

AN  
INTRODUCTION  
TO THE  
CRITICAL STUDY AND KNOWLEDGE  
OF THE  
HOLY SCRIPTURES.

BY  
THE REV. THOMAS HARTWELL HORNE, B.D.  
OF ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

Edited by  
THE REV. THOMAS HARTWELL HORNE, B.D.  
(THE AUTHOR)  
THE REV. JOHN AYRE, M.A.  
OF GONVILLE AND CAIUS COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE;  
AND  
SAMUEL PRIDEAUX TREGELLES, LL.D.  
AUTHOR OF "REMARKS ON THE PRINTED TEXT OF THE GREEK NEW TESTAMENT," ETC.

ILLUSTRATED WITH MAPS AND FACSIMILES OF BIBLICAL MANUSCRIPTS.

*FOURTEENTH EDITION.*

IN FOUR VOLUMES—VOL. I.

LONDON:  
LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.  
1877.

work that contains the very eloquent eulogium alluded to, inveighs against Christianity with acrimony and rancour.<sup>1</sup>

The whole of the evidence concerning the much litigated passage of Josephus is now before the reader; who, on considering it in all its bearings will doubtless agree with the writer of these pages, that it is GENUINE, and consequently affords a noble testimony to the credibility of the facts related in the New Testament.

---

## No. VIII

### ALLEGED CONTRADICTIONS TO PHILOSOPHY AND THE NATURE OF THINGS.

[*Referred to in p. 404. supra.*]

THE Scriptures often refer to matters of fact, which have been asserted to be contradictory to philosophy and to the nature of things. A little consideration, however, will reconcile these alleged repugnances: for the Scriptures were not written with the design of teaching us natural philosophy, but to make known the revealed will of God to man, and to teach us our obligations to our great Creator and Redeemer. Therefore the sacred penmen might make use of popular expressions and forms of speech, neither affirming nor denying their philosophical truth. All proverbial sayings and metaphorical expressions introduced by way of illustration or ornament must be taken from received notions; but they are not, therefore, asserted in the philosophical sense by him who uses them, any more than the historical truth of parables and similitudes is supposed to be asserted. Further, to have employed philosophical terms and notions only, and to have rectified the vulgar conceptions of men concerning all the phenomena incidentally mentioned in the Scriptures, would have required a large system of philosophy, which would have rendered the Scriptures a book unfit for ordinary capacities, and for the greater part of those for whom it is designed. If, indeed, revelation had introduced any the best founded system of modern physics, or if the Almighty Creator had been pleased to disclose the counsels themselves of His infinite wisdom, what would have been the consequence? Philosophy would immediately have become matter of faith, and disbelief of any part of it a dangerous heresy. How many infidels would this or that

<sup>1</sup> Appendix to the Life of Dr. Lardner, Nos. IX. and X. 4to. vol. v. pp. xlv.—xlvi. Works, 8vo. vol. i. pp. clv.—clxviii. Vernet, *Traité de la Vérité de la Religion Chrétienne*, tome ix. pp. 1—236. Huet, *Démonstr. Evang.* vol. i. pp. 46—56. *Œuvres de Nonotte*, tom. vi. pp. 382—391. Colonia, *La Religion Chrétienne Autorisée par des Auteurs Païens* (Paris, 1826, 2nd edit.), pp. 360—379. In pp. 395—485. his editor, the Abbé Labouderie, has reprinted David Martin's elaborate Dissertation sur le Témoignage rendu à Jesus Christ par Joseph, dans les Antiquités Judaïques, liv. 18. chap. 4. Bretschneider's *Capita Theologiæ Judæorum Dogmaticæ, e Flavii Josephi Scriptis collecta* (8vo. Lipsiæ, 1812), pp. 59—64. See also the Testimony of Josephus ably vindicated in Mr. Bryant's *Vindiciæ Flavianæ, or a Vindication of the Testimony given by Josephus concerning our Saviour Jesus Christ* (London, 1780, 8vo.); and in Friedrich Hermann Schoedel's *Flavius Josephus de Jesu Christo testatus, Vindiciæ Flavianæ*. Lipsiæ, 1840, 8vo.

man's fanciful hypothesis concerning the appearances of things have called forth! Besides, if the Scriptures had been made the vehicle of a refined system of natural philosophy, such a theory of nature would have seemed as strange and incredible to most men as miracles do; for there is scarcely any thing which more surprises men, unacquainted with philosophy, than philosophical discoveries. How incredible do the *motion* of the earth and the *rest* of the sun appear to all but philosophers, who are now fully convinced of the reality of these phenomena, while the rising and setting of the sun are terms as much in use with those who hold the doctrine of the earth's motion as with others! In fact, if we would be understood, we must continue to make use of this expression; but excepting this one instance, which is and ever will be in use, according to the vulgar conceptions of all nations and languages, (notwithstanding any philosophical discoveries to the contrary,) there is nothing in the Scriptures that is not strictly consistent with the present notions of philosophy. The discoveries in Geology and the other Natural Sciences, which have been made in later times, concur in many instances to confirm and elucidate the Sacred Writings. A few examples will illustrate the preceding observations.

1. No fact recorded in the Sacred Writings has been a more favourite subject of cavil with modern objectors, than the Mosaic Account of the creation, related in the first chapter of the book of Genesis, which some have affirmed to be contradicted by geological investigations. But these investigations, it is now known, all prove the perfect harmony between Scripture and geology in reference to the history of creation.

That history "does not confine the works of God to six days. It speaks of at least two distinct periods of divine operation:—the one, when *God created the heavens and the earth*; and another quite distinct from this, when, on six successive days, He wrought certain wonderful operations, among which man was created. The stupendous act of creation, of bringing into actual existence the constituent elements of nature, was the event set forth in the first period; for it was in *the beginning* that *God created the heavens and the earth*." But that the six days' operation was the next or second work of God is neither said nor implied in the sacred narrative. What period elapsed between the first act of creation is not stated; and what wonderful operations were accomplished during that interval, are not recorded. Respecting both the intervening period and the intervening works, the Scriptures

---

<sup>1</sup> "These few first words of Genesis may be fairly appealed to by the geologist as containing a brief statement of the creation of the material elements, at a time distinctly preceding the operations of the first day. It is nowhere affirmed that God created the heavens and the earth in the *first day*, but in *the beginning*: this beginning may have been an epoch at an unmeasured distance, followed by periods of undefined duration, during which all the physical operations disclosed by geology were going on. The first verse of Genesis, therefore, seems explicitly to assert the creation of the universe, 'the heavens' including the sidereal systems; 'the earth' more especially specifying our own planet as the subsequent scene of the operations about to be described. No information is given as to events which may have occurred upon this earth, unconnected with the history of man, between the creation of its component matter, recorded in the first verse, and the era at which its history is resumed in the second verse. Nor is any limit fixed to the time during which these intermediate events may have been going on: millions of millions of years may have occupied the indefinite interval between the beginning, in which God created the heaven and the earth, and the evening or commencement of the Mosaic narrative." Dr. Buckland's *Bridgewater Treatise*, vol. i. pp. 20—24. second edition.

are silent, because it was not necessary to our welfare ; it being the object of revelation not to teach us the sciences, nor to set forth specially all the operations of the Almighty, but to teach us our relation to God and our duty towards Him. The distinct and independent form, therefore, in which the first verse of Genesis stands with respect to those which follow, and the entire silence of Scripture as to both the period and the operations, which might occur between the actual creation of the universe in the beginning and the more detailed operations during the six days, give a latitude for the supposition of intervening ages, and myriads of intervening operations, and thus perfectly harmonise with the deductions of geology. The Scriptures plainly declare that God is the author of all things ; and they teach us also the very recent existence of man and the present order of things. Geology confirms both these truths : and by unfolding to us successive revolutions, which transpired between the first fiat of creation and the more recent changes when man was brought into existence, abundantly refutes the atheistic notion of an eternal succession ; and adds a mass of important evidence to the fundamental truth of theology."<sup>1</sup>

Further, Moses represents the earth (Gen. i. 2.) as existing in a state of fluidity. A tradition of the same fact reached some of the ancient philosophers ; and Thales, in particular, one of the Seven Wise Men and the wisest of them all (as Cicero informs us), said that all things were made out of water.<sup>2</sup> Others after him taught the same doctrine<sup>3</sup> ; and is it in the least degree contradicted or disproved by modern discoveries ? On the contrary, is it not more and more confirmed and illustrated by them ? It is well known that if a soft or elastic globular body be rapidly whirled round on its axis, the parts of the poles will be flattened, and the parts on the equator, midway between the north and south poles, will be raised up. This is precisely the shape of our earth ; it has the figure of an oblate spheroid, a figure bearing a close resemblance to that of an orange. Now, if the earth was ever in a state of fluidity, its revolution round its axis must necessarily induce such a figure, because the greatest centrifugal force must necessarily be near the equatorial parts, and, consequently, there the fluid must rise and swell most. It has been demonstrated by experiment, that the earth is flattened at the poles and raised at the equator<sup>4</sup> ; and thus do the Scriptures and philosophy agree together and confirm each other. The Scriptures assert that the earth was in a state of fluidity ; and philosophy evinces that it must have been in such a state from its very figure.

"But the" veracity and "inspiration of Moses will appear more clear, if we proceed to observe his statement respecting the order of God's works. We find that, after the creation of the earth in the mass or chaotic state, the first effort of divine power was put forth in the production of light, then in the separation of land and water, then in the production of the vegetable creation, then of the sun and moon, thence proceeding to fishes, then to birds, afterwards to quadrupeds, and, finally to man. It might have been supposed that the question as to the precise succession of these different orders was one which never could be determined, nor even approached, and, therefore, that an impostor, or a mere speculator, would not have concerned himself about the order ; because he would never have suspected that it was a point on which his accuracy could possibly be tested. But, in the present case, the geologists have proceeded quite irrespective of Moses, many of them with views, in the first instance, far from friendly to him ; often, it is to be feared, with an intention to confront and overthrow his statements. But what are now the conclusions at which they have arrived by pursuing their own independent reasonings ? It is, that the order of creation in these various particulars must have been nearly, perhaps exactly,

<sup>1</sup> Cooke's *Theiotes*, p. 41. [London 1849], 8vo.

<sup>2</sup> Thales enim Milesius, qui primus de talibus rebus quæsit, aquam dixit esse initium rerum. Cicero de *Natura Deorum*, lib. i. c. 10. Edit. Davisii.

<sup>3</sup> The reader will find the sentiments of the philosophers above alluded to in the notes to Grotius de *Veritate*, lib. i. c. 16.

<sup>4</sup> This was first conjectured by Sir Isaac Newton, and confirmed by Cassini and others, who measured several degrees of latitude at the equator and at the north pole, and found that the difference perfectly justified Sir Isaac Newton's conjecture, and, consequently, confirmed the truth of the Mosaic narrative. The result of the experiments, instituted to determine this point, proved that the diameter of the earth at the equator is greater by more than *twenty-three miles* than it is at the poles.

as given in Genesis. Discoveries which it was little expected could ever be made, have pointed out singular coincidences with these particulars, and have thereby verified the scriptural account.

"There appears, in the Mosaic record, a remarkable statement in reference to light, which has often been appealed to by infidel objectors, as a decisive proof of the inaccuracy and self-contradiction of the writer. It is stated, in the first chapter of Genesis, that God said, on the first day, 'Let light be,' and yet it is distinctly represented afterwards, that the sun and moon were not created, or made to shine upon our earth, until the fourth day. It has long been deemed impossible to reconcile these apparently hostile and contradictory accounts. Yet it is difficult to conceive that an impostor would have hazarded a statement so obviously contrary to probability, so apparently chargeable with inconsistency, and so unlikely to gain credit with those who reasoned upon appearances, and judged only by their senses. But how singular is the fact, that the modern discoveries of astronomy have rendered it more than probable, that luminous bodies in the heavens first exist as a diffused and expanded element, before they become condensed into a regularly formed and compact mass. Dr. Buckland observes:—'It appears highly probable that light is not a material substance, but only an effect of undulations of ether; that this infinitely subtle and elastic ether pervades all space, and even the interior of all bodies; so long as it remains at rest, there is total darkness; when it is put into a peculiar state of vibration, the sensation of light is produced; this sensation may be excited by various causes, *e. g.* by the sun, by the stars, by electricity, combustion, &c. If, then, light be not a substance, but only a series of vibrations of ether, *i. e.* an effect produced on a subtle fluid, by the excitement of one or many extraneous causes, it can hardly be said, nor is it said, in Gen. i. 3., to have been *created*, though it may be literally said to be called into action.'<sup>1</sup> The discoveries and observations of the late Sir W. Herschel, continued through a long life, first made it probable that a process, similar to that only briefly stated by Moses, is continually going on in the remote parts of the heavenly system. Herschel's observations have been confirmed by his son, and many other eminent philosophers.

