Moses*, and says, that “it would not
“ be hard to shew; upon great Inducements
“ of Probability; that the Law and the Hi-
“ story was far from being blended together
“ as they now stand in the Pentateuch, even
“ from the Time of *Moses* down to that of
“ *Esdra*s or *Ezra* (*x*).” But, with humble Submission to his Lordship’s great Learning, I think it would be hard to shew it, if his Lordship means in any material Points, and does not mean that there have been only some Dislocations of Passages, and some Parts that have been mislaid and lost, which are of no great Moment to the whole; which must be acknowledged to have happened to this very ancient Performance, without impeaching the Veracity of what is left.

FOR let us see the Force of this Objection, when applied to some ancient profane Author;

(*w*) Luke xvi. 29. xx. 42. xxiv. 44. John i. 45.
Mar. xii. 26. (*x*) Lett. iii. p. 99; 100.

As for Example, to *Homer*. The first Accounts that we have of his Works, are, that they were collected by *Lycurgus* when he sailed into *Asia*, at least fifty Years after the Death of *Homer*; where he met with the scattered Fragments of them, which before that Time had only been traditionally handed about in detached Pieces, until *Lycurgus* published them entire. Whereas, the Works of *Moses* were collected and published by himself, and deposited in the Ark, for their better Preservation. What excited *Lycurgus*, the *Lacedemonian* Legislator, to take so much Pains in the collecting of these Works, was not only the Beauty of the Poetry, but the political, as well as religious Sentiments he found interspersed in them, which, by laying before the *Grecians* the evil Effects of Discord in Society, might serve to unite the Minds of that fickle People, and endear them to that Form of Government he was going to establish. And if this was a rational Foundation for the Preservation of the Works of *Homer*, how much more Reason was there for the *Jews* to take Care of the Works of *Moses*, who had already received them as the municipal Law of their Nation, for the Establishment of their civil Property, as well as the Regulation of their religious Observances?

HOWEVER, after these detached Pieces of *Homer* were brought into *Greece*, they remained in that same unconnected Manner, under several Titles, such as the *Battle of the Ships*,
the

the *Death of Dolon*, the *Grotto of Calypso*, &c. until they were reduced into some Order by *Pisistratus* at *Athens*, or, according to *Plato*, by *Hipparchus* the Son of *Pisistratus*, who first divided them into the two different Poems of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.

AFTERWARDS, *Alexander* the Great, who was a superstitious Admirer of *Homer*, employed *Aristotle* to correct the *Iliad* from all the Errors and Interpolations which had crept into it; in the Revival of which, he himself, together with *Anaxarchus* and *Callisthenes*, is said to have assisted. Which Edition being finished, he laid up the Work in a rich Casket, whence it has since been called *the Edition of the Casket*.

WHICH Edition, however, not satisfying the Curious, *Zenodotus* of *Ephesus*, Library Keeper to the first *Ptolemy*, undertook another Correction of *Homer*, which not satisfying *Aristarchus*, (who was Preceptor to *Ptolemy Evergetes*, Son to the former *Ptolemy*) he set about another Edition, which he executed with great Learning and Judgment, and is probably that Edition, which, with some various Readings, is now in the Hands of the Learned.

LET us therefore suppose, that, notwithstanding all this Care, it could be shewed there were still some Dislocations in the present Copy, or some Passages that were disunited, and some Lines lost, and were not to be retrieved; we should certainly be obliged to the Critick

for his Pains ; but would this prove that what remained was not the Work of *Homer* ? I apprehend not. But rather, that the uninterrupted Attempts of Criticks to rectify the Text, would prove the direct contrary ; and would shew that what remains belongs truly to the supposed Author.

I HAVE, in my Treatise on the Pentateuch, entitled, *The Chronology of the Hebrew Bible vindicated*, &c. shewed, that there are several Passages in the Works of *Moses*, that are dislocated, and others that are lost ; and yet there are sufficient Materials remaining to shew, as well from the internal Marks, as the external Proofs, that what is left was the Work of *Moses* ; although the Titles of the Books, any more than those of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, are not now the same that they were originally. For I will allow, that the Books of the Pentateuch might not have been distinguished by the same Names when they were originally written, that they are now, no more than they are at present known by the same Names among the *Jews*, and among the *Christians*. The Book of *Deuteronomy*, was originally called by *Moses*, in all human Probability, *The Book of the Wars of the Lord* (y) ; it is called by the *Christians*, *Deuteronomy*, or the *second Law*, because it contains a Recapitulation of the several Laws which *Moses* had before given the *Israelites*, and it is known among the *Jews* by the Title of *Elle Hade-*

