

A
DISCOURSE
For the Vindicating of
Christianity
FROM THE
Charge of *Imposture*.

OFFER'D,
By way of LETTER,
To the Consideration of the DEISTS
of the Present Age.

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L O N D O N .

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A

LETTER

TO THE

DEISTS, &c.

Gentlemen,

IF I am not mistaken, the Reason you give for your Renouncing that Religion ye were baptized into, and is the Religion of the Country in which ye were born, is, *That the Gospel of Jesus Christ is an Imposture* : An Assertion that I tremble to repeat. But whether that *Gospel* be right, or ye are in the right that deny it, will appear from the Consideration of the Nature of an *Imposture*, and from the Life of that most infamous

Impostor (whom we, as well as you, acknowledge to be such) which I have before given you the exact Picture of. And if you can find any one Lineament of it, any one Line of all its filthy Features in the whole *Gospel of Jesus Christ*, I durst say (so sure I am of the contrary) that for the sake hereof I will give you all you contend for, and yield you up the whole Cause. And therefore, that we may thoroughly examine the Matter, I will lay down, in the first place, What an *Imposture* is; 2dly. What are the inseparable Marks and Characters of it; And, 3dly, That none of these Marks can belong to the *Gospel of Jesus Christ*. And when I have donethis, I hope I shall convince all such of you, who have not totally abandon'd your selves to your Infidelity, That the *Gospel of Jesus Christ* is that Sacred Truth of God, which you are all bound to believe.

An *Imposture*, taking the Word in the full latitude of its Signification, may denote any *Lie* or *Cheat*, whereby one Man imposeth upon another. But it is most frequently used to express such *Cheats* as are impos'd on us by those who come with false *Characters* of themselves, pretending to be what they are not, in order

der to delude and deceive. And when this *Character*, which is thus falsely assum'd, is no less than a pretended *Embassy* from Heaven; and under the Credit of it a New *Religion* is deliver'd to the World as coming from *God*, which is nothing else but a *Forgery*, invented by the first Propagators of it, to impose a Cheat upon Mankind, it amounts to be an *Imposure* in that Sense, in which you would have the *Gospel* of *Jesus Christ* to be such. And in this Sense it is to be understood in the Controversy between us; so that the whole *Question* which we are to examine into, is, Whether the *Christian Religion* be a Truth really given unto us by *Divine Revelation* from *God* our *Creator*, or else a meer Human Invention, contrived by the first *Propagators* of it, to impose a Cheat upon Mankind. And when I have fully disprov'd the latter part of this *Question*, That the *Christian Religion* cannot be such an Invention, contrived to cheat and impose upon us, that will sufficiently prove the former, that it must be that Divine Truth, which all we that are *Christians* firmly believe it to be.

That it is possible such a Cheat may be imposed upon Men, cannot be deny'd. It is sufficiently prov'd in the foregoing

History, which is a very full Instance of it; and I have laid it before you for this very purpose, that you may therein see clearly delineated and display'd in all its proper Colours the whole nature of the Thing, which you charge our *Holy Religion* with. All that I contend for, is, That if *Christianity* be such an *Imposture* as we all acknowledge the *Religion* of *Mahomet* to be, it must be just such another thing as that is, with all the same Marks, Characters, and Properties of an *Imposture* belonging thereto; and that if none of those Marks, Characters, or Properties can be discover'd in it, it must be a clear Eviction of the whole Charge, and manifestly prove, That our *Holy Religion* cannot be that Thing, which you would have it to be. For our only way of knowing Things, is by their Marks and Properties; and it is by them only that we can discover what the Nature of them is. It is only by the Marks and Properties of a Man, that we know a Man from another Living Creature, for we cannot see the Essences of Things. And so it must be only by the Marks and Properties of an *Imposture*, that we can know an *Imposture* from that which is a real Truth, when attested unto us. And as where we
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find none of the Marks and Properties of a Man, we assuredly know that cannot be a Man, how much soever any one may tell us that it is : So where we find none of the Marks and Properties of an *Imposture*, we may assuredly know that cannot be an *Imposture*, how much soever you, or any other like you, may assert it so to be.

Now the *Marks* and *Characters* which I look on to be inseparable from every such *Imposture*, are these following :

1. That it must always have for its end some carnal Interest.
2. That it can have none but wicked Men for the Authors of it.
3. That both these must necessarily appear in the very Contexture of the *Imposture* it self.
4. That it can never be so fram'd, but that it must contain some palpable Falsities, which will discover the Falsity of all the rest.
5. That where-ever it is first propagated, it must be done by Craft and Fraud.
6. That when entrusted with many Conspirators, it can never be long conceal'd : And,
7. That it can never be establish'd, unless back'd with Force and Violence. That all these must belong to every *Imposture*, and all particularly did so to *Mahometism* ; and that none of them can be charged

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upon *Christianity*, is what I shall now proceed to shew you, of each of them in their order.