"Upon the admission of this theory we perceive a beautiful harmony with the systems of incipient organisation which the geologists maintain. A long antecedent preparation is shown to have been going on, both of the heavens and the earth, for the reception of the noblest and most richly endowed of all sensitive beings; the only one destined to bear, in an emphatic sense, 'the image of God.' Moses, then, is not to be understood as saying, that on the first of the six days' work the element of light was called into existence; for the previous existence of light, to some considerable degree, seems now unquestionable, from the facts which geology has established; the existence of vegetation, in many analogous species to our present vegetation, and the provision made, in the extinct races of animals, for the exercise of the faculty of vision, evidently demonstrating the same, or nearly the same relation between their optical organs and the element of light, as now prevails. But at the period referred to by the Mosaic statement, light may have attained that degree of condensation which was requisite to constitute it a defined orb, and the expression 'Let light be,' may express its more perfected and *recommencing* operation in the mundane system, after that cataclysm which, it is supposed, destroyed the previous creation of animal and vegetable tribes, and marked the commencement of the new and more perfect creation which was to accompany the introduction of the human race, and to indicate the adaptation of all things to their use and comfort. So far, then, we conceive the discoveries of our modern geology, though they modify in some degree our interpretation of the Mosaic account, are by no means hostile to it, but rather serve to illustrate and confirm it; and especially so, by demonstrating the absence of all facts that could clash with the Mosaic date of the present races of living beings. The declaration of Moses, that the earth in the beginning or prior to the first day, was without form and void, and that darkness was upon the face of the deep, seems both to imply that it had a previous existence, and that it had undergone an entire disruption of its surface and destruction of its organised contents, to make way for the new and higher order of things just about to be introduced;

<sup>1</sup> Bridgewater Treatise, vol. i. p. 32.

and thus it coincides with the whole theory of geology, and receives most valuable confirmation from its sublime discoveries."<sup>1</sup>

2. The Mosaic narrative of the DELUGE has also been a favourite theme of cavil among the opposers of revelation, as being contrary to the discoveries of scientific investigation; but with how little foundation, will be evident from a brief statement of facts.

"It will form a good presumptive proof that Moses is correct in this matter, if it shall appear that ethnical traditions generally, and still more if they do universally, commence with this fact."<sup>2</sup> On referring to pp. 155—157. of this volume, it will be seen how fully the Mosaic narrative is corroborated by the historical traditions of that event universally prevalent in the ancient world, and which are also found among modern nations of different degrees of civilisation. Now "this harmony among all nations could have arisen only from the fact itself. . . . There is no clashing testimony to be derived from the traditionary accounts either of the ancient or modern nations. They all embody but one story characteristically varied."<sup>3</sup> These traditions do not, indeed, prove that the Noachian deluge was geographically universal; but they do most clearly prove that it was universal ethnographically; in other words (as the best expositors of Scripture are now of opinion), that it was local though of great extent, and that it overwhelmed the universal or entire race of mankind by whom the world was then actually peopled, and concerning whom only Moses wrote. The language of Scripture certainly seems, at first sight, most unqualified. *The waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth; and all the high hills, that were under the whole heaven, were covered* (Gen. vii. 19.). "If such language be interpreted by the same rules which we should apply to a modern composition, it could no way be understood to teach a limited deluge, or a partial destruction. But in respect to this ancient record, two considerations are to be carefully weighed:—

(1.) "In the first place, the terms employed are not to be judged of by the state of knowledge in the nineteenth century, but by its state among the people to whom this revelation was first addressed. When the earth was spoken of to that people (the ancient Jews), they could not have understood it to embrace a much wider region than that inhabited by man, because they could not have had any idea of what lay beyond those limits. And so of the phrase *heaven*, it must have been co-extensive with the inhabited earth only. And when it was said that all animals would die by the deluge" [Gen. vi. 17.], "they could not have supposed the declaration to embrace creatures far beyond the dwellings of men, because they knew nothing of such regions. Why, then, may we not attach the same limited meaning to these declarations? Why should we suppose that the Holy Spirit used terms, adapted indeed to the astronomy and geography of the nineteenth century, but conveying only a false idea to those to whom they were addressed?"<sup>4</sup>

(2.) In the second place, "to those who have studied the phraseology of Scripture, there is no rule of interpretation more certain than this, that *universal terms* are often used to signify only a *very large* amount in number or quantity."<sup>5</sup> Thus we read in Gen. ii. 20., that *Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowls of the air, and to every beast of the field.*

"If we reflect for a moment, we perceive that this statement, when interpreted according to its letter, involves something like an impossibility; and what need was there to name any animals beyond those which were to serve man, and form the subject of his discourse? We are informed that in consequence of the murrain '*all the cattle of Egypt died*;' and yet some escaped; for it is afterwards mentioned that, by a subsequent plague, the Lord '*smote all that was in the field, both man and beast.*' (Exod. ix. 6. 25.) When it is averred that '*all countries,*' we can only under-

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Redford's Holy Scripture Verified, pp. 27—31. Second edition. The reader who is desirous of investigating the Harmony of Scripture with Geology is referred to Dr. Pye Smith's Relation between the Holy Scriptures and some parts of Geological Science, fourth or fifth edition; Dr. Hitchcock's Religion of Geology and its connected Sciences; Dr. King's Principles of Geology explained, and viewed in their relations to Revealed and Natural Religion; and especially Mr. Crofton's Genesis and Geology.

<sup>2</sup> Redford's Holy Scripture Verified, p. 80.

<sup>3</sup> Hitchcock's Religion of Geology, p. 119.

<sup>4</sup> Dr. Pye Smith's Geology and Scripture, p. 268. Fifth edition.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. p. 82.

stand that some countries 'came into Egypt to Joseph to buy corn' (Gen. xli. 57.); and a limited portion of the habitable world must be intended by that 'all the earth' (1 Kings iv. 34.) which sought to hear the wisdom of Solomon. Within a certain vessel Peter could only see some samples, when he is represented to have seen 'all manner of four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air.' (Acts x. 10, 11.) At the time the Epistle to the Colossians was written, most of the world was in heathen darkness, and in utter ignorance of the true religion; yet in that epistle Paul speaks of 'the gospel which was preached to every creature under heaven.' (Col. i. 23.) He could not mean to expose himself to the charge of palpable untruth. In all these, and many like cases, we readily and necessarily assign a modified sense to absolute terms. There is no reason why this principle of interpretation should be held to be inapplicable to the history of the deluge.

"The difficulties which beset the idea of a universal deluge, irrespectively of geological discoveries, have induced many expositors, both ancient and modern, to believe that it was limited.

"Even when we take the largest estimate of the size of the ark, its dimensions exclude the supposition that it contained all land animals, and the food necessary for their preservation. The number of species of terrestrial mammiferæ alone is, on a moderate calculation, about seven hundred; and as they entered the ark by pairs, this gives us fourteen hundred individuals. Some of the animals were of great bulk. There are two species of living elephants, probably seven kinds of rhinoceros, besides many gigantic species of the ox tribe, of deer, antelopes, &c. In addition, we have about four thousand species of birds, after deducting aquatic fowls. As to insects, there must be, according to the estimate of able naturalists, above two hundred thousand of them. Then we have to find place for a sufficiency of food. The carnivoræ would require an ample supply of prey. In some instances the sustenance needed to be of a kind which could scarcely be stored up, for how could the ant-eaters be provided with their ant-hills?

"All the difficulties are not involved in the question of adequate accommodation. America has its peculiar animals, so has New Holland, and the same observation applies to Africa and Asia, and even to their associated islands, Madagascar, Java, Borneo, &c. How were the animals to be transported from these regions and back again, and how were they to find their proper food and temperature by the way? Difficulties multiply upon us the longer we consider the subject. Many plants would be destroyed by a marine deluge, as certainly as animals, and would equally require to be sheltered from the salt water.

"It is true that all these obstructions could have been removed by miracles. A miracle could have brought the animals together, and afterwards restored them to their respective domains. A miracle could have reduced their dimensions, and made them small enough to be contained in the ark. . . . Another miracle could have supplied the animals with their proper food, or changed their mode of life altogether. But the supposition of such miracles is highly improbable, not to say irreverent. When we are confuting the prodigies of the heathen, we are accustomed to point out their want of adequate object—their apparent uselessness; and we ought not rashly to expose the miracles of Scripture to a similar reproach.

"If we adopt the principle which Scripture itself so unequivocally sanctions—that general terms may be used with a limited sense—the whole account is simple and consistent. A deluge of great extent inundated the dry land. In respect to men, whom it was designed to punish for their wickedness, it was universal, except-

<sup>1</sup> "If anything more were required to show the partial location of birds, the Galapagos archipelago might be mentioned: of twenty-six specimens shot by Mr. Darwin, twenty-five were peculiar, though bearing a strong resemblance to American types; some birds were even confined to particular islands; and the gulls, one of the most widely-dispersed families, are peculiar. But on this comparatively recent volcanic group, only 500 miles distant from the coast of America, everything is peculiar, birds, plants, reptiles, and fish, and though under the equator, all have sober covering. . . . The distribution of animals is guided by laws analogous to those which regulate the distribution of plants, insects, fishes, and birds. Each continent, and even different parts of the same continent, are centres of zoological families, which have always existed there, and nowhere else; each group being almost always specifically different from all others.—Physical Geography, by Mary Somerville, vol. ii. pp. 210. 218."

ing only Noah and his family, whom it pleased God to spare alive. Along with them were preserved such animals as were most useful to them, and such as were fitted to fulfil the purposes of Providence after the waters should have retired:"<sup>1</sup>—so that (as Dr. Pye Smith has most truly remarked), "we are exonerated from some otherwise insuperable difficulties in natural history and geology. If so much of the earth was overflowed as was occupied by the human race, both the physical and the moral ends of that awful visitation were answered."<sup>2</sup> This also was the opinion of the following eminent biblical scholars, all of whom wrote long before any question arose on the subject of the deluge in consequence of geological discussions, viz., Bishop Stillingfleet<sup>3</sup>, Matthew Poole<sup>4</sup>, Jean Le Clerc<sup>5</sup>, J. A. Dathe<sup>6</sup>, and J. G. Rosenmüller<sup>7</sup>; whose son, E. F. C. Rosenmüller, in his *Scholia* on Gen. vii., has given a condensed statement of the reasons, which induced the majority of continental biblical writers (to whose judgment he accedes), at the close of the eighteenth century, to conclude that the deluge did not extend to the entire globe.<sup>8</sup>

Decisive as the preceding facts and considerations are, it has been attempted (but in vain) to set aside the Mosaic narrative of the deluge by various objections drawn from physical observation. Thus,

[i.] It has been attempted to set aside the Mosaic narrative, by some marks of antiquity, which (it has been alleged) existed in the strata of the lava of Mount *Ætna*. Count Borch, towards the close of the eighteenth century, attempted to prove that mountain to be *eight thousand* years old, by the different strata of lava discovered therein: and in the vaults and pits, sunk to a great depth about *Ætna*, the Canon Ricupero affirmed that seven strata of lava had been found, each with a surface of soil upon it, which (he assumed) would require two thousand years to

<sup>1</sup> King's Principles of Geology explained and applied in their relations to Natural and Revealed Religion, pp. 85—90. Second edition.

<sup>2</sup> Smith's Relation between the Holy Scriptures and Geological Science, p. 271.

<sup>3</sup> The judgment of Bishop Stillingfleet (first published in 1663) is particularly valuable:—"I cannot see any urgent necessity, from the Scripture, to assert that the flood did spread itself over all the surface of the earth. That all mankind (those in the ark excepted) were destroyed by it is most certain, according to the Scriptures. When the occasion of the flood is thus expressed—*And God saw that the wickedness of man was great upon the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created, from the face of all the earth* (Gen. vi. 5. 7.)—it could not be, then, any particular deluge of so small a country as *Palestine* which is here expressed, as some have ridiculously imagined; for we find an *universal corruption* in the earth mentioned as the cause; an *universal* threatening upon all men for this cause, and afterwards an *universal destruction* expressed, as the effect of this flood. *And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, and every man. And every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground, both man and cattle, and the creeping things and the fowl of the heaven; and they were destroyed from the earth. And Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark.* (Gen. vii. 21. 23.) So, then, it is evident that the flood was universal as to mankind, but from thence follows no necessity at all of asserting the universality of it as to the globe of the earth, unless it be sufficiently proved that the whole earth was peopled before the flood, which I despair of seeing ever proved. And what reason can there be to extend the flood beyond the occasion of it, which was *the corruption of mankind?*" . . . "I grant, as far as the flood extended, all these" [the several kinds of beasts, creeping things, and fowls] "were destroyed; but I see no reason to extend the destruction of these beyond that compass and space of earth where men inhabited; because the punishment upon the beasts was occasioned by, but could not be concomitant with, the destruction of mankind. But (the occasion of the deluge being the sin of man, who was punished in the beasts that were destroyed for his sake, as well as in himself) where the occasion was not, as where there were animals and no men, there seems no necessity of extending the flood thither. Stillingfleet's *Origines Sacrae*, book iii. chap. iv. sect. 3. pp. 539, 540. London, 1663 (or pp. 337, 338. London, 1709; or Works, vol. ii. pp. 337, 338.)

<sup>4</sup> *Poli Synopsis Criticorum Sacrorum*, vol. i. col. 98. Londini, 1669.

<sup>5</sup> *Mosis Prophetæ Libri quinque . . . ex translatione Joannis Clerici, cum ejusdem . . . Commentario*, pp. 66—71. Amstelædami, 1735.

<sup>6</sup> *Pentateuchus*, a J. A. Dathio. pp. 60. 61. Halæ, 1781.

<sup>7</sup> J. G. Rosenmülleri *Antiqui prima Telluris Historia, a Mose Gen. i. descripta*, pp. 6. 10—12. 71. Ulmæ, 1776.

<sup>8</sup> E. F. C. Rosenmülleri *Scholia in Vetus Testamentum, Pars i.* pp. 92—94. Lipsiæ, 1795



accumulate upon each stratum; and, reasoning from analogy, he calculated that the lowest of these strata *must* have flowed from the mountain *fourteen thousand years ago!*

ANSWER. — Nothing can be more fallacious than this argument, if indeed it deserves to be dignified with the name of an argument. For, who knows what causes have operated to produce volcanic eruptions at very unequal periods? Who has kept a register of the eruptions of any burning mountain for one thousand years, to say nothing of three or four thousand? Who can say that the strata of earth were formed in equal periods? The time for the formation of the uppermost and last is probably not known, much less the respective periods of the lower strata. One might have been formed in a year, another in a century. The philosophers above mentioned are wholly ignorant of the cause of any one of these earthy strata. They build one hypothesis upon another, and to believe their whole argument requires stronger faith than to believe a miracle. Faith in a miracle rests upon testimony; but faith in their scheme must be founded on an extreme desire to prove a falsehood. But the analogy, on which it has been attempted to build the hypothesis just mentioned, is contradicted by another analogy, which is grounded on more certain facts.