(y) See Numb. xxi. 14.

barim, because those are the Words with which it begins at present. And therefore, although the historical and juridical Parts of the Books of *Moses*, are not now blended in the same exact and precise Order in which they were originally written, this does not prove that the historical Parts are not to be esteemed the Work of *Moses*, as well as the juridical. Because, by the Expression of *the Law*, the *Jews*, generally understood the five Books of *Moses*, comprehending the historical and prophetical, as well as the juridical Parts of that Performance; and, that it was understood in that Sense by our Saviour and the Evangelists, is manifest, from the Appeals made to it by them: As for Example; when our Saviour says, *the Law prophecied until John* (z). Which Prophecies referred to the historical as well as legal Parts of the Books of *Moses*. And our Saviour expressly appealed to the History of the fiery Bush which appeared to *Moses* on *Mount Sinai*, when he said, *have ye not read in the Book of Moses, how in the Bush God spake unto him, &c* (a).

THE Authority, therefore, of the historical Parts of the Books of *Moses* is confirmed by the same Proofs, and is to be regarded with the same Veneration, as the juridical Parts. And, indeed, it is wonderful to think of the many and various Kinds of Attestations that remain to this Day of the Truth of the histo-

(z) Mat. xi. 15. Luke xvi. 26. John i. 45. v. 46.

(a) Mark. xii. 26.

rical Parts of those Books, considering the early Age of the World in which they were written. And, if we were only to consider the concurrent Testimony of prophane Historians, the Attestation they give to it is wonderful; the first of which, that I shall quote, is *Berosus*. Now *Berosus* was a *Chaldean*, or *Babylonish* Priest, who flourished in the Time of *Alexander* the Great, about the 481st Year of the *Æra* of *Nabonassar*. I have mentioned before, that his Character in *Greece* was so famous, for his Knowledge in Astronomy, that the *Athenians* erected a Statue to him, with a golden Tongue, on account of the Justness of his Astrological Predictions. This *Berosus* wrote a Chronological History of *Chaldæa*, and the adjacent Countries, from the Flood of *Noah*, whom he mentions by Name, to the Conquest of *Babylon* by *Cyrus*; in which he treated on the Affairs of *Egypt*, and synchronised them with the Affairs of *Assyria*; which makes his Work more useful than any other of the prophane Authors who have written upon this Subject; as we are enabled by it to rectify that excessive Number of Years, which the *Egyptian* Priests have assigned to the Duration of that Monarchy, and the Reign of their Gods. And, indeed, the Agreement between *Moses* and *Berosus*, in their Chronological Accounts, as well as their History, is very remarkable. For *Berosus* makes the Destruction of the *Egyptian* Host under *Pharaoh* in the *Red Sea*, to have hap-
pened

pened in the eighth Year of *Ascatades* King of *Assyria*, which, according to his Computation, was in the 794th Year after the Flood of *Noah*; whereas, *Moses* makes the same Event to have happened in the 798th Year of the Deluge (*b*). And, indeed, I cannot but think it something very extraordinary, to find the Chronology of the *Hebrew* Bible, and the Heathen Chronology of *Berosus*, agree so nearly with regard to the precise Time of this Event. Considering that the Time of the Reigns of the Kings of *Babylon*, from which this Calculation is computed, is set down by *Berosus*, and the Lives of the Patriarchs by *Moses*, according to the round Number of Years, without mentioning the odd Months of each Reign or Life; which, in the Space of near 800 Years, may very well be allowed to make a Difference of four Years, between the Calculation of *Berosus*, and the *Mosaical* Computation. I likewise cannot but observe, that the Acknowledgment of this Fact by an Heathen Writer, who says, that he compiled his Book out of the ancient Records of *Chaldæa*, although he attributes the Drowning of the *Egyptians* to the Power of Art-Magick, is very extraordinary, and adds no small Weight to the Testimony of *Moses*.

(*b*) See *The Hebrew Chronology vindicated*, written by the Bishop of *Clogher*, in which this Calculation between *Moses* and *Berosus* is fairly and faithfully carried on and computed.