S E C T. I.

I. That every *Imposture* must have for its end some carnal Interest, is a thing so plain and evident, that I suppose it will not need much Proof. For to impose a Cheat upon Mankind, and in a Matter of that great Importance, as all that have any Religion, hold that to be, is a thing of that difficulty to compass, and of that danger to attempt, that it cannot be conceiv'd, why any one should put himself upon such a Design, that doth not propose some very valuable Advantage to himself in the Success. To cheat one Man is not always so easy a matter, or is it without its Mischiefs and Inconveniences in the Discovery. But to enterprize a Cheat upon all Mankind, and in a thing of that Importance, as the introducing of a New *Religion*, and the abolishing of the Old one (to which so many both by Custom and Education will be always zealously affected, be it what it will) must be an Undertaking of the greatest difficulty and hazard imaginable.

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For whoever engageth himself in such a Plot of *Imposture*, must unavoidably meet with many strong Oppositions to struggle with in the Management of it, which will continually put his Thoughts upon the rack, to find out Devices to surmount them, and his Body to incessant Pains and Labour to bring them into Execution; and for the effecting hereof, he must have some Confidants to assist him, some to help forward the Design, whom he must trust with the Secret of it, and the more he hath of such, the more he hazards all to a Discovery. And all this while his Mind will be fill'd with anxious Cares, and his Thoughts distracted with many uneasy and affrighting Apprehensions (as is usual with Men on wicked Designs) about the Success, and every Failure will expose him to that terrible Revenge from those he attempts to delude, as such a Villany whenever detected, most justly deserves. This was *Mahomet's* case all the while he was propagating his *Imposture* at *Mecca*, and so it must be of every other such *Impostor* also. And when a Man puts himself upon all this, the nature of the thing manifestly leads us to conclude, he must propose something to himself hereby, which may make him amends for all
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in the result. For when so much is put to hazard, Men do not use to do it for nothing. There must always be some great Interest in the bottom of such a Design, something that the Undertaker values at a more than ordinary rate, to make him engage in so exceeding difficult and dangerous an Enterprize. For wherever the Venture is great, it must be taken for granted there is an End proposed, which in the Estimation of the Venturer, is equivalent thereto. What it was that put *Mahomet* on his *Imposture*, the foregoing *History* of his Life sufficiently shews, it was his Ambition and his Lust. To have the Sovereignty over his Country, to gratify his Ambition, and as many Women as he pleased to satiate his Lust, was what he aim'd at ; and to gain himself a Party for the compassing of this, was the grand Design of that *New Religion* which he invented, and the whole end and reason of his imposing it on those he deluded thereinto. And whoever pursues the like Method must certainly have some such End in it ; it being totally incredible that any one should take upon him the Trouble, Fatigue, and Danger of carrying on such a Cheat only for cheating sake. But here we challenge all the Enemies of
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that *holy Religion* which we profess, to find out any thing like this in the *Gospel* of *Jesus Christ*, any thing that favours of worldly Interest either in him the first *Founder* of our *Faith*, or in any of his *holy Apostles*, who were the first *Propagators* of it. *Vaninus*, one of the most zealous Champions of Impiety that ever appear'd against the *Christian Cause* (for he dy'd a Martyr for it) hath attempted this : but after the most accurate and diligent Search which so keen an Adversary could make, he was forc'd to give up the Point ; and plainly acknowledge, That in the whole Series of the *History* and Actions of our *Saviour*, he could not find any thing that he could charge with secular Interest or Design to blast him or his *Religion* with. And if you will renew the same Attempt, tho' you extend the Enquiry much farther, even to his *Apostles*, and all the rest of his *Disciples*, who first preach'd this *holy Religion* to the *World*, and take in to your Assistance all the Enemies of it ; after the strictest Scrutiny that you can make, you will never have any better Success herein.