Ætna and Vesuvius resemble each other in the causes that produce their eruptions, in the nature of their lavas, and in the time necessary to mellow them into soil fit for vegetation. This being admitted, which no philosopher will deny, the Canon Recupero's analogy will prove just nothing at all. We can produce an instance of *seven* different lavas, with *interjacent strata of vegetable earth*, which have flowed from Mount Vesuvius within the space, not of *fourteen thousand*, but of somewhat less than *fourteen hundred years*; for then, according to our analogy, a stratum of lava may be covered with vegetable soil in about *two hundred and fifty years*, instead of requiring two thousand for that purpose. The eruption of Vesuvius, which destroyed Herculaneum and Pompeii, is rendered still more celebrated by the death of the elder Pliny, recorded in his nephew's letter to Tacitus. This event happened A. D. 79; but we are informed by unquestionable authority<sup>1</sup> that the matter which covers Herculaneum is not the produce of one eruption only, for there are evident marks, that the matter of *six* eruptions has taken its course over that which lies immediately over the town, and which was the cause of its destruction: and these strata are either of lava or of burnt matter, *with veins of good soil between*. Whence it is evident, with what ease a *little attention* and *increase of knowledge* may remove a great difficulty.<sup>2</sup>

[ii.] "The size of the ark has been alleged as quite insufficient to contain the animals and their food. But this objection overlooks the statement that these animals were brought together by miracle; that the ark was prepared under Divine direction; that though the number of animals is large, yet by far the greater part of them are comparatively small; that in a state of confinement in the ark they would require much less food than when free; that many of them would be in a torpid state, and all of them so influenced by the mighty power of the Creator as to meet the circumstances in which they were placed. Miracle is alleged to account for the whole. Whether all the species of animals now known were there or not cannot be determined by any calculations of the capacity of the ark; since no one can say how many it could or could not contain when the Creator interfered to make it his instrument for preserving both man and the animals."<sup>3</sup>

3. As the same causes must always produce the same effects it is objected as an absurdity in the Mosaic history (Gen. ix. 13.) to speak of the rainbow as formed *after* the flood, and as the sign of a covenant *then* made; because, as that phenomenon results from the immutable laws of the refraction and reflection of the sun's rays on drops of falling rain, it is certain that the rainbow must have been occasionally exhibited from the beginning of the world.

<sup>1</sup> Sir W. Hamilton's Remarks on the Nature of the Soil of Naples and its Vicinity, in the Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society, vol. lxi. p. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Bp. Watson's Apology for Christianity, in reply to Gibbon, pp. 255—263. London, 1776; or pp. 151—156. of the 8vo. edition. London, 1806.

<sup>3</sup> Redford's Holy Scripture Verified, p. 95

ANSWER.—But the original does not say that God set the rainbow in the clouds. The word translated, *I do set my bow in the cloud*, may be (as indeed it ought to be) rendered, with great propriety, *I do appoint my bow in the cloud, to be a sign or token of the covenant between me and the earth*; and a fit sign it certainly was, because the patriarch knew that there never was, nor ever can be, a rainbow, but when there is sunshine as well as rain. “What purpose then was served by the rainbow? The very best purpose, so well expressed by the sacred historian, when he represents God as saying, *This is the token of the covenant, which I will make between me and you, and every living creature that is with you, FOR PERPETUAL GENERATIONS*; for natural and inanimate objects,—such as pillars and heaps of stones,—were considered as tokens, and even a kind of witnesses, in the contracts of all the civilised nations of remote antiquity. Of this we have several instances in the books of the Old Testament, but surely not one so apposite as that of the rainbow. Noah and his sons undoubtedly knew,—either by the science of the antediluvian world, or by the immediate teaching of God,—that the rainbow is a physical proof, as long as it is seen, that a general deluge is not to be dreaded: and therefore, if their minds, filled with terror and astonishment at what they had escaped, should ever have become fearfully apprehensive of a future deluge, the sight of the bow would immediately dissipate their fears. The science of Noah and his sons, which taught them the physical connection of the sign, and the thing signified, was soon lost, with other truths of greater importance, when their descendants were scattered in small tribes over the face of the whole earth: but the remembrance of the flood, as well as some confused notions of the rainbow being a kind of information from the gods to men, appear to have been preserved by tradition among all nations: and thousands of pious Christians, without knowing any thing of the physical causes of the rainbow, consider it at this day as a token, and even a pledge (as in truth it is), that the earth will not again be destroyed by a deluge.”<sup>1</sup>

4. If all mankind sprang from Noah, the second parent of the human race, it is impossible to account for the origin of the *blacks*, if the patriarch and his wife were *white*.

ANSWER.—But this difference in colour does not invalidate the narrative of Moses: for it has been ascertained that the influence of climate, and the local circumstances of air, water, food, customs, &c. are sufficient to account for the dissimilarity which is discovered in the appearance of different nations. If *dogs*, taken to the frigid zone, grow shaggy; and if *sheep*, transported to the torrid zone, exchange their wool for hair, why may not the human species gradually partake of the influence of climate? as experience shows that it does.<sup>2</sup>

Man was formed to reside in all climates. “Man,” says the eminent naturalist, Buffon, who was by no means a bigot in favour of the Scripture history, “though *white* in Europe, *black* in Africa<sup>3</sup>, *yellow* in Asia, and *red* in America, is still the same animal, tinged only with the colour of the climate. Where the heat is exces-

<sup>1</sup> Bp. Gleig's edition of Stackhouse's History of the Bible, vol. i. p. 204. note.

<sup>2</sup> The testimony of M. De Pages, who himself experienced this change, is particularly worthy of notice. In his Travels round the World, during the years 1767—1771, speaking of his passage over the Great Desert, he says, “The Arabs, who frequent the middle of the Desert, have their hair almost frizzled, fine, and of the same nature as that of the negroes” [that is, woolly]. “During the short period of my passage, my own hair became more dry and delicate; and, receiving no nourishment for want of perspiration, showed a tendency to assume the same frizzled appearance. Might not the frizzled appearance, the entire failure of moisture, and the excessive heat of the climate which occasioned it, have been the chief cause of that frizzling? My blood was become extremely dry, and my complexion discoloured but little from that of a Hindoo or an Arab.” *Voyages autour du Monde*, tom. i. p. 307. Paris, 1782.

<sup>3</sup> *Black* is not the colour of the negro when first born. It is a remarkable fact that the negro infant comes into the world *white*, only with a *yellowish* tinge, and that it becomes progressively darker, until the tenth day, when it is perfectly *black*. Caillié, *Voyage à Tombuctoo*, tom. i. p. 65. Paris, 1830.

sive, as in Guinea and Senegal, the people are perfectly black; where less excessive, as in Abyssinia, the people are less black; where it is more temperate, as in Barbary and Arabia, they are brown; and where mild, as in Europe and in Lesser Asia, they are fair." In further corroboration of the influence of climate on the human complexion, we may remark, that there is a colony of Jews, who have been settled at Cochin on the Malabar coast from a very remote period, of which they have lost the memory. Though originally a fair people from Palestine, and from their customs preserving themselves unmixed, they are now become as black as the other Malabarians, who are scarcely a shade lighter than the negroes of Guinea, Benin, or Angola. At Ceylon, also, the Portuguese, who settled there only a few centuries ago, are become *blacker* than the natives: and the Portuguese, who settled near the Mandingoes, about three hundred years since, differ so little from them as to be called *negroes*, which they resent as a high indignity.

In short, to adopt the memorable conclusion of the indefatigable philosopher above cited (who deduced it after a minute inquiry from a great number of the best attested observations):—"From every circumstance proof may be obtained, that mankind are *not* composed of species essentially different from each other; that, on the contrary, there was originally but one individual species of men, which, after being multiplied and diffused over the whole surface of the earth, underwent various changes, from the influence of climate, from the difference of food and the mode of living, from epidemical disorders, as also from the intermixture, varied *ad infinitum*, of individuals more or less resembling each other; that these alterations were at first less considerable, and confined to individuals; that afterwards, from the continued action of the above causes becoming more general, more sensible, and more fixed, they formed varieties of the species; and that these varieties have been and still are perpetuated from generation to generation, in the same manner as certain disorders and certain maladies pass from parents to their children."<sup>1</sup> Among all the diversified tribes who are endowed with reason and speech, "we contemplate the same internal feelings, appetencies, aversions; the same inward convictions, the same sentiments of subjection to invisible powers, and more or less fully developed—of unaccountableness or responsibility to unseen avengers of wrong and agents of retributive justice, from whose tribunal men cannot even by death escape. We find everywhere the same susceptibility, though not always in the same degree of forwardness or ripeness or of improvement, of admitting the cultivation of these universal endowments, of opening the eyes of the mind to the more clear and luminous views which Christianity unfolds, of becoming moulded to the institutions of religion and civilised life: in a word the same inward mental nature is to be recognised in all the races of men. When we compare this fact with the observations, which have heretofore been fully established, as to the specific instincts and separate physical endowments of all the distinct tribes of sentient beings in the universe, we are entitled to draw confidently the conclusion, that all human races are of one species and one family."<sup>2</sup> To this conclusion drawn from physiology we may add the corroborative facts, that philology shows, that "there is a remarkable affinity between the words of different languages; thus indicating that all language was originally one:" and that "it has been shown by traditions which universally prevail, that there is an identity in the belief of all nations in events, which happened to their ancestors in the earlier periods of the world's history; such, for instance, as the deluge and the offering of sacrifices to propitiate the Deity; while such traditional agreements are utterly irreconcilable with the doctrine of the diversity of origins."<sup>3</sup>

5. The peopling of America and of several islands, in which mischievous terrestrial animals are found, has also been urged as an 'ob-

<sup>1</sup> Buffon's Nat. Hist. vol. i. p. 291.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Fritchard's Natural History of Man, pp. 545, 546. second edition; which treatise contains a very full discussion of the unity of the human race. But the most comprehensive work on this important subject is Dr. Smyth's Unity of the Human Races proved to be the Doctrine of Scripture, Reason, and Science. (Edinburgh, 1851.)

<sup>3</sup> Gamble's Paul the Apostle, p. 105.

jection against the universality of the deluge, and consequently against the credibility of the Mosaic history.

ANSWER. — Modern geographical discoveries have removed the weight of this objection. The straits which divide North America from Tartary, are so narrow as to admit a very easy passage from one continent to the other; and it is not impossible that they might even have been united by an isthmus, which the combined influence of time and the waves has demolished. The resemblance found between the inhabitants of the opposite sides of that passage and their uncivilised state and rude ignorance of the arts, prove them to have had one common origin.<sup>1</sup> So fully convinced was M. Buffon of this fact, long before the last and most important discoveries on the subject<sup>2</sup>, that he declares he has “no doubt, independently of every theological consideration, that the origin of the Americans is the same with our own.”<sup>3</sup>

The parts of the new world which are disjoined from the others, and which have been represented by ignorance and infidelity as vast continents, are by the most recent and complete researches reduced to a few inconsiderable islands<sup>4</sup>; whose inhabitants were, in all probability, conveyed to their present settlements from islands<sup>5</sup> adjacent to the continent of Asia, from which continent all the inhabitants of the new world (excepting the Esquimeaux and a few other American tribes that are evidently descended from the Greenlanders) have migrated. Nor can it excite surprise, that we are unacquainted with the *circumstances* of their migration, when we consider that this event probably happened at no great distance from the time when our own ancestors set out from the same regions, to people the western world, by an opposite route.<sup>6</sup>

6. The declaration of Moses in Deut. i. 10. that God had multiplied the Israelites as the *stars of heaven for multitude*, has been ridiculed, because to the apprehension of the objector “the number of the stars is infinite.”

Let us, however, consider this subject. How many in number are the stars which appear to the naked eye? For it is that which appears to the naked eye which is to govern us in replying to this objection; for *God brought Abraham forth abroad*, — that is, out of doors, and *bade him look towards heaven* (Gen. xv. 5.), not with a telescope, but with his naked eyes. Now, let the objector go forth into the open air, and look up in the brightest and most favourable night, and count the stars. Not more than 3010 stars can be seen by the naked eye in both the northern and southern hemispheres; but at the time alluded to, the Israelites, independently of women and children, were more than six hundred thousand. Suppose, however, we even allow, from the late discoveries made by Sir Wm. Herschel and others with

<sup>1</sup> The Esquimeaux resemble their neighbours on the north-west extremity of Europe; and the same resemblance is also found to subsist between the inhabitants of the north-east of Asia, and both the Americans opposite to them, and all the other Americans, except those few tribes which, together with the Esquimeaux, appear to have descended from the Greenlanders. Robertson's History of America, vol. ii. pp. 45—49.

<sup>2</sup> Those of Captains Cook and King. The latter had an opportunity of seeing, *at the same moment*, the coasts of Asia and America. Cook and King's Voyages, vol. iii. p. 244.

<sup>3</sup> Buffon's Nat. Hist. vol. i. p. 229.

<sup>4</sup> New Holland, though very considerable in size, is not at all so in its population. It was, however, known in part before the other islands above referred to.

<sup>5</sup> The inhabitants of these islands are supposed to have been all derived from the Malays. See the Introduction to Cook and King's Voyages, vol. i. pp. lxxi.—lxxiii. 4to., and also pp. 116—202.