BUT,

BUT, here I think, I ought to inform your Lordship, that the original Work, which was written by *Berosus* in *Greek*, is now lost. And that that which goes at present under his Name, is only an imperfect Abstract written in *Latin*, which was published towards the latter End of the fifteenth Century, by *Annius*, or the Monk of *Viterbo*, as Lord *Bolingbroke* styles him (c), whose Character for Fidelity not being the best, has given Occasion to some Criticks to object against the Authenticity of this Translation. Because, as they have justly observed, there are several Quotations out of *Berosus*, mentioned both in *Josephus*, *Pliny*, *St. Jerome*, and *Athenæus*, which are not to be found in this Treatise of *Berosus* that was published by *Annius*. *Josephus*, for Example, speaking of *Berosus*, says, that, “ he was a
 “ *Chaldæan* by Birth, well known to the
 “ Learned by the Publication of his *Chaldæan*
 “ Books of Astronomy and Philosophy a-
 “ mong the *Greeks*. This *Berosus*, says he,
 “ following the most ancient Records of that
 “ Nation, gives us an History of the Deluge
 “ of Waters that then happened, and of the
 “ Destruction of Mankind by it; and agrees
 “ with *Moses* in the Narration of it. He also
 “ gives us an Account of that Ark, wherein
 “ *Noah*, the Origin of our Race, was pre-
 “ served, when it was brought to the highest
 “ Part of the *Armenian* Mountains. After

(c) Lett. iii. §. 1. p. 82.

“ which

“ which, he gives a Catalogue of the Poste-
 “ rity of *Noah*, and adds the Years of their
 “ Chronology, and at length comes down to
 “ *Nabopolassar*, who was King of *Babylon* and
 “ the *Chaldeans* (d).” And *St. Jerome* and
Athenæus, as well as *Josephus*, quote Passages
 out of *Berosus*, as low down as the Reign of
Cyrus the Great: Whereas, our *Berosus* is con-
 tinued down no lower than the Reign of *A-*
cherres in *Egypt*, and of *Ascatades* in *Assyria*,
 who were cotemporary with the *Exodus* of the
Israelites out of *Egypt*. *Pliny* also, as hath
 been before remarked, quotes *Berosus* for say-
 ing, that the *Babylonians* had celestial Obser-
 vations for 480 Years backwards from his
 Time. And *Josephus* (e) has two long Quo-
 tations out of *Berosus*, giving an Account of
 the Improvements made in *Babylon* by *Nebu-*
chadnezzar, and says besides, that “ *Berosus*
 “ complains of the *Grecian* Writers, for sup-
 “ posing, without any Foundation, that *Ba-*
 “ *bylon* was built by *Semiramis*, Queen of *As-*
 “ *syria*; and for asserting that those wonder-
 “ ful Edifices belonging to it, were her
 “ Workmanship (f).” Whereas, there are no
 such Passages in our present Copy of *Berosus*.
 But, on the contrary, in the Fragment of
Berosus, which is come down to our Hands,
 there is Mention made of *Semiramis*; and the
 Author says, she greatly enlarged *Babylon*, in-

(d) *Joseph.* cont. *Ap.* lib. i. §. 19. (e) *Jos.* Ant.
 lib. xi. c. 11. cont. *Ap.* lib. i. §. 2. (f) *Jos.* cont.
Ap. lib. i. §. 20.

somuch, that she almost made a new City of it. But, that Quotation mentioned by *Josephus*, is by no Means difficult to be reconciled with this Passage; for that Quotation must have been towards the latter End of *Berosus*, after he had been speaking of the immense Improvements and Additions made in *Babylon* by *Nebucadnezzar*; which, indeed, it would be wrong to attribute to *Semiramis*. But, as Mr. *Whiston* (g) very judiciously remarks, the great Improvements which *Nebucadnezzar* made in the Buildings at *Babylon*, do no way contradict those ancient and authentick Testimonies, which ascribe its first Building to *Nimrod*, and its first Rebuilding to *Semiramis*. These Passages, therefore, quoted by *Josephus*, *Pliny*, &c. were probably in that Part of the History of *Berosus*, which is now lost, wherein the History of *Assyria* was carried down from *Ascadates* to *Cyrus*. For, as far as this Fragment does go, it agrees exactly with the Account given of *Berosus* by *Josephus*, with regard to the Flood, the Repeopling of the Earth by *Noah* and his Sons, together with a Chronological Account of those Events. And whereas *Josephus* quotes *Berosus* for saying, when speaking of the Ark, that “ it is said “ there is still some Part of this Ship in *Armenia*, at the Mountain of the *Cordycæans*, “ and that some People carry off the Pieces “ of the Bitumen, which they take away, and

(g) Whiston's *Jos.* in loc.