For had our *Saviour's* Design been to seduce the People for his own Interest, he must have taken the same course that
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other Seducers do. He must have flatter'd them in their Humours, and form'd his Doctrines to their Fancies ; courted those that were in greatest authority and esteem with them, and made it his Business mostly to preach against and decry those who were least in their Favour, and study'd and practis'd all other such Arts of Popularity, whereby he might best insinuate into their good liking, and gain that Interest with them, as might be sufficient to serve his Purpose, and obtain the End propos'd. These were the Methods whereby *Mahomet* first propagated his *Imposture*, and these are they which all others must take, whose Purpose it is to deceive the People. But our *Saviour* in every particular acted contrary hereto ; which sufficiently proves that he had no such design to compass. For he freely preach'd against whatever he found blameable in the People, spared not their most beloved Errors, or fram'd his Doctrines to indulge them in any one evil Practice, how predominant soever amongst them ; and was so far from courting those in the greatest authority and esteem with them, that he was most sharp and bitter against them above all others, whom they most idoliz'd, I mean the *Scribes* and *Phari-*
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sees; For he, on all Occasions, detected their *Hypocrisies*, and laid open their evil Practices, and in the severest manner rebuk'd and condemn'd them for their Iniquity therein, even to the preferring and justifying before them the wicked *Publicans*, who for their Exactions and Oppressions upon the People in their gathering the publick *Taxes*, were held among them the most hated of Men, and the worst of Sinners. And therefore, tho' his *Miracles* often drew their Admiration and their Applause on the one hand, his Doctrines and his Preachings as fast alienated them from him on the other; so that those very same Men, who, for the sake of the former, follow'd him often in Multitudes, and were ready to acknowledge him to be the Messiah, were as violently set against him at other times, for the sake of the latter, and at last crucify'd him on the account thereof. And is it possible to conceive, that he who took all those Courses so contrary to the Humour of the People, without regarding how much they tended to exasperate them against him, should have any Interest or Design of his own to serve himself of them?

When our *Saviour* took upon him to
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be the *Messias* that was promis'd, had he done it only as an *Impostor*, to promote a secular Interest and Design of his own, he would certainly have assum'd that Character according to those Notions in which the *Jews* expected him. For in this case the Expectation of the People must have been the grand Motive to the *Imposture*, and their looking for such a *Messias* to come, the main inducing reason of his putting himself thereon, and therefore to be sure, had he been an *Impostor*, he would have offer'd himself to them no otherwise than just such a *Messias* as their Notions of him would have him to be; and there are two special reasons which in this case would have determin'd him hereto. 1. Because those Notions offer'd to him the highest secular Interest that could be attained unto : And, 2. Because the suiting of his Pretensions exactly according to them, would have been the readiest and most likely way for him to carry the Interest, whatever it was, which you may suppose him to have aim'd at.

And, first, the Notions which the *Jews* had of the *Messias*, offer'd him the highest secular Interest that could be attain'd unto ; and therefore to be sure, when he took upon him to be that *Messias*, had he
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he done it only as an *Impostor*, for a secular Interest, he would have laid hold of that Interest offer'd, and under the Character which he assum'd, most certainly have claim'd all that which according to those Notions the *Messias* was to have. For this was nothing less than a most glorious secular Kingdom; the Expectations of the *Jews* being then concerning this Matter the same as they have ever since continued amongst them; that the

Messias * was to be a Secular Prince, who was to deliver them from their Enemies, and restore the Kingdom of *David* at *Jerusalem*, and there reign in great Glory and Splendor over the whole House of *Israel*. And what greater or more desirable Interest can this World afford, than such a State of Advancement?

And what is there that is more valu'd and esteem'd in the Opinion of all Mankind, than the Attainment thereof? And at that time when our *Saviour* first appear'd on his *Mission*, there was the most favourable Juncture that could offer it self, for his setting up for all this: For then the People
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* *The Messias shall come and restore the Kingdom of the House of David to the ancient State of its former Dominion, and shall rebuild the Temple, and gather together the dispersed of Israel; and then shall be re-established all the Legal Rites and Constitutions, as in former Times; and Sacrifices shall be offer'd, and the Sabbatical Years and Jubilees observed, according to every Precept deliver'd in the Law. Maimonides in Yad Hachazekah in Tract. de Regibus & Bellis eorum, cap. 11. sect. 1*

of the *Jews* being fallen under the Yoke of the *Roman* Government, and also grown very impatient under it, entertain'd a general Expectation of the speedy Coming of the *Messias*, under that Character of a *Temporal Prince*, which they had conceited of him, to deliver them from this Bondage, and by conquering those who subjected them thereto, again restore the *Kingdom of Israel*. And these Hopes had then taken that possession of their Minds,

and they were all so full of them, that every one stood in a manner ready and prepar'd to joyn with him, whosoever should take upon him to be the Person, as sufficiently appeareth not only from † the *Scriptures*, but also from the *History* which (*) *Josephus* wrote of those Times. And therefore had our *Saviour*, by taking upon him to be the *Messias*, aim'd only, as an *Impostor*, at a Secular Interest, What reason can be given, why he should not with the Name of the *Messias*, have also

† *Mark* 15. v. 43. *Luke* 2. v. 38. &c. 24 v. 31. *Acts* 1. v. 6. From all which Places compared together, it appears, that there was among the *Jews*, in the Time of our *Saviour*, a general Expectation of the speedy Coming of the *Messias*, and that their Notion was of a temporal Deliverance, and a temporal Restoration of the *Kingdom of Israel* to be effected by him. And this Expectation was it which made the Multitude so ready to joyn themselves to *Theudas*, and after to *Judas* of *Galilee*, of whom mention is made *Acts* 5. v. 36, 37. and after that to an *Egyptian Jew*, *Acts* 21. v. 38. on their pretending to be the Persons from whom this Deliverance was expected.