<sup>6</sup> Dr. Evelyng's Bampton Lectures, p. 282. Respecting the peopling of North America, the reader may consult the researches of Dr. Robertson, in his History of America, vol. ii. pp. 25—49., and the Abbé Clavigero, in his History of Mexico, translated by Mr. Cullen, vol. ii. dissertation i. There are also some valuable hints on the origin of the North American Indians, in “A Discourse on the Religion of the Indian Tribes of North America, delivered before the New York Historical Society, by Samuel Farmer Jarvis, D.D.” New York, 1820. 8vo.

telescopes, which have magnified between thirty-five and thirty-six thousand times, that there *may be* seventy-five millions of stars visible by the aid of such instruments, which is the highest calculation ever made; yet still the divine word stands literally true. Matthew says (i. 17.) that the generations from Abraham to Christ were forty-two. Now we find at the second census, that the fighting men among the Hebrews amounted to 600,000; and the Israelites, who have never ceased to be a distinct people, have so multiplied, that if the aggregate number of them who ever lived could be ascertained, it would be found far to exceed the number of all the fixed stars taken together.<sup>1</sup>

7. The speaking of Balaam's ass (Numb. xxii. 28.) has been a standing jest to infidels in almost every age.

If the ass had opened her own mouth and reproved the rash prophet, we might well be astonished. Maimonides and others have imagined that the matter was transacted in a vision. But it is evident, from the whole tenor of the narration, as well as from the declaration of an inspired writer (2 Pet. ii. 14—16.), that it is to be understood as a literal narrative of a real transaction. The ass, it has been observed, was enabled to utter such and such sounds, probably as parrots do, *without* understanding them; and, whatever may be said of the construction of the ass's mouth, and of the tongue and jaws being so formed as to be unfit for speaking, yet an adequate cause is assigned for this wonderful effect, for it is expressly said, that *the Lord opened the mouth of the ass*. The miracle was by no means needless or superfluous: it was very proper to convince Balaam that the mouth and tongue were under God's direction, and that the same divine power which caused the dumb ass to speak contrary to its nature, could make him, in like manner, utter blessings contrary to his inclination. The fact is as consonant to reason as any other extraordinary operation; for all miracles are alike, and equally demand our assent, if properly attested. The giving of articulation to a brute is no more to the Deity than the making of the blind to see or the deaf to hear. And the reputed baseness of the instrument of which God was pleased to make use, amounts merely to this, that (as the apostle observes on another occasion) *God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise*. (1 Cor. i. 27.) There was, therefore, a fitness in the instrument used; for the more vile the means were, the fitter they were to confound the unrighteous prophet.

8. It has been affirmed that the circumstance of the sun and moon standing still, which is recorded in Joshua x. 12., is contrary to philosophy.<sup>2</sup>

"It is pitiful to say that the sun could not stand still because it does not move; for the history speaks according to the ideas of the age, and was intended to record simply the appearance to the eye, to which the language of men, whether philosophers or peasants, is still conformed in common conversation. Whether the effect was produced by a supernatural refraction, or whether the motion of the earth around its axis was suspended, we do not possess the means of determining."<sup>3</sup> In either case there was a miracle; and as a miracle the sacred historian expressly relates this event. It is, therefore, impossible to account for it on philosophical principles.

<sup>1</sup> Dr. A. Clarke's Commentary, on Deut. i. 10.

<sup>2</sup> An ingenious French philosopher, who has consecrated his geological researches to the elucidation and defence of the sacred volume, has endeavoured to show that the double day in Palestine, caused by the miracle related in Josh. x., must have produced a double night in Europe. He considers that the double night, so frequently mentioned by the Latin poets, and connected with the birth of Hercules, was identical with this miracle, which is thus collaterally confirmed by the testimony of ancient profane writers. Chaubard, *Éléments de Géologie*, pp. 321—327. Paris, 1833. 8vo.

<sup>3</sup> Dr. Dick's Lectures on Theology, vol. i. p. 178. The reader, who is desirous of reading the different opinions of learned men, on the subject of this miracle, is referred to Mr. Hewlett's note on Josh. x. 12. (Comment. on the Bible, vol. i.), and to an original and elaborate note of Dr. A. Clarke on the same passage.

The object of this miracle was of the most important and impressive nature. The sun and the moon, the two principal gods of the idolatrous heathen nations, were commanded to yield miraculous obedience to the chief servant of the true God; and thereby contribute to the more effectual conquest of their own worshippers. With respect to the objections to the probability of this miracle, which originate in a consideration of its supposed consequences, it is justly observed by Bishop Watson, that the "machine of the universe is in the hand of God: he can stop the motion of any part, or of the whole, with less trouble than either of us can stop a watch!" How absurd, then, are the reasonings of those men who believe in the existence of an omnipotent God, yet deny the possibility of the exertion of his power in other ways than those which are known to their limited experience!<sup>1</sup>

9. The beautiful poetical passage in Judges v. 20. has been stigmatised as a "species of Jewish rant and hyperbole."

A tempest meeting the enemy in the face discomfited them; and the torrent Kishon was so suddenly swelled by the rain (which common opinion ascribed to the planets) as to sweep away the greater part of Sisera's army in its precipitate flight. Hence the poetess calls it the *first* or the *prince* of torrents. The whole is exceedingly poetical, notwithstanding the censure of the opposers of revelation, whose cavils are characterised not more by want of taste than by wilful ignorance and malignity of disposition.

10. The number of cattle sacrificed at the dedication of Solomon's temple, has been objected to as incredible, viz. one hundred and twenty thousand sheep, and two and twenty thousand oxen. (1 Kings viii. 63.)

To this it may be replied, first, that all these were not offered in one day, much less on one altar. This solemn meeting continued fourteen days, viz. seven at the feast of tabernacles, and seven at the feast of dedication (1 Kings viii. 65.); and because the brazen altar was too little to receive the burnt-offerings, Solomon, by special permission from God, *hallowed the middle of the court*, that is, ordered other altars to be erected in the court of the priests, and perhaps in other places, which were to serve *only* during that solemnity, when such a vast number of sacrifices was to be offered. And, secondly, it is by no means improbable that there were some neighbouring princes, who paid Solomon their tribute in cattle, and who might supply victims for the extraordinary sacrifice above referred to. See an instance of this kind in 2 Kings iii. 4.

The great number of beasts daily required in Solomon's kitchen (1 Kings iv. 23.), will by no means be found incredible, when we compare it with the accounts of the daily consumption of oriental courts in modern times, and the prodigious number of servants of an Asiatic prince. Thus, Tavernier, in his description of the seraglio, said, that five hundred sheep and lambs were daily required for the persons belonging to the court of the sultan.<sup>2</sup>

11. It is urged that the treasures, mentioned in 1 Chron. xxix. 4—7. as amassed by David for the purpose of erecting a temple, are incredible; and that it was impossible that he could collect such a sum, which has been computed by M. le Clerc at eight hundred millions sterling, and which is thought to exceed all the gold of all the princes now upon earth put together.

But it is possible that there may be a corruption in the numbers; we are not so well acquainted with the weights mentioned, as to be able to ascertain with precision the then comparative value of the precious metals, nor what resources for

<sup>1</sup> Townsend's Arrangements of the Old Testament, vol. i. p. 463. note.

<sup>2</sup> Burdett's Oriental Literature, vol. i. p. 399.

obtaining them (now lost) there were at that time. Besides, it is probable that the talent, mentioned in the passage above cited, was the Syriac talent; according to which the amount collected by David would be 7,087,791<sup>1</sup>. And in an age like that in which David lived, when kings and princes were accustomed to hoard up vast quantities of gold and silver (as oriental monarchs still do) it is by no means improbable that David and his princes, in their successful wars with the Philistines, Moabites, and Amalekites, and with the kings of Zobah, Syria, and Edom, might collect gold and silver to the above amount.

12. The circumstance of Elijah being fed by ravens (1 Kings xvii. 4.) has excited the profane scoffs of unbelievers, as an incredible thing; and they have attempted to be witty in their inquiries whence these unclean birds could have procured food for the prophet.

It has been attempted to get rid of this miracle, by asserting that the prophet was not fed by ravens, but by the Orbim or inhabitants of Orbo, a small town in the vicinity of Bethshan. But the following arguments will show that the received interpretation is correct:—It is expressly said that Elijah *drank of the brook Cherith*. (1 Kings xvii. 6.) “Had strangers brought him food, they might as well have furnished him with water; and thus it would not have been necessary for him to have removed when the brook was dried up. Again, Ahab (who had sent messengers in pursuit of the prophet among the neighbouring kingdoms and nations) took an oath of them that they were ignorant of the place of his concealment (1 Kings xviii. 10.); and some one out of a tribe, we may suppose it probable, would have delivered him up, seeing that they could gain nothing by his concealment, and had every thing to fear from detection. If we come to verbal criticism, we find that the word is precisely the same with that, which is most properly rendered ‘raven’ in Gen. viii. 7. when Noah sends a bird out of the ark.”<sup>2</sup> The Almighty, doubtless, could have caused food to have been conveyed to Elijah in any other way, but he chose to send it by these rapacious birds for the greater illustration of his absolute command over all creatures, and also to give us full evidence that he is able to succour and preserve, by the most improbable means, all those who put their trust in him. We need go no further to inquire whence the ravens had this food; it is enough if we believe that they brought it to Elijah; for then we must allow, that they acted by divine direction, and that the food was of God’s providing.

13. There is no contradiction between Job xxvi. 7. and Psal. xxiv. 2. and civ. 5.

In the first-cited passage, Job says that God *hangeeth the earth upon nothing*; and in Psal. xxiv. 2. it is said that Jehovah *hath founded the earth upon the seas, and established it upon the floods*; and in Psal. civ. 5. that he *hath laid the foundations of the earth that it should not be removed for ever*. All which expressions are philosophically correct; for the foundation of a pendulous globe can be nothing but its centre, upon which all the parts lean and are supported by it; and the waters continually flowing through the bowels and concavities of the earth, from the depths of the sea, by a constant course and circulation, constitute an abyss in the lowermost parts of the earth. *All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full: unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again*. (Eccles. i. 7.) So that, with great propriety of speech, the terraqueous globe is said to hang upon nothing, and the earth to be founded upon the seas, and established upon the floods, and (Psal. cxxxvi. 6.) *to be stretched out above the waters*.<sup>3</sup>

14. The *unicorn* 𐤇𐤓 (REIM), described in Job xxxix. 9. and alluded

<sup>1</sup> The reader will find some elaborate and interesting calculations on the subject, in Dr. Brown’s *Antiquities of the Jews*, vol. i. pp. 149—153.

<sup>2</sup> Myers’s *Hulsean Essay on the Futility of Attempts to represent the Miracles recorded in Scripture as Effects produced in the ordinary Course of Nature*, p. 93. Cambridge, 1831. 8vo.

<sup>3</sup> Jenkin’s *Reasonableness of the Christian Religion*, vol. ii. p. 236.

to in several other passages of Scripture, is the common rhinoceros, which is known, in Arabia, by the name of *reim* unto this day.

15. The circumstance of Jonah being in the belly of a *whale* (Jonah i. 17. ; Matt. xii. 40.) has been affirmed to be contrary to matter of fact; as the throat of a whale, it is well known, is capable of admitting little more than the arm of an ordinary man; and these fish are never found in the Mediterranean Sea.

But Bochart has long since proved that a great fish of the *shark* kind is here intended. It is a well attested fact that many of the shark species are not only of such a size and form as to be able, without any miracle, to swallow a man whole, but also that men have been found entire in their stomachs; and, since it is a fact well known to physiologists, that the stomach has no power over substances endued with vitality, this circumstance will account in part for the miraculous preservation of the prophet Jonah in the belly or stomach of the great fish, in which he was for three days and three nights. Bochart is further of opinion, that the particular species of shark which swallowed the prophet Jonah was the *squalus carcharias* or white shark, for its voracity termed *lamia* by some naturalists, and which is a native of the seas in hot climates, where it is the terror of navigators.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Rae Wilson the day after a violent storm, exactly in the same portion of the sea where the ship with Jonah on board encountered the tempest, observed several very "great fishes" sporting about the ship, some of which could not be less than sixty feet in length, and appeared as long as the vessel itself on board of which he was embarked.<sup>2</sup>

The preceding are the passages of Scripture, which have been principally excepted against, as being contrary to philosophy and the nature of things; and yet, when all the circumstances of them are properly considered, there is nothing in them which may not be accounted for, and interpreted, on the principles of modern philosophy.

<sup>1</sup> Bocharti Opera, tom. iii. col. 742. *et seq.* Bochart's opinion has been adopted by Mr. Parkhurst (Greek Lexicon, article *Κηρος*), and is now generally received. See also Scripture illustrated by Natural History, &c. Expository Index, p. 52. and the Fragments annexed to the quarto edition of Calmet's Dictionary, No. cxlv. p. 103. Bishop Jebb, however, has urged several considerations (which are too long for insertion here, and the force of which it would impair to abridge), to show that it probably was a whale, into the cavity of whose mouth Jonah was taken. (Sacred Literature, pp. 178—180.) The observations which he has adduced from the natural history of the whale are confirmed by the enterprising and experienced whale-fisher, Captain Scoresby; who states, that when the mouth of the *Balæna Mysticetus*, or Great Common Whale, is open, "it presents a cavity as large as a room, and capable of containing a merchant ship's jolly-boat full of men, being six or eight feet wide, ten or twelve feet high (in front), and fifteen or sixteen feet long." (Scoresby's Account of the Arctic Regions, vol. i. p. 455.) The only objection that can be offered to Dr. Jebb's opinion is, that there is no authentic instance on record of whales being found in the Mediterranean Sea.

<sup>2</sup> Travels in the Holy Land, &c. third edition, vol. i. pp. 14, 15. London, 1831.



## No. IX.

## ON THE CONTRADICTIONS TO MORALITY, FALSELY ALLEGED TO EXIST IN THE SCRIPTURES.

[Referred to in pages 399. and 404. *suprà*.]

NOTWITHSTANDING it is generally admitted that the Holy Scriptures breathe a spirit of the purest and most diffusively benevolent morality; yet there are some passages which have been represented as giving countenance to immorality and cruelty. But these, when duly examined, will be found perfectly in unison with the purest principles of morality. The wide difference which subsists between ancient and modern manners, if fairly considered, would alone be a sufficient reply to the indecencies, which are asserted to exist in the Bible.