“ use chiefly as Amulets, for the averting of
“ Mischiefs (b),” This Quotation is to be
found, *totidem Verbis*, in our Author. And,
what is very remarkable, is, that, as *Josephus*
observes, *Berosus* agrees with *Moses* in the De-
struction of Mankind by the Flood; so this
Fragment agrees exactly with the *Hebrew*
Chronology of the Bible, in the Time of the
Departure of the *Israelites* out of *Egypt*, and
the Destruction of *Pharaoh* and his Host in
the Red Sea.

AND, as I find that this Fragment, in the
List of the *Assyrian* Kings, and the Time
which is there assigned to the Duration of
each particular Reign, agrees exactly with
the Succession of the Kings of *Assyria*, and
the Length of their Reigns in the *Chronicon*
of *Eusebius*, I cannot, therefore, but look upon
this Treatise, as far as it goes, to be a faith-
ful Translation of that Part of *Berosus*, which
might have been made by some private Per-
son, for his own Use, before the Original was
lost; which, at last, fell into the Hands of
Annius of *Viterbo*, who has since published
it (i). And, although I will not take upon
me to vindicate the Integrity of *Annius*, with
regard to all his Actions, or every Thing that
he has published; yet, since this Fragment

(b) Joseph. Ant. lib. i. c. 3.

(i) It is affirmed by *Didymus Rapaligerus Livianus*, an
Italian Author, that this Fragment of *Berosus* was given
to *Annius* at *Genoa*, by Father *George* of *Armenia*, a Do-
minican Friar.

of *Berosus*, as far as it goes, agrees perfectly with the Account given of the Works of *Berosus* by *Josephus*, and, as *Annius* was undoubtedly a learned and inquisitive Person, and lived at the Conclusion of that Age of Ignorance and Barbarity which had over-run the Face of the *Christian* World in the fifteenth Century (*k*); I cannot help thinking it more than probable, that he might have an Opportunity of meeting with some Books, which had been lost to the World for some Generations. And, although the intire Works of *Berosus* did not come to his Hands, yet, that either he, or Father *George* of *Armenia*, might in some private Study have met with this imperfect, but faithful Translation of them.

BUT, my Lord, I desire you will take Notice, that I lay no more Stress on this Evidence of *Berosus*, or of any other Author I shall quote, than barely such as the Nature of his Testimony, when duly and critically considered, fairly requires; and that is, of an Heathen Author of Repute in his Time, and unbiaſſed in Favour of the *Jewish* Religion. Under the same Limitations, I shall therefore proceed to produce the Testimony of *Artapanus*, with regard to this particular Fact of the *Israelites* having passed the Red Sea with Safety, under the Conduct of *Moses*, at the same Time that *Pharaoh* and his Host were drowned

(*k*) He died on the 13th of *November*, 1502.

in it: Whose Words are to this Effect, as they are quoted by *Eusebius* (1), for the Original is lost; that “the People of *Memphis*” reported, that *Moses* being well skilled in “the Situation of the Coasts, and the Ebbing and flowing of the Tides, took that Opportunity of carrying the *Israelites* over the Red Sea; but that the People of *Heliopolis* relate this Fact quite otherwise, viz. That *Moses* being divinely inspired, struck the Sea with a Rod, whereupon the Water gathering in a Heap on either Side, he led his Forces dry through the Sea: But, that when the *Egyptians* attempted to follow them, the Sea returning to its former Course, intirely overwhelmed them.” Whence, it appears, that *Artapanus* was diligent and inquisitive enough not to be content with common Reports, but that he had personally inquired about the Truth of this Fact, and the Manner of it, from the Inhabitants of the Country where it happened. And it is further to be remarked, that the People of *Heliopolis*, who lived in the very Place where *Moses*, according to the general Opinion of the Learned, performed all his Wonders; and whose Fellow-Citizens were themselves the Sufferers by this Event, should be more likely to know the Truth of this Affair, than the Inhabitants of *Memphis*, who lived on the other Side of the River *Nile*, and at a considerable Distance from the Scene of Action.

(1) Euseb. Præp. Evan. lib. ix. c. 27.