(*) *Josephus* not only makes mention of *Theudas*; and *Judas* of *Galilee*, and the *Egyptian*, of

claimed this grand Interest of a *Kingdom*, which, according to the Opinion of all those who expected a *Messias*, belong'd thereto? or why he should not in so favourable a Juncture, as was then offer'd for it, have possessed himself thereof? But he was so far from doing either of these, that he wav'd both, and not only omitted this Opportunity of possessing himself of this *Kingdom*, but also renounc'd and disclaim'd the whole thereof. For instead of laying any pretence to it, he set himself to confute those very Notions which gave it unto him, and to convince the People that they were mistaken in them, and thereby overthrew all that which offered unto him the highest Secular Interest which the Men of this World use to aim at. And not only so, but advanc'd

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whom we have an account in Scripture, *Antiq. lib. 20. c. 2. & c. 6.* but also of several others, who, on the same Pretences, found the Multitude ready to joyn themselves unto them. *Antiq. lib. 20. c. 6. & 7. & de Bello Judaico, l. 7. c. 31.* As did also *Barchosbas* in the Reign of *Adrian* the Roman Emperor. And what *Maimonides* delivers of the Doctrine of the Jews, concerning this Matter, might give any Man an Handle to offer at it. For, saith he, the *Messias* is not to be known by Signs or Wonders (for he is to work none) but only by Conquest. And therefore his Words are. *If there ariseth a King of the House of David, who is studious of the Law, and diligent in observing the Precepts of it, as was David his Father; that is, not only of the Law, which is written, but of the Oral also, and inclineth all Israel to walk therein, and repairs the Breaches, and fights the Battels of the Lord; this Person may be presum'd to be the Messias. But if he prospers in what he undertakes, and subdues all the neighbouring Nations round about him, and re-builds the Sanctuary in its former Place, and gathers together the dispers'd of Israel, then he is for certain the Messias.* *Maimonides in Yad Hachazekah Tract. de Regibus & Bellis eorum, c. 11. sect. 4.*

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in the stead of those Errors, such Doctrines concerning the *Messias*, as were not only without all manner of worldly Interest in them, but all levell'd directly opposite thereto. For he taught them, that the *Kingdom* of the *Messias* was not a *Temporal*, but a *Spiritual Kingdom*; that he was not to be a Judge and a Ruler over them in the Secular Affairs of this World, and the Pomp and Glory thereof, but to govern and direct their Hearts within by the Power of his Holy Spirit, in order to conform them to that Law of Righteousness, which might fit them to reign with him in the Kingdom of Everlasting Glory hereafter. And therefore when the *Jews*, being convinc'd by his wonderful Works that he was the *Messias*, would have taken him by Force and made him their *King*, he withdrew from among them to disappoint the Design. And when interrogated by *Pilate*, he told him his *Kingdom* was not of this World. And had he aim'd at any such thing, he would never have taught such Doctrines of himself, which so directly overthrew all that which gave him the most favourable Advantage of attaining thereto. Had he offer'd at more of this World's Interest than the *Notions* of the *Jews* invested him with (if it were possible

ble more could be had than those gave their *Messias*; or if he had joyn'd thereto, the Enjoyment of carnal Pleasure, as *Mahomet* did, there might then have been some ground of charging him of differing from those Notions for the serving of his own Interest; but when the Change was on the quite contrary hand, and instead of being that reigning and glorious *Messias*, amidst the highest Pomp and Splendor of this World, as the *Jews* would have had him to be, he declar'd himself only for such a *Kingdom* as had nothing of this World in it, and whose greatest Perfection lay in its greatest Opposition thereto; he that will say that there was any thing of this World in his thus stripping himself of all the Pomp and Glory of it, or that there could be any design of Interest for himself, where all manner of Self-Interest is thus renounc'd, must reconcile Contradictions, and make the nature of one Extreme to consist in the other, which is most directly opposite thereto. Had he, when he took upon him to be the *Messias*, done it only for a worldly Interest, this great Interest of reigning, so obviously offer'd it self unto him under that Character, that it cannot be conceiv'd how he should ever have avoided it. The Power, and Glory, and