Further, the characters and conduct of men, whom we find in all other respects commended in the Scriptures, are in some respects faulty; but these are, in such instances, by no means proposed for our imitation, and, consequently, give no sanction whatever to immorality: for several of these faults are either expressly condemned, or are briefly related or mentioned as matter of fact, without any intimation that they are either to be commended or imitated. The sacred writers, however, are only answerable for facts, not for the morality of actions. It is true that the Jewish history is stained with blood and cruelty; but so is the history of all other nations, (whose chroniclers, annalists, or other historians are not censured for their bare narration of the crimes of the individuals or nations,) and without the additional circumstance of being relieved by such histories of true piety and virtue as abound in the Scriptures. But it is worthy of remark, that the moral character of the Jewish nation was by no means so uniformly bad as the modern antagonists of divine revelation have pretended. In some ages their morals were much purer, and their piety more fervent, than at others. Such was the generation which first entered Canaan with Joshua, and such also the generations that lived during the reigns of their most pious monarchs. It is, moreover, to be considered, that the mere narration of any action, such as we find in the Old and New Testaments, implies neither the approbation nor the censure of it, but only declares that such a thing was done, and in such a manner; and the not concealing of these actions shows the simplicity and impartiality of the sacred writers, who spare no person whomsoever, not even when they themselves are concerned, — though the thing related should redound to their disgrace; — as in the case of Noah's drunkenness (Gen. ix. 21.); Jacob's deceiving of Isaac

(Gen. xxvii.<sup>1</sup>); Peter's denial of Christ (Matt. xxvi. 69—75. and the parallel passages of the other evangelists); Paul's dispute with Peter (Gal. ii. 11—14.); and Paul's excuse of himself (Acts xxiii. 5.).

The following are the principal passages which have been charged with being contradictions to morality; but with how little pretext, the reader will be enabled to judge, by the candid examination and consideration of the remainder of this section.

1. *God's command to Abraham, to sacrifice Isaac (Gen. xxii.) has been represented as a command to commit murder in its most horrid form, and, consequently, as inconsistent with the holiness of God to give.*

But this command may be satisfactorily vindicated, either by regarding it as a symbolical action<sup>2</sup>, or (without this consideration) by resolving it into the divine sovereignty over the lives of his creatures. For, the Supreme Lord and Giver of Life has a right to take it away, and to command it to be taken away, whenever and in whatsoever manner he pleases. To offer a human victim to him, without his express warrant, would be to commit murder; but to do so by his command would be an act of obedience. As the Almighty has a right to command, so his perfections lead us to infer, that he will command nothing but what is worthy of himself. The design of God, however, was to *prove* Abraham, in order that his faith, love, and obedience might be manifest, and not, in fact, that he should offer up Isaac.

2. *Jacob's vow (Gen. xxviii. 20—22.) is asserted to be quite conditional, and as implying that if his God would clothe and feed him, he would serve him.*

This representation is not more unjust, than the manner in which it is stated is indecent. In order that this matter may be regarded in its proper light, it must be considered, that, immediately before the account which is given us of Jacob's vow, we are informed of a vision which he had when setting out on his journey to Padan-

<sup>1</sup> From this circumstance God has been represented by infidels, as distinguishing his favourite Jacob, by a system of *fraud and lies*; but the following considerations, by Bishop Horne, may assist us to form a right judgment of this matter.

"1st. The proposition of deceiving Isaac originated not with Jacob, but with Rebecca. Jacob remonstrated against it, as likely to bring a curse upon him, rather than a blessing; nor would he consent to perform his part, till she engaged to take all the blame on herself — 'On me be thy curse, my son; only obey my voice.'

"2dly. From this speech, and from the earnestness and solicitude discovered by Rebecca, it may not unfairly be presumed, that she had some special reason for what she did; that Isaac was about to take a wrong step in a concern of great moment, which ought to be prevented, and could be prevented by no other means.

"3dly. The rectitude of Rebecca's judgment seems evidently to have been recognised and allowed by Isaac, at the conclusion of the matter. For though he had blessed Jacob, intending to bless Esau, yet, as if recollecting himself, he confirmed and ratified that blessing in the strongest terms: 'Yea, and he shall be blessed.' Still farther — at sending him away, he again repeated the benediction, in the most solemn and affecting manner: 'God give thee the blessing of Abraham!' It is hard to assign any other reason, why, if so disposed, upon discovering the fraud, he might not have reversed the proceeding. Nay, by the kind meeting of the brothers afterwards, one should be inclined to suppose, that Esau himself acquiesced at length in the propriety of what had been done.

"4thly. If such were the case, Isaac was only deceived into what was right, and what himself acknowledged to be so in the conclusion. The deception was like those often practised by physicians for the benefit of their patients; and casuists must decide upon it in the same manner. The offence of Jacob is certainly alleviated, if not entirely taken off, by the circumstance of Rebecca pledging herself to bear the blame; as the conduct of Rebecca seems justified by that of Isaac ratifying and confirming to Jacob the blessing originally intended for Esau. Upon the whole, if there were any offence, it was one that might be forgiven; and if God, notwithstanding, continued to bless Jacob, he did forgive it, and had reasons for so doing." Bp. Horne's Works, vol. vi. pp. 477, 478.

<sup>2</sup> This is Bp. Warburton's mode of solving the difficulty.

Aram, when God renewed to him the promises made to Abraham concerning the giving of the land of Canaan to his posterity, and that in his seed all nations of the earth should be blessed: at the same time assuring him, that he would be with him in all places whither he should go, and would bring him again into that land. (12—15.) In consequence of this vision, Jacob made his vow the next morning; the design of which was, to express the sense he had of the divine goodness, and his confidence in God's gracious protection, and to declare his solemn resolution, that if God would be with him and keep him in his way, and would give him *bread to eat and raiment to put on* (which shows the moderation of his desires), so that he should come again to his father's house in peace, he would after his return make an open and public acknowledgment of his gratitude and devotion to the Lord as his God; would set apart that place, where God had appeared to him, to his worship; and would devote to His service the tenth of all the substance which God should give him. Now such a conduct as this, instead of being impiously interested and craving (as some opposers of revelation have asserted), will appear to every one who judges candidly and impartially, a great argument of the simplicity and goodness of Jacob's heart, and of a pious and well-disposed mind: though undoubtedly it appears absurd to those who affirm—what however they cannot prove—that the Almighty does not concern himself with individuals of the human race.

3. *The objection, that God's commanding of the Israelites (Exod. iii. 22., xii. 35.) to borrow from the Egyptians what they never intended to restore, is not only an act of injustice, but favours theft, is obviated by rendering the Hebrew verb שָׁאַל (SHAAL), asked or demanded, agreeably to its proper and literal meaning<sup>1</sup>, which is given to it in all the ancient versions, as well as in every modern translation, our own excepted.*

4. *The hardening of Pharaoh's heart (Exod. iv. 21., ix. 16.) has been a fruitful source of malignant cavil with the adversaries of the Bible; some of whom have not hesitated to affirm that this single chapter is sufficient to destroy the authenticity of the entire Scriptures, while others, more decently and speciously, assert that a just God could not punish the Egyptian monarch for a hardness of heart of which he himself was evidently the cause. This is the objection in all its force. Let us now see how little foundation there is for it.*

“When we meet with an assertion apparently contrary to all the truth and equity in the world, it is but common justice to any writer, human or divine, to suppose that we mistake his meaning, and that the expression employed to convey it is capable of an interpretation different from that which may at first present itself. We cannot, for a moment, imagine that God secretly influences a man's will, or suggests any wicked stubborn resolution to his mind, and then punishes him for it. We are therefore to consider, by what other means, not incompatible with his nature and attributes, he may be said, in a certain sense, and without impropriety, to harden a man's heart. There are many ways by which we may conceive this effect to be wrought, without running into the absurdity and impiety above mentioned. The heart may be hardened by those very respites, miracles, and mercies, intended to soften it; for if they do not soften it they will harden it.—God is sometimes said to do that which he permits to be done by others, in the way of judgment and punishment: as when his people rejected his own righteous laws, he is said to have ‘given them’ the idolatrous ones of their heathen neighbours, ‘statutes that were not good.’—The heart may be hardened by his withdrawing that grace it has long resisted; men may be given up to a reprobate mind; as they *would* not see when they

<sup>1</sup> It is the very word used in Psal. ii. 8. שָׁאַל, (SHAAL). *ASK of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.* The verb is rendered *demandera, shall demand, by Rabbi Cahen. La Bible . . . . . avec l'Hobrou en regard, tom. ii. p. 13.*

possessed the faculty of sight, the use of that faculty may be taken from them, and they may be abandoned to blindness. But all this is judicial, and supposes previous voluntary wickedness, which it is designed to punish.<sup>1</sup>

Further, no person who candidly peruses the history of the transactions with Pharaoh, can deny that what the Almighty did to Pharaoh and the Egyptians had a tendency to soften rather than to harden his heart; especially as it was not until after he had seen the miracles, and after the plagues had ceased, that *he hardened himself* and would not suffer the Israelites to depart. The threatened plagues were suspended on a condition with which he refused to comply, and then only were they inflicted. It is, moreover, well known that Hebrew verbs in the Hiphil conjugation signify to *permit* or to *suffer* to be done, as well as to *cause* to be done: hence nothing more is meant, than to leave a man to the bent and tendency of his own disposition. Thus Pharaoh was left, and he is said to have made his own heart stubborn against God. *He sinned yet more and hardened his heart.* The proper rendering, therefore, of Exod. iv. 21. is — *I will permit his heart to be so hardened that he will not let the people go.* So in Exod. ix. 12. it ought to be translated, *Yet the LORD suffered the heart of Pharaoh to be so hardened that he hearkened not to them.* And a more literal rendering of Exod. ix. 15, 16. would remove the discrepancy which seems at present to exist in our common version, which runs thus: — *For now I will stretch out my hand and smite thee with pestilence; and thou shalt be cut off from the earth. And in very deed for this cause have I raised thee up, for to show in thee my power; and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth.* In the original Hebrew, the verbs are in the past tense and not in the future, as our authorised version improperly expresses them, by which means an apparent contradiction is produced; for neither Pharaoh nor his people were *smitten with pestilence*, nor was he by any kind of mortality *cut off from the earth.* The first-born, it is true, were slain by a destroying angel, and Pharaoh himself was drowned in the Red Sea: but there is no reference whatever to these judgments in the two verses in question. If the words be translated as they ought, in the subjunctive mood, or in the past instead of the future, this seeming contradiction to facts, as well as all ambiguity, will be avoided: "*For if now I HAD STRETCHED OUT (literally had sent forth) my hand, and had smitten thee and thy people with the pestilence, thou SHOULDEST HAVE BEEN cut off from the earth. But truly on this very account have I caused thee to subsist, that I might cause thee to see my power: and that my NAME might be declared throughout all the earth, or in all this land.*"<sup>2</sup>

Thus God gave this impious king to know that it was in consequence of his especial providence, that both he and his people had not been already destroyed by means of the *past* plagues: but that God had preserved him for this very purpose, that he might have a further opportunity of showing Pharaoh His power in the remaining plagues, and of manifesting that He, Jehovah, was the only true God, for the full conviction of the Hebrews and Egyptians.<sup>3</sup>

Lastly, our authorised translation of Exod. vii. 13. (*and he [that is, God] hardened Pharaoh's heart*) is incorrect. It ought to have been, *AND THE HEART OF PHARAOH WAS HARDENED*, as the original is rendered by all the ancient versions, without exception, and by the most judicious modern translations. The same phrase is correctly translated in our authorised version, in Exod. vii. 22., viii. 19., and ix. 7.

The objections, therefore, which the opponents of the Bible have raised against it from the passages we have been considering, are thus proved to be utterly destitute of foundation.

<sup>1</sup> Bp. Horne's Letters on Infidelity, Lett. xiv. (Works, vol. vi. p. 481.)

<sup>2</sup> Ainsworth, Houbigant, Dathe, Schott and Winzer on Exod. ix. 15, 16. Cahen translates them in the past tense:—"Mais c'est pour cela, que je t'ai conservé pour te montrer ma puissance, et afin qu'on cite mon nom sur toute la terre; si tu t'élèves encore contre mon peuple pour ne pas le renvoyer." Bible, tom. ii. p. 15. It is worthy of remark that the Septuagint Greek version of the Pentateuch renders these two verses subjunctively. The case of Pharaoh is fully considered by Mr. Twopenny in his "Dissertations on some Parts of the Old and New Testaments," &c. Diss. iv. pp. 38—54.; and in Dr. Graves's Discourses on Calvinistic Predestination, pp. 295—304.

<sup>3</sup> Dr. A. Clarke on Exod. ix. 15.