AND, indeed, the Truth of this Piece of History, as related by *Moses*, is wonderfully confirmed, by the Names which were given to several Parts of this Country, through which the *Israelites* passed in their Departure out of *Egypt*, which having borrowed their Denominations from this Transaction, retain them to this very Day: As for Example; *Moses* says, *And it came to pass, when Pharoah had let the People go, that GOD led them not towards the Land of Canaan, through the Way of the Land of the Philistines, although that was near; for GOD said, Lest peradventure the People repent when they see War, and they return to Egypt. And GOD led the People ABOUT, by the Way of the Wilderness of the Red Sea. And they took their Journey from Succoth, and encamped in Etham, in the Edge of the Wilderness. And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the Children of Israel, that they TURN and encamp before Pihahiroth, between Migdol and the Sad, over against Baal-zephon: before it shall ye encamp by the Sea; for Pharoah will say of the Children of Israel, They are entangled in the Land, the Wilderness hath shut them in (w).* Now, it is very remarkable, in going this round about Way from *Egypt* to *Canaan*, through the Wilderness of *Etham*, or the Wilderness of the Red Sea, that there is on the right Hand of the Road, near Midway between *Cairo* and the Red Sea, a long narrow Valley, between two rugged Chains of

(w) *Exod. xiii. 17, &c.*

Mountains, to get into which, the Traveller must *turn* out of the common Road, and which is to this Day called by the *Arab* Inhabitants of the Country, *Tiab beni Israel*, or *the Road of the Children of Israel* (*n*); and when the Traveller comes into this Road, he finds himself pent in on either Hand by impassible Mountains, and fronted at the End of it by the Red Sea; so that, in this Situation, well might *Pharaoh* say, *They are entangled in the Land, the Wilderness hath shut them in.* And, what compleatly shews, that this was the Place from which the *Israelites* escaped, by passing the Red Sea, is, that the Mountain, which borders on the Sea at the End of this Ridge of Mountains, is known to this Day by the Name of *Jibbel At-takab*, or *the Mountain of Deliverance*; and those Springs of Water which run over-against this Mountain, on the opposite Shore of the Sea, and near which Springs, if this Story be true, it is natural to think the *Israelites* must have landed, is known also to this Day, by the Name of the *Fountains of Moses*. And is it possible to account for all these Names being given to all these Places, in a Country, of which the *Israelites* were never the Masters, if these Matters of Fact, as they are thus related, had never happened?

BUT although no Heathen Authors, that I can find, except *Berosus* and *Artapanus*, mention the Destruction of *Pharaoh* and his Host

(*n*) Shaw's Travels, p. 346.

in the Red Sea ; yet several of them take Notice of the Departure of the *Israelites* out of *Egypt*. For *Justin* (a), the *Roman Historian*, in particular mentions from *Trogus Pompeius*, that when the *Egyptians* pursued the *Israelites*, who were conducted by *Moses*, they were forced by Tempests to return Home again. Which possibly may be true with Regard to the Rear of the *Egyptian* Army, who might have escaped ; and who, to be sure, saw with Horror the tempestuous Overflowings of the Sea, upon *Pharaoh* and his Host. And *Tacitus*, who is Lord *Bolingbroke's* favourite Author (b), in the fifth Book of his History, where he is writing expressly concerning the Origin of the *Jews*, says, some Authors tell us, that “ in the Reign of *Isis*, a Multitude of
 “ *Jews* left *Egypt*, and were conducted into a
 “ neighbouring Country, under the Command
 “ of *Hyerosolymus* and *Judæus*,——But, says
 “ he, in one Account Numbers of Writers concur,
 “ That when *Egypt* was over-run with a pesti-
 “ lential Disease, contaminating living Bodies,
 “ and very foul to behold, *Boccharis* the
 “ King, applying for a Remedy to the Oracle
 “ of *Jupiter Ammon*, was ordered to purge
 “ his Kingdom, and to remove into another
 “ Country, that Generation of Men, so detest-
 “ ed by the Deities. Hence, when they
 “ were all searched out, and brought together,
 “ and the Multitude were carried into the

(a) *Just.* lib. xxxvi. c. 1.(b) *Lett.* v. p. 161.