Riches of a *Kingdom*, are too great Baits of Allurement to the worldly-minded Man, ever to be refus'd by such a one, after he had assum'd that Character, which, in the generally receiv'd Notion of it, invested him with them. Or can it be imagin'd, since these are the only Things which could make that Character at all desirable to an *Impostor*, why any Man should run the great Hazard and Trouble of being such in the assuming of it, but for the sake of them? All those false *Christs*, who have been real *Impostors*, and have in several Ages started up to delude the World with this Pretence, have ever with the Name of the *Messias*, claimed also this *Kingdom*, which the *Jews* ascribed thereto; and that in every such Scene of Deceit, which hath open'd in the World, hath always appear'd to have been the Bait, which allur'd those Wretches to act that Part therein. And had our *Saviour* been such a one as they, he must certainly have taken the same course. For to do otherwise, would have been to do the Wickedness without the Temptation, and to run the Hazard without that which was to reward the Success. But he having been so far herefrom, that he did not only renounce this Kingdom, but

but all manner of other worldly Interest whatever; this plainly shews he could have no Design upon this World by that *Mission* which he undertook, or had any other reason for his entring on it as the *Messias*, but that he was really that Person; whom *God*, by his *Holy Prophets*, had so often promis'd, and at length, in fullness of Time, accordingly sent to bring Life and Salvation unto us.

2. Had our *Saviour*, when he took upon him to be the *Messias*, done it only as an *Impostor*, for a Secular Interest, he would have assum'd that Character according to those Notions in which the *Jews* expected him, because this would have been the readiest and most likely way for him to carry that Interest, whatever you may suppose it to be. For the eager Expectations of that People being then for such a reigning *Messias*, as they had drawn a Picture of in their own Fancies, his only way to have gotten them to own and receive him for the *Messias*, was for him exactly to have humour'd them herein, and propos'd himself to them just such a one as they would have had him to be. And had his Intent been only to seduce them under that Character, in order to serve himself of them for a Secular Interest,

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terest, this Method is that which is so obviously necessary in such a case, that it could not have been avoided. For to do otherwise, would evidently have been to put the matter in a most certain Method totally to miscarry, and make the whole Design impracticable. To come to them as their *Messias*, under a Character totally differing from that in which they expected him, would be sufficient to make them, for that very reason, never to receive him. Altho' Humility, and the debasing of a Man's self, may, in other cases, be a means to court Popularity, and procure the Favour of the People, it could never have serv'd in this; nor would our *Saviour's* taking upon him the Character of the *Messias*, so vastly lower as to this World, than the general Opinion then gave it unto him, have been of any stead to him in order thereto; but quite the contrary. For the *Jews* had then fram'd their Notions of the *Messias* they expected, for their own Sakes rather than his; suitable to those worldly Interests they were most in love with, and those Notions went current through the whole *Nation*, as the true and exact Description of him, by which he was to be known at his coming. And therefore for any one to propose himself

himself to them, as the *Messias*, under a Character totally disagreeing herefrom, would have been the readiest way for him to be told, that he was not therefore the Man; and this, instead of being a means to seduce them to him, become such a reason for their rejecting him, as no Art of *Imposture* would ever have been able to master. And this, indeed, prov'd the main cause, that, notwithstanding our *Saviour's* Miracles, the *Jews*, who daily saw them, were still harden'd in their Aversion against him; and it continues with them to this Day the grand Stumbling-block of Infidelity, which they cannot get over. For they look for a *Messias*, that was to subdue their Enemies, and deliver them from the Slavery of the *Romans*, and by the Establishment of a *Temporal Kingdom* over them, advance the State of their *Nation* to the highest Prosperity, and their *Law* to the highest Perfection of Observance, which both were capable of. But he proposed himself unto them as a *Messias*, which had nothing to do with this World, or any of the Interests of it; and instead of the *Temporal Kingdom* they expected, claim'd only a *Spiritual*; and instead of the outward Rites and Ceremonies of the *Mosaical Law*,

which were all fulfill'd and done away in him, taught them only to worship *God* in Spirit and in Truth. And what could more displease and alienate from him, Men so eager upon this World, and the Glory and Riches of it, than thus, instead of Conquest over Enemies, Extent of Power, and a most flourishing State of Prosperity, which they dreamt of, to preach to them of Mortification, Repentance, Self-denial, and those other *Christian* Virtues, in the increase of which the true Prosperity of *Christ's Kingdom* only consists; and instead of their *Temple*, and the outward Pomp and Splendor of the Worship there perform'd, which they so much valu'd themselves upon, and so zealously affected, thus to propose to them the worshipping of *God* without all this, only in that Spiritual manner, which, under the numerous Rites of the *Mosaical Law*, they had not been accustomed to have any great regard unto? For this was to baulk them of the Hopes they most delighted in, and put a Baffle upon them in those eager Expectations and most earnest Desires, which their Hearts had long dwelt upon. And how ill they were able to brook this, will appear by this Instance in the *Gospel**, That those very same Men