5. *Again, visiting the sins of the fathers upon their children (Exod. xx. 5.) has been charged as injustice.*

But this objection disappears, the moment we are convinced that the reward and punishment here intended, are confined to the outward circumstances of prosperity and distress in the *present* life; because if (as was the case) such a sanction were necessary in the particular system by which God thought fit to govern the Jewish people, it is evident, that any inequality as to individuals, would be certainly and easily remedied in a future life (as in the particular instances recorded in Numb. xvi. 27—33. and Josh. vii. 24, 25.); so that each should receive his final reward exactly according to his true appearance in the sight of God, and thus "the Judge of all the earth do right." It is only when children copy and improve on the crimes of their wicked parents, that they draw down upon their heads redoubled vengeance; so that the innocent *never* suffer for the guilty, except in such temporal calamities as necessarily result from their parents' crimes. As, when the profligacy of one generation involves the next in poverty, or the like. On the contrary, so benevolent is the God of Israel, that the eminent piety of one man is sometimes rewarded with blessings on thousands of his descendants. This was the case with Abraham and his descendants. Yet this is the God whom deists represent as cruel and vindictive.<sup>1</sup>

6. The extirpation of the Canaanites by the Jews, according to the divine command, is urged as an act of the greatest cruelty and injustice; but this objection falls to the ground when it is considered, that

The wickedness of the Canaanites "was so great as to deserve such exemplary punishment from God as might prove a warning to other nations. He might as justly destroy them by the sword of the Israelites as by famine, pestilence, or any other judgment. He gave full proof by miracles that he had commissioned the Israelites for this very purpose; and their being thus commissioned had the strongest tendency to impress them with an abhorrence of idolatry."<sup>2</sup>

7. *The narrative of the death of the rebels, Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, and their associates, contained in Numb. xvi. 23—35. has met with peculiar treatment from some German critics.*

One class has suggested that Moses probably caused the tents of the rebels to be *undermined*; and as he knew at what hour of the day the mine would be sprung, so he could predict when the rebels would be swallowed up in the earth! Eichhorn is somewhat more expert in his explanation. He attempts to show that Moses ordered the rebels to be *buried alive*, with all that appertained to them. As to the two hundred and fifty men consumed by fire, he thinks that they were first slain, and then their bodies consumed by fire; and this by the orders of Moses.

To argue against conjectures of such a nature would indeed be labour in vain. It is not possible for any one who reads the narration of Moses really to suppose that the writer did not regard the event in question as miraculous. Now the object of an interpreter is to explain the meaning of the author whom he undertakes to interpret. The question — whether such an event as is related in Numb. xvi. 23—35. is possible or credible? — may be raised by critics or sceptics, and may be answered by them in the negative; but those who believe that the Creator of the world has it at all times under his control, and that the authors of the sacred volume are worthy

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Graves's Lectures on the Pentateuch, Part iii. Lect. 3. Sect. 2. (Works, vol. ii. pp. 280—285.) See also Michaelis's Commentaries on the Laws of Moses, vol. i. pp. 45—47. Age of Infidelity, in answer to the Age of Reason, p. 52.

<sup>2</sup> Gerard's Institutes of Biblical Criticism, p. 445. The extirpation of the Canaanites is considered in the Age of Infidelity, in answer to the Age of Reason, pp. 26—31.; also by Lord A. Hervey in his Sermons on the Inspiration of the Holy Scripture, pp. 67, 68. (Cambridge, 1856); and most fully by Dr. Graves in his Lectures on the Four last Books of the Pentateuch, Part iii. Lect. 1. (Works, vol. ii. pp. 204—225.)

of full credit, will not be anxious to explain away the obvious meaning of the Scriptures, nor to free themselves from the obligation to believe in occurrences of a supernatural kind. To wonder or to scoff at this (so named) *credulity*, is not difficult; but to argue it down with grounds of reasoning that will abide the test of careful, extensive, and sober investigation, is quite a different task.<sup>1</sup>

8. *The severity of Moses in ordering the extermination of the Midianites (Numb. xxxi.) can only be justified by the command. This the history asserts: but that assertion (it has been insisted) is contradicted by the nature of the case, because it is abhorrent from the Deity to require the destruction of his creatures, and more especially to require them to destroy one another.*

This is the objection in all its strength; only in this instance there is supposed to be equal cruelty in sparing as in destroying, because, while all the males were destroyed (children as well as adults), the female children and virgins were all to be spared, as it has been said, for prostitution. For the latter assertion, however, there is no foundation either in fact or in probability. It only proves that the objectors find it necessary to exaggerate in order to produce the desired effect upon their readers; for the books of Moses nowhere allow the Israelites to debauch their female slaves. His law prohibited an Israelite even from marrying a captive without delays and previous formalities; and if he afterwards divorced her, he was bound to set her at liberty "because he had humbled her." (Deut. xxi. 10—14.) They were, then, simply allowed to retain these captives as slaves, educating them in their families, and employing them as domestics. The destruction of the other Midianitish women, who were either married or debauched, is accounted for, by recollecting that they had enticed the Israelites to sin. It is a fact too well known to require additional proof in this place, that in the early heathen nations, numbers of lewd women were consecrated to fornication and idolatry, vestiges of which are still to be found among the dancing girls of Egypt and of India. Such, probably, were many of these women, and such, therefore, was their punishment. As to the males, they were appointed to destruction, that the nation might be extirpated, which was impossible while any of the male issue were preserved. "While," however, "the Mosaic Code presents enactments of great severity, it must be remembered that it was drawn for a people on the verge of civilisation; and, withal, has furnished to the world some of the best and most enduring principles of wise government."<sup>2</sup>

9. *It is asserted that some of the Levitical laws have a manifest tendency to corrupt and defile the imagination; and the regulations in Deut. xxii. 13—21. have been particularly urged as an instance of this sort.*

With regard to these regulations, and others of a similar kind, we may remark that what they require might be needful in the then situation of the Israelites, and yet it is not necessary that we should now curiously or impertinently scrutinise them. The people of Israel were disposed to be jealous of their wives, and to defame them without any just cause, that they might have an excuse for putting them away, which would tend to produce many public mischiefs and disorders. In this case, therefore, it was a wise and merciful institution, to provide a remedy by such sort of injunctions by which the innocent might be vindicated. Such signs of trial might never fail in that climate, though they might in some others. So far indeed was it from being unworthy of God to leave such things upon record, that it may heighten our admiration both of his great wisdom and benignity in his management of that people, who were so extremely perverse, and so addicted to the extremes of lust and jealousy. If, therefore, the perusal of the passage in question excite improper thoughts in any one, the fault is in him, and not in the Scripture. Scarcely any thing can be mentioned, of which a bad use may not be

<sup>1</sup> Stuart's Hebrew Chrestomathy, pp. 182, 183.

<sup>2</sup> Lectures on the Evidences of Christianity, delivered at the University of Virginia, p. 385. (New York, 1852.)

made: things the most sacred and divine may in this respect be strangely abused. Nor is it a better argument that the Scriptures were not written by inspiration of God, that there are some parts and passages of it, which may be abused by persons who are lasciviously disposed, than it is that the sun was not created by the Almighty, because its light *may* be used by wicked men as an auxiliary in perpetrating the crimes which they have meditated.

10. *The Mosaic law (Deut. xiii.) which punished idolatry with death, has been represented as cruel and unjust, and giving countenance to persecution for religious opinions.*

But it is manifest to any one, who will peruse the chapter in question with attention, that this law commanded only such Israelites to be put to death, as apostatised to idolatry and still continued members of their own community. And as their government was a *theocracy* (in other words, God was the temporal king of Israel, and their kings were only his viceroys,) idolatry was, strictly, the political crime of *high treason*, which in every state is punishable with death. It is further to be observed, that the Israelites were never commissioned to make war upon their neighbours, or exercise any violence towards any of them, in order to *compel* them to worship the God of Israel, nor to force them to it even after they were conquered (Deut. xx. 10.); nor were they empowered thus forcibly to attempt to recover any native Israelite, who should revolt to idolatry, and go to settle in a heathen country.

11. *The law in Deut. xxi. 18—21. has been stigmatised as being both inhuman and brutal, but with as little justice as any other part of the Mosaic institutes.*

The passage in question is as follows:—“*If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, which will not obey the voice of his father, nor the voice of his mother, and that when they have chastened him, will not hearken unto them; then shall his father and his mother lay hold on him, and bring him out unto the elders of his city and unto the gate of his place; and they shall say unto the elders of his city, This our son is stubborn and rebellious; he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton and a drunkard. And all the men of the city shall stone him with stones, that he die.*” On this clause, we are to take notice, in the first place, of the character of the culprit, it is a *son*,—not a daughter;—a *stubborn and rebellious son, a glutton and a drunkard*;—in a word, a most profligate and abandoned character. Secondly, his parents must reprove and correct him, *repeatedly*, and until there is *no* hope of amendment. Thirdly, the parents were the *only allowed prosecutors*; and it was required that they should *both* concur in bringing him to the magistrate, the power of life and death not being intrusted to the parents, as it afterwards was among the Greeks and Romans. Lastly, the magistrates were to investigate the case, which must be *fully proved*, so as to induce them to condemn the criminal, and order him to be put to death. Natural affection would almost always prevent the prosecution; the required proof would secure all, but the most atrociously criminal, from the hasty rage, or the deliberate malice of those few parents, who were capable of such desperate wickedness, as combining to murder their own children. We do not read of any instance, in the whole Jewish history, of this law having been carried into execution. If, however, such an extraordinary event at any time occurred, it could not fail to excite general notice, and to produce a deep and lasting impression on the minds of both parents and children. So that the solemn execution of one incorrigible criminal would be a most salutary warning to tens of thousands. The very existence of such a law would confirm greatly the authority of parents, and give energy to their admonitions; as well as fortify the minds of young persons against various temptations, and so *prevent* crimes. And it would constantly excite all parents, who attended to the law of Moses, to restrain, correct, and watch over their children, when young; to give them good instruction, set them a good example, and pray for them without ceasing; and to keep them as much as possible out of bad company, and from contracting bad habits.

This law, therefore, so harmless and beneficial in its operations, yet so contrary

to human policy, proves, instead of invalidating, the divine original of that code, in which alone it is found.<sup>1</sup>

12. *From the conduct of Ehud (Judges iii. 15—26.), of Jael (iv. 17—20.), and from David's advice to Solomon concerning Joab and Shimei (1 Kings ii. 5, 6. 8.), it has been asserted that the Scriptures inculcate assassination.*

Nothing can be more false than this assertion. For, in the first place, the cases of Ehud and Jael are simply recorded as matters of fact, without any comment or observation whatever; and, therefore, they neither can nor ought to be represented as encouraging assassination.<sup>2</sup> The approval of the conduct of Jael by the prophetess Deborah is restricted to the act of destroying a tyrant. "God may have commissioned each as his agent; and left them, as he does and often has done, to select their methods of service. Such examples are not propounded for imitation, unless we were placed in circumstances of similarly extraordinary character."<sup>3</sup> We must judge of the conduct of Jael by the feelings of those, among whom the right of avenging the blood of a relative was so strongly rooted, that even Moses could not take it away. Jael was an ally, by blood, of the Israelitish nation. Their chief oppressor, who had mightily oppressed them for the space of twenty years, now lay defenceless before her; and he was moreover one of those whom Israel was bound by divine command to extirpate. Perhaps, too, she felt herself called to be the instrument of God in working out for that nation a great deliverance, by thus exterminating their heathen oppressor. At least, Israel viewed it in this light; and in this view we cannot reproach the heroine with that as a crime, which both she and Israel felt to be a deed performed in accordance with the mandate of Heaven.<sup>4</sup>

The advice of David to Solomon, when on his death-bed, demands a more distinct consideration. And, in the first place, with regard to Joab, we remark that no attentive reader of the history of David, after his accession to the throne of Israel, can help observing how often it is noticed that the sons of Zeruiah were too strong for David; in other words, that they had too much power with the army for him to venture to punish their atrocious deeds; reasons of state deferred the punishment, and when those reasons were removed, it was proper to punish a deliberate murder according to an express law. David also knew that a man like Joab, who could brook no superior, might endanger the peace of the kingdom. He was now engaged to support Adonijah, and so far in actual rebellion. But it is to be observed that the Hebrew monarch does not advise Solomon to put Joab *absolutely and unconditionally* to death; he charges him to *do according to his wisdom*, and the sum of his advice is in effect this:—"Though you have now pardoned Joab through policy, as I was myself compelled to do by the exigency of the times, and the predominant influence of the sons of Zeruiah; yet, should he offend *again*, act according to discretion, and then punish him, as a hoary-headed and confirmed traitor, with death." Secondly, with respect to Shimei, David had fulfilled his promise. He had only engaged that he would not put him to death on the day when Abishai had requested permission to do it (compare 2 Sam. xix. 23. with 1 Kings ii. 8.); and he left it to Solomon to treat him as he thought just, in reference to his future conduct. David knew that he was Shimei still, and would so act as to bring on himself due punishment. Solomon accordingly sent for Shimei, and commanded him to reside in Jerusalem, and not to depart thence, under pain of death on the day when he should pass over the brook Kidron, a condition to which Shimei thankfully acceded. (1 Kings ii. 37, 38.) Three years afterwards, the latter transgressed this convention, and went to Gath (verse 40.), a suspicious quarter, in con-

<sup>1</sup> Age of Infidelity, p. 24. Scott's Reply to Paine's Age of Reason, p. 18. London, 1820. 12mo.

<sup>2</sup> The cases of Ehud and of Jael are considered in Twopenny's Dissertations, pp. 133—140.; and in Lord A. Herve's Sermons on the Inspiration of Holy Scripture, pp. 69—71.

<sup>3</sup> Lectures on the Evidences of Christianity, delivered at the University of Virginia, p. 386.

<sup>4</sup> Prof. Robinson's Interpretation of Judges, chap. v., in the Biblical Repository, vol. ii p. 607. (Andover, 1831.)



sequence of which Solomon, after charging him with the violation of his oath, commanded him to be put to death. (41—46.)<sup>1</sup>

13. Again, it has been asserted by some, that the law of Moses (Levit. xxvii. 28.), concerning devoted things to be put to death, authorised human sacrifices: and Jephthah's sacrificing his daughter (Judg. xi. 34. &c.), Samuel's hewing Agag in pieces before the Lord (1 Sam. xv. 33.), and David's delivering seven of Saul's posterity to the Gibeonites to be put to death by them (2 Sam. xxi. 2, &c.), have been represented as instances of human sacrifices according to that law.