“ immense

“ immense Deserts, and there abandoned ;
 “ whilst all continued waiting under Astonish-
 “ ment and Despair ; *Moses*, one of these
 “ Exiles, exhorted them to entertain no Hopes
 “ of Relief from Gods or Men, since both
 “ by Gods and Men they had been forsaken ;
 “ but to trust in himself, as in a Leader sent
 “ from Heaven, and by whose Aid they
 “ should vanquish their present Misery and
 “ Distress. They assented, and utterly igno-
 “ rant of whatever was to befall them, began
 “ to journey on at Random. But nothing
 “ aggrieved them so sorely, as Want of Water.
 “ But when they were lying scattered over
 “ the Plains, ready to perish, a Herd of wild
 “ Asses, leaving their Pasture, climbed up a
 “ rocky Mountain, covered with a thick
 “ Wood. *Moses* followed them up, forming
 “ a Conjecture from the singular Verdure of
 “ the Herbage, and there discovered some
 “ large Springs. This proved their Solace
 “ and Relief ; and travelling for six Days
 “ without Intermision, on the seventh Day
 “ they gained a Settlement, by extermina-
 “ ting the Inhabitants. There they raised
 “ their City, there founded and dedicated
 “ their Temple.”

HERE then let us rest a while, after this
 long Quotation, and give me Leave to ask
 your Lordship, whether it is possible for the
Jews to expect from the *Heathens* a stronger
 Confirmation of the Truth of their History ?
 For is it not here allowed, that their Leader's

Name was *Moses*? that he pretended to a divine Commission; and that when they were in Distress for Water, he by his Prudence (either natural or supernatural) relieved them; and that they rested on the seventh Day? Had these Authors spoke more favourably of these Facts, they might have been suspected for being *Jews*, or for having *copied Moses*, as Lord *Bolingbroke* (q) expresseth it, and for borrowing their History out of the Bible; which would greatly have invalidated the Force of their Testimony. But when an Author *whose Judgments*, according to Lord *Bolingbroke*, *seldom deviate from Truth* (r), declares this to be the *concurrent Testimony of Numbers of Writers*, concerning Matters of Fact, which he was particularly engaged in the Enquiry after, in my humble Opinion a stronger Evidence cannot be desired.

AND now, my Lord, that I am upon this Subject, I hope you will indulge me in permitting me to go on with *Tacitus*, who says further, that “*Moses*, to insure the Subjection
“ of this Nation to himself for ever, esta-
“ blished religious Ordinances altogether new,
“ and opposite to those of all other Men and
“ Countries. Whatever we esteem holy is
“ with them prophane.—They refrain from
“ feeding on Swine, in Memory of their for-
“ mer Calamity; for that they had once
“ been infected and defiled with the same le-
“ prous Tumours and Eruptions, to which that

(q) Lett. iii. p. 90. (r) Lett. ii. p. 39.

“ Animal is subject.—It is said, that they
 “ choose to rest every seventh Day, because
 “ then they ended their Labours: Afterwards,
 “ through the Growth and Allurements of
 “ Laziness, every seventh Year was devoted
 “ to Sloth.”

AND pray, my Lord, does not this put you
 in Mind of what I mentioned to you in one
 of my former Letters, that the Institution of
 the *Jewish Sabbath*, was appointed not so much
 to remind them of the Creation of the World,
 as of their Deliverance from the *Egyptian*
 Bondage, and was therefore ordered to be ob-
 served on every seventh Day from that on
 which they first began their Departure out of
Egypt: For, says *Moses* unto them, *But the*
seventh Day is the Sabbath of the LORD thy
GOD; in it thou shalt do no Work.—And re-
 member, that thou wast a Servant in the Land
 of *Egypt*, and that the LORD thy GOD brought
 thee out thence; through a mighty Hand; and by
 a stretched-out Arm; therefore the LORD thy
 GOD commanded thee to keep the Sabbath (s).

BUT, says *Tacitus*, “ These Ceremonies, in
 “ whatever Way introduced, are by their An-
 “ tiquity maintained.—They instituted Cir-
 “ cumcision, on purpose to be distinguished
 “ by a particular Mark.—They choose to in-
 “ terr their Dead, rather than to burn them,
 “ according to the Usage of the *Egyptians*;
 “ with whom they concur in their Notions of
 “ an infernal World; but far different is their

(s) Deut. v. 14, 15.

“ Persuasion about Things celestial. The *E-*
 “ *gyptians* offer divine Worship to several brute
 “ Animals, to Images and the Works of Art :
 “ The *Jews* know but one Deity, to be con-
 “ ceived and adored by the Mind only. For
 “ prophane and unhallowed they hold all such
 “ as, out of perishing and mortal Materials,
 “ use to fashion their Gods after the Likeness
 “ of Men. They hold that the divine Being
 “ eternal and supreme, is incapable of all
 “ Change, incapable of ever ending. In their
 “ Cities, therefore, no Images are seen, so far
 “ are they from allowing such in their Tem-
 “ ples.”