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who, on the seeing of his *Miracles*, were so firmly convinc'd of his being the *Messias*, that they would forthwith have taken him by force, and declar'd him their *King*; the next Day after, on his preaching to them of Spiritual Things, and offering thereby to withdraw their Minds from the perishable Things of this World, to fix them on those which endure to everlasting Life, murmur'd against him, and would no more endure him. For their Hearts were after a *Messias* that should found them a *Temporal Kingdom*, and make them great and glorious, and powerful therein; and to set up a *Spiritual Kingdom* instead hereof, was not only to deprive himself of the Grandeur of the other, but them also of the Portion which they expected therein. And no one certainly that intended a worldly Interest by such an Undertaking, would ever have projected it in such a Method as this, which was so totally inconsistent with it. For this would be to renounce in the very Act the End which he propos'd, and make the Attainment of it impracticable by the very Means whereby he pursu'd it; It would be to wave the highest Interest in this World, to pursue after another, which no one can imagine what, and thereby totally alienate

alienate those from him, by whom alone he could hope in such a Design as this to attain any at all. And therefore had a worldly End and a worldly Interest been all that our *Saviour* aim'd at in his taking upon him to be the *Messias*, whom the *Jews* expected, he would never so much contrary to that Interest, and so much contrary to that most obvious means of carrying on such a Design, have assum'd that Character in a manner so much differing from that under which they expected him: Or could he by such a Method of Procedure ever have made any thing of the Attempt among them, had he not on his side the Power of God, as well as his Mission, to make him successful therein?

Had his Business only been to deceive the People for the advancing of some secular Interest of his own, he would never have attempted it in so unlikely a way of succeeding, as that of abolishing the *Mosaical Law*, to which the whole Nation of the *Jews* were then so zealously addicted, that they could not bear the least Word which might seem to derogate either from the Excellency which they conceiv'd of it, or that Opinion which they then had, and still retain, that it
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was to be immutably observ'd by them to the end of the World. The case of *Mahomet* with his Men of *Mecca* was quite otherwise, he found no such Zeal in them for their old *Religion* to struggle with ; they themselves were then grown so weary of it, that the Generality of them had in a manner totally exchange'd it for no *Religion* at all, at that time *Mahomet* first began to propagate his *Imposture* among them ; they having then for they most part given themselves up to the Opinions of the *Zendikees*, who in the same manner as the *Epicureans* among the *Greeks*, and too many now a-days among us, acknowledg'd the Being of a *God*, but denying his Providence, the Immortality of the Soul, and a Future State, did at the same time deny all manner of Necessity of paying any Worship unto him. And no wonder then, if such Men, who plac'd their All in this World , were easily brought over to a *Sect*, whose chief Aim was at worldly Prosperity and worldly Pleasure in the *Religion* which they profess'd. This *Mahomet* was well enough aware of, before he started his new *Religion* among them ; and it seems to have been the greatest Encouragement which embolden'd him to venture on that Attempt.

tempt. However, since they still retain'd the outward Form of their *Religion* after they had deserted the Substance of it, he found even from hence that Opposition to his Design, that to make it go down, he was forc'd to retain all those Rites and Ceremonies in his new *Religion*, which they had been afore us'd to in their old; and in order hereto, he chose to make some dangerous alterations in his first Establishments, as particularly in that of the *Kebla*, rather than ruffle his *Arabians* by abolishing what he found them through long Usage and Custom any way affected to. For his Business being to deceive the People, his care was to offer at nothing which might be difficult to go down with them, and so must it be of every other Deceiver who takes upon him to act the like Part. But in every particular it was quite otherwise with our *Saviour*, and those whom he first preached his *Gospel* unto. For the *Jezees* having undergone several terrible Scourges from the Hand of *God* for the Neglect of that Law which he had given them, were from their former too much Disregard of it then grown into the contrary Extreme of being with exceeding Superstition and Bigotry too much devoted to it. They then look'd on it with
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the same Veneration as they still do, to be an immutable Law never to be alter'd, That the *Messias* himself on his coming should not make the least Change therein, but that the Glory of his Kingdom should chiefly consist in the Perfection of its Observance, and the exact Performance of the Worship it prescrib'd; and for any one to advance any Doctrine contrary hereto, was reckon'd no less than (*) *Blasphemy* (*) *Act. 6.* among them. And therefore had our *Saviour* only consulted Flesh and Blood in the *Mission* which he undertook; had he had no other Design therein than a secular Interest and a worldly End, he would never have oppos'd himself against the violent Current of such predominant Opinions as he found then reigning among them whom he first preached his *Gospel* unto, or ever durst have offer'd at the Abolition of that *Law* which they were so violently bigotted unto. Had he come to deceive them as a *Seducer*, the very nature of the thing must necessarily have directed him to a quite contrary Method; that is, to sooth and colloque with them whom he came to impose upon; to have contradicted no Opinion they were violent for, or oppos'd any Doctrine which they were zealously affected to, but to have