But as there are express prohibitions of sacrificing their children in Deut. xii. 30, 31.; Psal. cvi. 37, 38.; Jer. vii. 31.; and Ezek. xvi. 20, 21.; so there not only is no direction to sacrifice any other human creature, nor are there any rites appointed for such sacrifice, but also it would have rendered the priest unclean, by touching a dead body; and the sacrifice of a man is expressly declared to be abominable in Isa. lxvi. 3. As no devoted thing could be sacrificed at all, the law in question cannot possibly relate to sacrifice, and is capable of a very different meaning. For, although Josephus, and many commentators after him, are of opinion that Jephthah did really immolate his daughter, the probability is that she was not sacrificed. And this will appear from the rendering of the converse particle *†* (*vau*), which the preceding considerations require to be taken disjunctively, and translated OR instead of AND, both in Levit. xxvii. 28.<sup>2</sup> and also in Judges xi. 30, 31.<sup>3</sup> (as it is in the margin of our larger Bibles.) What further confirms this rendering, and consequently reconciles these two passages, is, that Jephthah's rashness had time to cool, as his daughter went two months to bewail her virginity, that is, her consecration to God, which obliged her to remain single, without posterity. It is further said, that she went to bewail her virginity, *not* her sacrifice. Besides the Israelitish women went four times in every year to mourn or talk WITH (not *for*) the daughter of Jephthah, to lament her seclusion from the world, and the hardship of her situation as cut off from every domestic enjoyment. Now, if in the course of two months no person could have suggested to Jephthah a ransom for his daughter, yet surely she must have been alive, though dead to him and his family (as his only child), and to the world by her seclusion, if the Israelitish women went to condole with her. It is further worthy of remark, that it is not afterwards said, that he actually sacrificed her, but that "*he did with her according to his vow.*" The sacred historian subjoins, *she knew no man*: if she were sacrificed, this remark is frivolous; but if she were devoted to perpetual virginity, this idea coincides with the visits of the Israelitish women. On the whole, we may safely conclude, that Jephthah's daughter was *not* sacrificed, but consecrated to a state of celibacy.<sup>4</sup>

With respect to the two other cases above mentioned, viz. the hewing of Agag in pieces before the Lord, and the delivery of seven of Saul's posterity to the Gibeonites, they have no reference whatever to sacrifices. Agag, in particular, was put to

<sup>1</sup> See Dr. Chandler's Life of David, vol. ii. pp. 444—481., where that monarch's conduct towards Joab and Shimei is fully vindicated.

<sup>2</sup> That this passage should be so rendered, has been proved by Dr. Hales. It will then run thus: — *Notwithstanding, no devotion [or devoted thing] which a man shall devote unto THE LORD, [either] of man or of beast, or of land of his own property, shall be sold or redeemed. Every thing devoted is most holy unto the Lord.* New Analysis of Chronology, vol. ii. pp. 289, 290. See the subject also treated, in an admirable manner, in Dr. Randolph's Sermon entitled Jephthah's Vow considered, in the second volume of his "View of our blessed Saviour's Ministry," &c. pp. 166—195.

<sup>3</sup> Which verses are to be translated thus: — "*And Jephthah vowed a vow unto THE LORD, and said, If thou wilt surely give the children of Ammon into my hand, then it shall be that whatsoever cometh out of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the children of Ammon, shall either be the Lord's, or I will offer it up [for] a burnt-offering.*" New Analysis of Chronology, vol. ii. p. 288.

<sup>4</sup> Hales, vol. ii. pp. 289—292. Calmet's Dictionary, vol. ii. pp. 158. &c. 4to. edit. Additions to Calmet. Waterland's Scripture vindicated, on Judg. ix. 13. (Works, vol. v. pp. 133—135.)

death as a *criminal*, and not as a sacrifice.<sup>1</sup> The "seven descendants of Saul, who were partly the children of a concubine and partly of a daughter of Saul, were not pretenders to the crown; and David cannot be suspected of having embraced such an opportunity to put them out of the way. Neither is it to be supposed that David delivered up the innocent to death contrary to the law (Deut. xxiv. 16.). They were therefore delivered up to the avengers of blood, and punished with death, not on account of the crimes of Saul, but for the murders which they themselves, with the connivance of Saul, had committed on the Gibeonites, and for which they had hitherto remained unpunished. They themselves constituted the bloody house, which was generally notorious as such. Saul is mentioned with them, merely because he took under his protection the murderers, who were so nearly related to him, and delivered them from the hands of the avengers of blood."<sup>2</sup>

14. In 1 Sam. xiii. 14. David is called the *man after God's own heart*. And this phrase, as applied to him, has been a fertile source of sarcasm and reproach to many infidel writers, as if the Scripture sanctioned adultery and murder.

But do they authorise those crimes? By no means. They are there reprehended, and the severest denunciations are pronounced against those who perpetrate them. In what sense then was he a *man after God's own heart*? ANSWER.—In comparison of his conduct with that of Saul; in his strict attention to the law and worship of God; in his recognising, throughout his whole conduct, that Jehovah was king in Israel, and that he himself was only his vicegerent; in never attempting to alter any of those laws, or in the least degree to change the Israelitish constitution. In all his *public official conduct* he acted according to the Divine Mind, and fulfilled the will of his Maker. But the phrase itself will, perhaps, be the best explained by the case of Samuel. Eli was rejected, and Samuel chosen in his place, just as David superseded Saul. On this occasion God said, *I will raise me up a faithful priest, that shall do according to that which is in my heart.* (1 Sam. ii. 35.) And is not he, who acts agreeably to the Divine Will, a *man after God's heart*? Further, it is worthy of remark, that this expression is never used in reference to his private or personal moral conduct. It is used wholly in reference to his uniform regard to the promotion of the interests of pure religion, notwithstanding all temptations to idolatry and persecution.<sup>3</sup> The numbering of the people (2 Sam. xxiv.), in order, as it would seem, to push conquests into foreign countries, and the flagitious adultery with Bathsheba, together with the consequent murder of Uriah (2 Sam. xi.), are the only instances in which David seems to have forgotten himself and his God. With regard to the two last shocking crimes, more particularly, so far was David from excusing them, that he confesses and laments them with the greatest horror. "But how earnest was his repentance! And with what submission to the will of God did he bear those calamities which were sent for his punishment, and which, as they were caused by his own children, must have been so much the more distressing to his paternal feelings! (2 Sam. xi.; Psal. li. 2; Sam. xii. 1—23., xiii. 1—20., xv.—xviii.) Do we not here again see the soul entirely and steadily devoted to God? David, indeed, was no ideal model of human perfection; he was not without the blemishes incident to human nature; but on the whole, he was an example worthy of the imitation of his successors; and according as they appear on comparison with him, the sacred writers estimate their characters."

15. *The conduct of David towards the Ammonites, in putting them under saws and harrows of iron, &c. on the capture of Rabbah, has been represented as an instance of diabolical and unparalleled cruelty.* (2 Sam. xii. 31.)

The cavils of the objectors, in this as in every other instance, are utterly unfounded: for, in the first place, the expression may signify only that David put them under

<sup>1</sup> Hales, vol. ii. p. 314. Du Voisin, *Autorité des Livres de Moÿse*, p. 405.

<sup>2</sup> Jahn's *History of the Hebrew Commonwealth*, vol. i. pp. 111, 112.

<sup>3</sup> See the Rev. Wm. Cleaver's *Sermon on the Character of David King of Israel*, in four Sermons annexed to Bp. Cleaver's *Seven Sermons on Select Subjects*, pp. 377—399., and especially Dr. Chandler's *Life of David*, vol. i. pp. 321—330.

such labours and made slaves of them to do hard and servile work. So we speak of laying people under tribute: it is a common mode of speech in several languages. Secondly, if instead of deducing their objections from translations the objectors had consulted the original passage, they would have seen that there was no ground whatever for their charges. The Hebrew preposition **ב** (beth), which is used throughout the verse in question, it is well known, signifies to as well as *under*; and to put the people to saws, harrows, axes, and the brick-kilns, means no more than to employ them as slaves in the most menial and laborious offices, such as sawing, making iron harrows, hewing wood, and making bricks. This form of expression is an Anglicism as well as a Hebraism; and we still say, to put a person to the plough, to the anvil, &c. The passage objected to may be thus rendered. *He (David) brought forth the people that were therein, and put them to saws, and to harrows of iron, or to iron-mines, for the original word means both, and to axes of iron, and made them pass through the brick-kiln.*<sup>1</sup> This rendering is adopted in the edition of the French version of the Bible corrected by the company of Pastors at Geneva, in 1805.<sup>2</sup>

16. *It has been asserted from 1 Kings xxii. that Jehovah kept false prophets as well as true ones.*

The most common attention to the context will show that this assertion is as false as it is malignant. For, in the first place, the four hundred prophets mentioned in that chapter (verse 6.) were pretended prophets whom the wicked king of Israel had in his pay, and who knew how to suit his humour and to flatter his vanity, all agreeing in the same fawning compliances and in the same treacherous counsels which pleased for the present, but ultimately proved fatal. They are emphatically termed by Micaiah (verse 23.) *Ahab's prophets*, notwithstanding they professed to be the Lord's prophets, prophesying in his name. And, secondly, the address of Micaiah to the two confederated kings in verses 19—23. is not a real representation of any thing done in the heavenly world, as if the Almighty were at a loss for expedients or had any hand in the sins of his creatures; but it is a mere parable, and only tells in figurative language what was in the womb of providence, the events which were shortly to take place, and the *permission*<sup>3</sup>, on the part of God, for these agents to act. Micaiah did not choose to tell the angry and impious Ahab, that all his prophets were liars; but he represents the whole by this parable, and says the same truths in language equally forcible but less offensive.

17. The Scriptures represent the Almighty as a God of truth and faithfulness; but he is charged by the opposers of divine revelation with being guilty of falsehood, by *inspiring prophets with false messages*, and by *violating his promises*. The grossness of such assertions is sufficiently disgusting, but it is the duty of a Christian advocate fully to meet them, and to expose all their falsehood.

In the first place, With regard to the charge of *inspiring prophets with false messages* (which is founded on 1 Kings xxii. 22, 23.; Jer. iv. 10.; and Ezek. xiv. 9.), we remark, that it is a known idiom of the Hebrew language, to express things in an imperative and active form, which are to be understood only permissively. So where *the devils besought CHRIST that he would suffer them to enter into the herd of swine, he said unto them, Go* (Matt. viii. 31.); he did not command but permitted them. And so in John xiii. 27., where our Saviour says to Judas, *That thou doest, do quickly*, we are not to understand that he commanded him to betray him, though that

<sup>1</sup> Orton's Exposition of the Old Testament, vol. iii. p. 195. Chandler's Life of David, vol. ii. p. 227. Hales's Analysis of Chronology, vol. ii. p. 344.

<sup>2</sup> "Il en fit sortir les habitans, et appliqua les uns au travail des scies, des herbes de fer, et des haches de fer, et les autres au travail des briques." . . . "He brought forth the inhabitants, and applied [or put] some to the labour of saws, of harrows of iron, and of axes of iron, and others to the labour of bricks." (La Sainte Bible. . . par les Pasteurs et Professeurs de l'Eglise et de l'Académie de Genève, tom. i. p. 258. Genève, 1805.)

<sup>3</sup> That this is the meaning of 1 Kings xxii. 22. is proved in the next remark.

seemed to be expressed in the form. So, likewise, here, where an evil spirit offered himself to be a lying spirit in the mouth of the prophet, and God says, *Go forth and do so* : this only signifies a permission, not a command. And so (Jer. iv. 10.) where the prophet complains that God had greatly deceived the people, *saying they should have peace when the sword reacheth to the soul* ; we are to understand this no otherwise, but that God permitted the false prophets to deceive them, prophesying peace to them, as appears by the history. (Ezek. xiv. 19.) *I the LORD have deceived that prophet*, that is, permitted him to be deceived, and to deceive the people as a just judgment upon them for their infidelity with respect to his true prophets. This he threatens at the 5th verse, *I will take the house of Israel in their own heart, because they are all estranged from me through their idols* ; because they have chosen to themselves false gods, I will suffer them to be deceived with false prophets ; and that this is the meaning, appears by the threatening added, *and I will stretch out my hand upon him, and I will destroy him from the midst of my people* : now God will not punish that of which he is the author.

That text (Jer. xx. 7.) *Thou hast deceived me, and I was deceived*, signifies no more, but that he had mistaken the promise of God to him, who when he gave him his commission, told him he would be with him, by which he understood that no evil should come to him, and *now he was become a derision and the people mocked him* ; and in his passion and weakness, he breaks forth into this expression, *Thou hast deceived me, and I was deceived* ; whereas it was his own mistake of the meaning of God's promise, which was not, that he should not meet with scorn, and opposition, and persecution, but that they should not prevail against him, as we may see at the latter end of the first chapter.<sup>1</sup>

Secondly, With respect to the assertion that the Almighty violates his promises, it has been objected that God did not give the children of Israel all the land which he promised to Abraham, as will appear by comparing Gen. xviii. 19, 20. with Josh. xiii. 1. &c. and Judg. ii. 20, 21. In Gen. xv. 18. God promised to *give Abraham and his seed such a land*, the bounds of which he describes in Josh. xiii. 1. It is there said that *there remained very much land yet unconquered*, of which they had not got possession. And in Judg. ii. 20. it is said, that the people not having performed their part of the covenant, God would suspend the further performance of his promise, and *would not drive out any more of the nations before them* ; and it is probable, that the Israelites never were possessed of the promised land in the full latitude and extent of the promise.