Tacitus then proceeds to describe the Coun-
 try of *Judæa*, and to bring down the History
 of the *Jews* to his own Times. But what I
 have quoted out of him, seems to me to be
 sufficient to shew the concurrent Testimony
 of a Number of Heathen Writers, with the
 History of the *Jews*, as delivered in the Books
 of *Moses*. To which I shall only add a few
 Remarks on that Observation, which is here
 mentioned by *Tacitus*, that *these Ceremonies, in*
whatever Way introduced, are by their Antiquity
maintained; there not being in the Nature of
 Things, a stronger Proof of the Truth of any
 ancient Matter of Fact, than the continued and
 uninterrupted Practice of some ceremonial or
 ritual Observance, that was originally institu-
 ted as a Memorial of that Matter of Fact.
 And of Consequence it will follow, that the
 continued Observation of the *Sabbath*, of the
Passover,

Passover, of the *Feasts of Tents*, &c. among the *Jews*, is a living Proof that those Matters of Fact, in Memory of which they were instituted, had a real Existence some Time or other. And as *Tacitus* has mentioned that of *Circumcision*, there is something so remarkable in it, that I cannot help taking Notice of it. For, he says, it was instituted in order to preserve the *Jews* as a peculiar People, in being distinguished by a particular Mark. And *Moses* says not only the same Thing, but also, that God at the same Time that he appointed the Ordinance of Circumcision, commanded *Abraham* to change his Name from *Abram*, which signifies *Venerable Father*, to *Abraham*, which signifies *the Venerable Father of a Multitude*; saying, *For a Father of many Nations have I made thee. And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make Nations of thee, and Kings shall come out of thee (t).*

AND I defy the World to produce such another Instance. It is now near four thousand Years ago, since a Prophecy was published, concerning an old Man of an hundred Years of Age, that he should be exceedingly fruitful, and that Nations should come out of him; on which Account, he was ordered to circumcise himself and his Family, that by this Particularity, they might be distinguished from the rest of Mankind. And what is become of this Prophecy? How has the Event answered? Why! from that Day to this in a miraculous Manner. For, in less than five hundred Years

(t) Gen. xvii. 5. &c.

afterwards, one Branch of the Family alone, amounted to the Number of six hundred thousand Men, besides Women and Children (u). And if we were to compute the Number of *Jews* and *Mahometans* which are now upon the Face of this Earth, for these last are the Descendants from *Abraham* by *Ishmael*, and continue to circumcise themselves as well as the *Jews*, who are his Descendants by his Son *Isaac*; I do not know whether we should be much mistaken, if we said that they amounted to one tenth Part of all Mankind. But sure I am, that there is no such other Instance in the whole World, and that this may fairly be looked upon as a standing and living Miracle; appointed and continued by Almighty God; among other wise Reasons, as a Proof of the divine Inspiration of that History; in which this Prophecy is recorded.

I SHALL add one Attestation more, to the Truth of the *Mosaical* History: *Moses* informs us in the Book of *Exodus*, that in the Journeying of the Children of *Israel* from *Egypt* to *Mount Sinai*, they pitched in *Rephidim*; and there was no *Water* for the People to drink. And the People thirsted there for *Water*; and the People murmured against *Moses*. And *Moses* cried unto the LORD. And the LORD said unto *Moses*, Go on before the People, and take with thee of the Elders of *Israel*. Behold I will stand before thee there upon the Rock in *Horeb*; and thou shalt smite the Rock, and there shall come

(u) *Exod.* xii. 37.

Water out of it, that the People may drink. And Moses did so in the Sight of the Elders of Israel (w).

AND now what is become of this Stone? Hear, O ye Heavens, and give Ear, O Earth! It is still in being, still visible to the Eye, with the infallible Marks of this Miracle inscribed on every Side of it. And that Infidelity may no longer doubt of it, I shall here literally copy the Description that is given of it, by the learned Dr. *Shaw*, in his Travels to Mount *Sinai*. Where, after describing several Parts of Mount *Horeb*, he says, “ After we had
“ descended, with no small Difficulty, down
“ the western Side of this Mountain, we came
“ into the other Plain that is formed by it,
“ which is *Rephidim*, Ex. xvii. 1. Here we
“ still see that extraordinary Antiquity, the
“ Rock of *Meribah*, Ex. xvii. 6. which hath
“ continued down to this Day, without the
“ least Injury from Time or Accidents. It is
“ a Block of Granate Marble, about six Yards
“ square, lying tottering as it were, and loose,
“ in the Middle of the Valley, and seems to
“ have formerly belonged to Mount *Sinai* (x),
“ which hangs in a Variety of Precipices all
“ over this Plain. The Waters which gushed
“ out, and the Stream which floweth withal,
“ Ps. vii. 8, 21. have hollowed, across one Cor-
“ ner of this Rock, a Channel about two

(w) Exod. xvii. 1.