have study'd their Humours, and learn'd their Notions, and so fram'd and suited all his Doctrines according thereto, as might best take to draw them over to the End design'd. To have done otherwise would have been to set Priest and People against him, as an Enemy to their *Religion*, and a Blasphemer of their *Law*. And as our *Saviour* found it so in the result, so it must have been obvious to any one in his case to have foreseen it from the beginning. And therefore since notwithstanding this, he took this Method, so contrary to the whole End and Design of one that intends a Cheat upon the People, and without having any regard to that Zeal with which the *Jews* were then so violently bigotted to their *Law*, or that Rage of Resentment which they were ready to express against whatsoever in the least should derogate from it, did boldly preach unto them such Doctrines as totally disannull'd it; this manifestly proves he could have no Interest of his own to serve upon them in this Undertaking, or that he had any other reason for his entering on it, but that he was sent of *God* so to do.

The grand and fundamental Doctrine of the *Religion* which *Jesus Christ* left
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his *Church*, was that of his Death and Passion, whereby he made Atonement for our Sins, and deliver'd us from the Punishment which was due unto us for them. By this means only he propos'd to save us, that is, from Sin, the Devil, and Eternal Death; and by this Conflict only did he undertake to subdue these our Enemies for us, and on that Conquest to found us a *Kingdom*, which should make us holy and righteous here, and for ever blessed with him in Glory hereafter. This was the whole End and Purpose of our *Saviour's* Mission; this he frequently foretold to his *Disciples*, and on this was founded the whole *Religion* which he taught them. And can any one say he could have a Design of Secular Interest for himself in such a *Religion* as this, which could have no Being but by his dying for it, or any reason for its Establishment among Men, till he had laid down his Life for the completing of it? To say there was any thing of worldly Interest in this, would be to charge it on his Cross, and place it in that bitter and ignominious Death which he underwent thereon. Men sometimes put their Lives to great Hazard for the Interests of this World; but for a Man purposely to design Death for such an End,
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and part with this World in such a manner as *Christ* did, for the sake of any thing that this World hath, is a thing which was never yet heard of, and is in it self so contrary to the most obvious Dictates both of Reason and Nature, that no one can be so absurd as to imagine it possible for any Man so to do.

But that which I know you will say in this case is, That it was not *Christ* himself, but his Disciples after his Death, that made this a Part of his *Religion*; That he intended no such thing in the Undertaking he enter'd on, that it should end in his Death, and be compleated by his Crucifixion; but that this hapning unto him, those who kept up his Party, and propagated his Religion after him, foisted this thereinto, to salve the Ignominy of his Death, and serve themselves of it, for the better carrying on of their Designs thereby. And if so, then the *Imposture* must be shifted from him to his *Disciples*. And in this case the same Enquiry must still be made, What Advantage could they propose to themselves herefrom? For if *Christs* having no Self-design or worldly Interest in the *Religion* which he taught, be of any Force to acquit him of being guilty of *Imposture* therein (as it must
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with every Man of unprejudic'd Reason) It must also be of force to acquit them of the same Charge who propagated it after him. And what worldly Interest is it which they could possibly have in this Matter? If you say *Empire*, how improbable is it, that a few poor *Fishermen*, without any manner of Foundation either of Power, Riches, or Interest with others, for the carrying on of such a Design, should ever frame in their Thoughts the least Imagination tending thereto, especially at that time when the *Roman Empire*, being in its utmost height and vigour, had the major part of the then known World united under its Command, to crush the greatest Attempts of this nature, which might be made against it? If Riches and Honour be alledg'd as their End, I must desire you to tell me how this could be a Means to gain them? or whether any one of them ever attain'd to either thereby? If we examine into the Accounts which we have of their Lives and Actions, we shall find them journeying about the World from Place to Place in great Poverty, and under all the Difficulties and Pressures of it, to discharge that *Apostleship* which was committed unto them, and in every Place where they came to be load-