ANSWER.—This covenant of God with Abraham was upon consideration of his past faith and obedience, though it seems that the full performance of it did likewise depend upon the future obedience of his posterity. In pursuance of his covenant, notwithstanding all the murmurs and rebellions of that people, God did bring them into the promised land, though they provoked him to destroy them many a time ; because he remembered his covenant with Abraham. When they were possessed of it, God gave them a title to the rest, and would have assisted them in the conquest of it, if they had performed the condition required on their part, that is, continued faithful and obedient to him ; but they did not, and thereby discharged God from any further performance of his promise ; and God, when he had done this, had fully performed the covenant he made with Abraham, so far as concerned his part, as appears by the acknowledgment of Joshua, even in a time when a great part of the land was unconquered (Josh. xxi. 44.), and of Solomon (1 Kings viii. 56.) ; yea, and had it not been that God had made this covenant, as well upon consideration of Abraham's faith and obedience, as upon condition of the future obedience of his posterity, the rebellions and disobedience of the people in the wilderness had released God wholly from the promise, and he would not have been unfaithful if he had utterly destroyed that people, and made a full end of them, and they had never entered into that land ; because a failure of the condition makes the obligation to cease ; and that this condition was implied in the covenant with Abraham appears from Deut. vii. 12, 13., xi. 22, 23., and Judg. ii. 20. God gives this reason why he suspended the complete performance of his promise : *The anger of the LORD was hot against Israel, and he said, Because that this people hath transgressed my covenant which I commanded their fathers, and have not*

<sup>1</sup> Tillotson's Works, vol. vi. p. 506. London, 1830.

hearkened to my voice, I also will henceforth drive out any of the nations which Joshua left when he died.<sup>1</sup>

18. The destruction of *forty-two little children*, by Elisha, whom they had in sportive playfulness called a *bald head* (it is said), was an act of cruelty and revenge.

It was no such thing. The original word in 2 Kings ii. 23, 24., which in our version is rendered *little children*, also means young persons who are grown up. Thus Isaac was called a *lad*, when he was *twenty-eight* years old; Joseph, when he was *thirty*; and Rehoboam, when he was *forty* years of age. The town of Beth-el was one of the principal seats of Ahab's idolatry; and it is probable that these men came out of that city and insulted the prophet, at the instigation of the priests of Baal, exclaiming — *Ascend, too, thou bald-head; ascend, too, thou bald-head*, in allusion to Elijah's ascension to heaven; of which they had heard, but which they did not believe. Elisha, it is said, *cursed them*; but he did not this from any petulant temper of his own. He *cursed them in the name of the Lord*, that is, he declared in his name and authority the punishment which he would inflict upon them. Thus Elisha acted as a minister of the Supreme Governor of the world; and by his order and in his name he foretold the punishment which was about to be inflicted upon these profligate idolaters. Had this denunciation proceeded from the angry resentment of the prophet only, and not from a divine impulse, such a signal event as the destruction of these profane young men of Beth-el would not have been the immediate consequence of it.

19. It is objected that many passages of the Old Testament ascribe to the Almighty human affections, passions, and actions, even those of the worst kind.

But these objections cease, when such passages are interpreted *figuratively*, as they ought to be, and when all those other passages of the Bible are duly considered, which most evidently convey the sublimest ideas of the Divine Majesty. The Holy Scriptures, it is true, in condescension to our limited capacities, and to the imperfections of human creatures and of human language, represent God as having the body, the passions, and the infirmities of a man. Thus, they make mention of his eyes and ears, his hands and feet, his sleeping and waking; they ascribe to him fierce anger and jealousy, grief and repentance, joy and desire. The simple language of the Hebrews might also be another reason for its abounding with such expressions. But that no man might be so weak or so perverse as to take those expressions according to the letter, and entertain mean and unworthy thoughts of his Maker, the same Scriptures often add to those very descriptions something which manifestly shows us how they are to be understood, and reminds us that if God has a body, the heaven is his throne, and the earth his footstool; if he has hands, they are hands which reach to the ends of the creation; if he has eyes, the darkness to them is no darkness; and from them nothing is hidden; and in other places we are told that he is perfect; that he is blessed or happy; that he is unchangeable; that he is every where present; that he is a spirit; that no man hath seen him or can see him; that he is incomprehensible; and that the most exalted notion which we can possibly frame of him, falls infinitely short of the truth.<sup>2</sup> One or two examples will illustrate the preceding remarks.

Thus, when God is said to *repent*, the expression simply means that He does not execute that which seemed to us to have been his purpose; that he is pleased to do otherwise than his threatenings seemed openly to express, on account of some tacit condition implied in them. And this does not derogate either from the truth, or sincerity, or constancy, of God in his word. It does not derogate from his *truth*, because he speaks what he really intends, unless something intervened to prevent the judgment threatened, upon which he resolved when he threatened to take off and stop his judgments. Nor does it derogate from his *sincerity*, for he has told us that his threatenings have such conditions implied in them:—nor from his *con-*

<sup>1</sup> Tillotson's Works, vol. vi. p. 507. See also Waterland's Scripture Vindicated, on Ezek. xiv. 9. (Works, vol. vi. pp. 257—264.)

<sup>2</sup> Jortin's Sermons, vol. i. p. 287.

stancy and immutability, because God does not change his counsel and purpose, but takes off the sentence, which he had passed with reserved conditions.

20. It has also been objected, that the book of Ecclesiastes contains some passages which savour of irreligion, and others which savour of immorality.

But the passages, thus excepted against, are either innocent when rightly interpreted; or else they express, — not the sentiments of Solomon, but the *false opinions* of others, whom he personates in order to confute them; — or, however, not his deliberate sentiments, but such hasty and wrong notions, as during the course of his inquiry after happiness arose successively in his mind, and were on mature consideration rejected by him, that he might fix at last on the true basis, — the *conclusion of the whole matter*; which is to *fear God and keep his commandments; for God will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.* (Eccl. xii. 13, 14)

21. It has likewise been objected that the Song of Solomon, and the sixteenth and twenty-third chapters of Ezekiel's prophecy, contain passages offensive to common decency.

But this objection will fall to the ground by interpreting those parts allegorically, as almost all the commentators, from the earliest times, have unanimously done: and, likewise, by considering that the simplicity of the eastern nations made these phrases less offensive to them than they appear to us; as, on the other hand, many things which are perfectly correct in our view, would appear far different in eastern climates. With respect to the Song of Solomon, in particular, it is to be remarked, 1. That most of the forms of speech, against which exceptions have been made, are mistranslations, and do not exist in the original; — and, 2. Admitting the correctness of these remarks, it may also be shown, that this book abounds with beautiful poetic images. There is, therefore, no just exception to supposing it allegorical, provided the allegory be not extravagant and inconsistent.

22. It has been asserted, that the imprecations pronounced by the prophets, particularly in many passages of the Psalms, show a spirit of malice inconsistent with humanity, and highly vicious.

"It is an improper vindication of these" [imprecations], "either to allow that malice was *consistent* with the spirit of the Old Testament, though not of the New; or, to say that the prophets pronounced them against men, not as their own enemies, but as the enemies of God. But some of them appear harsh only by the strong figurative style in which they are expressed, and, when taken out of this, appear very allowable wishes. All of them may be considered not as prayers, but simple predictions, the imperative being put for the future" [as in Psal. xxviii. 4, 5.] "(which is a common Hebrew idiom), and shown to be so put by the future being used in other parts of the prediction; and this idiom is more natural in prediction than in other kinds of composition, because it is the immediate result of combining idioms common in the prophetic style; for, as the prophets are often commanded to do a thing, when it is only meant that they should foretell it<sup>1</sup>; so they often do foretell a thing by commanding it to be done<sup>2</sup>, and they often express their predictions in an address to God<sup>3</sup>; the union of which two idioms gives them the appearance of imprecations."<sup>4</sup>

Of all those tremendous imprecations which appear in our common English version of Deut. xxvii. 15—26, there is not one authorised by the original. The

<sup>1</sup> See examples of this mode of speech in Isa. vi. 10. and Jer. i. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Isa. xlvii. 1. "Come down" [that is, thou shalt come down], "and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon;" [thou shalt] "sit on the ground."

<sup>3</sup> Isa. ix. 3. "Thou hast multiplied the nation, thou hast increased their joy: they joy" [that is, they shall joy] "before thee, according to the joy in harvest."

<sup>4</sup> Gerard's Institutes of Biblical Criticism, pp. 447, 448.

Hebrew texts express no kind of *wish*, but are only so many denunciations of the displeasure of God against those who either were or should be guilty of the sins therein mentioned, and of the judgments which they must expect to be inflicted upon them, unless prevented by a timely and sincere repentance. And agreeably to this view, the sacred text should have been rendered "cursed they," or, "cursed are they," and not "cursed be they," in the sense of *Let them be cursed*; the word *be*, though inserted in our translation, having nothing answerable to it in the Hebrew.

The same idiom, which appears in the prophetic writings, is also to be found in 1 Cor. xvi. 22. and 2 Tim. iv. 14.

The former passage runs thus :—*If any man love not the Lord Jesus, let him be anathema maranatha.* From 1 Cor. xii. 3. we find that the Jews, who pretended to be under the Spirit and teaching of God, called Jesus Christ *αυθημα* or *accursed*, that is, a person devoted to destruction. In 1 Cor. xvi. 22. Saint Paul retorts the whole upon themselves, and says, *If any man love not the Lord Jesus let him be* (that is, *he will be*) *accursed; the Lord will come.* This is not said in the way of imprecation, but as a *prediction* of what would certainly come upon the Jews if they did not repent; and of what *actually* came upon them, because they did not repent, but continued to *hate* and *execrate* the Saviour of the world, as well as a prediction of what still lies upon them because they continue to *hate* and *execrate* the Redeemer.

In 2 Tim. iv. 14. we read, *Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil; the Lord reward him according to his works*; which has the appearance of an imprecation. But instead of *ἀποδῶν* may the Lord reward, *ἀποδώσει* will reward is the reading of the Codices Alexandrinus and Ephremi (which are of the best authority), the Codices Claromontanus, San Germanensis, Augiensis, also of those numbered by Griesbach 6. 17. 31. 37. 67\*\* 71. 73. 80. and of the MS. by Matthæi noted with the letter f.;—of the Coptic, Armenian, and Vulgate versions—and of Chrysostom, Theodoret, Eulogius as cited by Photius, Johannes Damascenus, Oecumenius, Augustine, and others among the fathers of the Christian church. The reading of *ἀποδώσει* makes the sentence declaratory,—*The Lord will reward him according to his works*; and as it is supported by such satisfactory evidence, Griesbach has inserted it in his inner margin, as being nearly equal, if not preferable, to the common reading.<sup>1</sup> An additional proof that this is the preferable lection is furnished by the fact, that it is in unison with the spirit and temper of the intrepid Apostle, Saint Paul; who, in the sixteenth verse, when speaking of his being deserted by every one, when (during his second imprisonment at Rome) he was first summoned to vindicate himself before the sanguinary emperor Nero, says, *Let it not be placed to their charge*, that is, *Let them not have to reckon for it with the Supreme Judge, at the great day.*

23. The preceding examples, with two exceptions, have been taken from the Old Testament. So pure, indeed, is the morality of the New Testament, that the advocates of infidelity can find no other fault with it, than this,—that it carries the principle of *forbearance* too far, because, among other things, it inculcates the love of our enemies. Notwithstanding this involuntary testimony to its inimitable excellence, two passages have been singled out, as inculcating immorality, viz. Luke xvi. 8. and 1 Cor. ix. 5.

(1.) In Luke xv. 8. we read that *The lord commended the unjust steward* (who in the parable had been represented as having defrauded his master), *because he had done wisely*; and hence Jesus Christ has been unjustly charged with countenancing dishonesty. The whole of the context, however, shows, that it was the *master* or *lord of the steward*, and not Christ, who is represented as commending his conduct, and it is in consequence of his master's so commending him that Jesus made the reflection, that *the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.* The parable in question is to be interpreted *solely* in reference to the prin-

<sup>1</sup> Scholz, Lachmann, and Tischendorf have inserted *ἀποδώσει* as the proper reading of the text in their editions of the Greek Testament.

cial idea contained in it; and that idea is, from the conduct of a worldly minded man, to enforce upon the followers of Jesus Christ the necessity of their being at least as assiduous in pursuing the business of the next world,—the salvation of their souls, — as worldly minded men are in *their* management of the affairs of this world.

(2.) The interrogatory (1 Cor. ix. 5.) has been distorted into a charge of adultery against the apostle Paul. It would be a sufficient reply to this falsehood, to state that the whole of his conduct and sentiments completely disproves it. The purest benevolence, the severest reproofs of all sin, and the most exemplary discharge of all the civil, social, and relative duties pervade all his justly admired epistles. Let us, however, briefly consider this passage. It is sufficiently evident from the context, that at Corinth there were false teachers of Christianity, who questioned Paul's apostleship; and that he was obliged to conduct himself in the most circumspect manner, in order that they might not find any occasion against him. Having vindicated his apostolic character and mission, and proved his right to have the necessaries of life supplied to him, if he had demanded them of those among whom he had laboured gratuitously, he says, — *Have we not power (authority or right) to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord and Cephas?* What is there in this passage which can be construed into a sufficient proof of adultery in an English court of law? — When the apostle speaks of his right to take with him a sister, a wife, he means, first, that he and all other apostles, and, consequently, all ministers of the Gospel, had a RIGHT to marry; for it appears that James and Jude, who were *the brethren* or kinsmen of the Lord, were married; and we have infallible evidence that Peter (surnamed Cephas) was a married man, not only from this verse, but also from Matt. viii. 14. where his *mother-in-law* is mentioned as being cured by Jesus Christ of a fever. And, secondly, we find that their wives were persons of the same faith, for less can never be implied in the word *sister*. It is further worthy of notice that Clement of Alexandria has particularly remarked that the apostles carried their *wives* about with them, "not as wives but as *sisters*, that they might minister to those who were mistresses of families, that so the doctrine of the Lord might, *without reprehension or evil suspicion*, enter the apartments of the women."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Clementis Alexandrini Stromata, lib. iii. c. 6. (Op. tom. i. pp. 535, 536. Oxon, 1715.) Clement was one of the most learned Greek Christian writers in the close of the second century. His Stromata were written A. D. 193.