(x) The Reader should know that Mount *Sinai* is a Part of Mount *Horeb*.

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§ Inches

“ Inches deep, and twenty wide, appearing to
 “ be incruſted all over, like the Inſide of a
 “ Tea-kettle, that hath been long in Uſe.
 “ Beſides ſeveral moſſy Productions, that are
 “ ſtill preſerved by the Dew, we ſee all over
 “ this Channel, a great Number of *Holes*,
 “ ſome of them four or five Inches deep,
 “ and one or two in Diameter, the lively and
 “ demonſtrative Tokens of their having been
 “ formerly ſo many Fountains. It likewise
 “ may be further obſerved, that Art or Chance
 “ could by no Means be concerned in the
 “ Contrivance. For every Circumſtance points
 “ out a Miracle, and, in the ſame Manner
 “ with the Rent in the Rock of Mount *Cal-*
 “ *vary* at *Jeruſalem*, never fails to produce
 “ a religious Surprize in all that ſee it (y).”
 Which Account is confirmed by Dr. *Pocock*,
 who obſerved further, that within every one
 of the afore-mentioned *Holes*, there is an hori-
 zontal Crack, and in ſome, alſo, a Crack per-
 pendicularly down; which, conſidering the
 great Hardneſs of Granate, makes it impoſſi-
 ble for theſe Appearances to have been the
 Work of a Tool (z).

AGAIN, *Moses* ſays in the Book of *Numbers*,
 that, about thirty Years after this, *the Chil-*
dren of Iſrael abode in *Kadeſh*, and *Miriam*
died there, and was buried there. And there
was no Water for the Congregation. And they
gathered themſelves together, againſt Moſes and
againſt Aaron. And Moſes and Aaron went

(y) Shaw's Trav. p. 352. (z) Pocock's Trav. p. 148.

from the Presence of the Assembly, unto the Door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation, and they fell upon their Faces : And the Glory of the LORD appeared unto them, And the LORD spoke unto Moses, saying, Take the Rod, and gather thou the Assembly together, thou and Aaron thy Brother, and speak ye unto the Rock, before their Eyes, and it shall give forth its Water, and thou shalt bring forth to them Water out of the Rock. And Moses took the Rod.— And Moses lift up his Hand, and with his Rod he smote the Rock twice ; and the Waters came out abundantly, and the Congregation drank, and their Beasts also (a).

WHICH Rock is also in being, as well as the other, as appears from an original Manuscript Journal (b), now in my own Possession, which was written by the Prefetto of Egypt, from the Convent *de propaganda Fide*, A. D. 1722, giving an Account of his Travels from Grand Cairo to Mount Sinai, and back again, Wherein, after speaking of the afore-mentioned Rock, in the Valley of *Raphidim*, he says, in his Journey from Mount Sinai towards Tor, “ we passed by a large Rock on our Left
 “ Hand, in which, as in that other Rock
 “ which Moses struck with his Rod, appear
 “ from the Bottom to the Top, Openings
 “ where Water gushed out.” And now, what

(a) Numb. xx. 1—11.

(b) A Translation of this Journal, in a Letter to the Society of Antiquaries at London, is now in the Press, as before mentioned.

can Scepticism say, to these two, if not living, yet, standing Miracles in Attestation of the Truth of the *Mosaical* History? Which, in my humble Opinion, cannot possibly be considered in any other Light, than as two Tables of Testimony, written in Stone by the Finger of God.

AND now, my Lord, having thus vindicated the Authenticity of the Scriptures of the New Testament, and proved the Veracity of the *Mosaical* History, from the concurrent Testimony of *Heathen* Writers, and the additional Attestation of living and of standing Miracles, I shall, as soon as I have Leisure, revise those Letters which I did myself the Honour of writing to your Lordship formerly, in Vindication of the *Mosaical* Account of the Creation and Deluge, and shall give them to the World, as a proper Sequel to this Treatise.

Who am, &c.

F I N I S.

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