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ed with Contempt, Oppression, and Persecution for the sake of that *Religion* which they taught. Had Riches and Honour been the End propos'd for all this, certainly after having experienc'd, by the ill Success, how improper Means they had taken in order thereto, some of them would have desisted from the Enterprize, and no longer have pursu'd a Design which could not answer its End. But you cannot bring us an Instance of any one of them that did this. No, they still went on in the Work which they had undertaken, and without being weary'd by the Poverty they labour'd under, or, in the least discourag'd by that Contempt, Scorn, and Persecution which they every where met with, all constantly persever'd to preach that *Gospel* which they had receiv'd, even to their Lives end ; and not only so, but most of them laid down their Lives for the sake thereof, which they would never have done, if they had not for that *Ministry* a much higher Reason than all the Honour and Riches of this World could ever amount unto. All that can be said of any worldly Interest for them in their preaching up that *Religion* which they propagated, is, That they were thereby made Heads of the Party which they drew
over

over thereto. But alas, what Advantage could this be unto them to be thus made Heads of a contemn'd, oppress'd and persecuted Party of Men, who were everywhere sought out for Bonds, Imprisonments and Death? To head such a Party, what is it but to expose a Man's self to the greater Danger, and set himself up to receive the first Strokes of every Persecution which was levell'd against it? For in this case, those who head the Party are most sought after, and the Ring-leaders of it are ever made the first and the most signal Examples of every Severity which is design'd for its Oppression. And this was all that the *Apostles* got by heading that Party which they converted to the *Christian Religion*; and what of worldly Interest could be found therein? If the heading of a Party be of any Advantage to a Man, it must be then only when it brings him Honour, or Power, or Riches, or some other worldly Enjoyment. But to head such a Party as the first *Christians* were, could bring neither of these therewith; but, on the contrary, Poverty, Contempt, Oppressions, and Persecutions, were all the Fruits, as to this World, which the *Apostles* of our *Saviour* reaped thereby. And certainly on these Terms to head a

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Party, could never have been the Reason to make them enter on that Undertaking; or if it had, they could never under such Discouragements have long continued therein.

S E C T. II.

II. And thus far having examin'd the first Mark of *Imposture*, and, I hope, sufficiently shown it cannot belong to that *Holy Religion* which we profess: I shall now proceed to the second; that is, that it must always have wicked Men for the *Authors* of it. For thus to impose upon Mankind a false *Religion*, is the worst of Cheats, and the highest Injustice which can be done either to *God* or Man: to *God*, because it robs him of the Worship of his Creatures, either by diverting it to a false Object, or by directing it to him in such a false Way, as cannot be accepted of before him. And to Man, because it deprives him of his *God*, by putting him upon such a false *Religion* as must necessarily alienate both his Mercy and his Favour from him. And to do this is such a consummate piece of Iniquity, that it is impossible any one can arrive thereto, without having first corrupted himself to a great degree in all Things else

else. For such an one must have cast off all Fear of God, as well as all regard of Man, before he could ever offer at so great a Wickedness against both. And when a Man is come to this, to be sure he will stick at nothing whereby his Lusts may be gratify'd, or any carnal Interest serv'd, which he sets his Heart upon, but will make the Corruptions of his Mind appear in all the Actions of his Life, and be thoroughly wicked in every thing where his own Interest, or his own Designs, do not put a Restraint upon him. And that *Mahomet* was such a one, the *History* of his Life, which I have laid before you, sufficiently shows.

But who ever yet charged * *Jesus Christ*, or his Holy *Apostles* with any thing like this? not *Celsus*, not *Porphyry*, nor *Julian*, or any other of the *Heathens*, or the *Jews*, who were the bitterest Enemies of *Christianity*, and the greatest Opposers of it. And to be

* All that the bitterest Enemies of *Christianity* have ever objected against our Saviour, save a fabulous Story of his Birth, amounts to no more than this, That he was a *Magician*, which was an Invention fram'd only to salve his working of *Miracles* (which they could not deny in such a manner as to make them give no Reputation or Authority to the Doctrines which he taught.

sure could they have found any such Accusation against any of them, they would never have spar'd to have made the utmost use of it they could, for the blasting

of that *Religion* which they taught. For it is a popular *Argument*, which would have serv'd their purpose among the People more than any other they could have offer'd unto them. And we see with what success the various *Sects* among us serve themselves of it every Day, no Argument being more prevalent amongst the unthinking Multitude, for the beating down the Reputation of any Profession of *Religion*, than the ripping up of the Faults of those that teach it. To examine into all the Labyrinths and abstruse Speculations of Reason and Argument, which may be brought for or against any *Religion*, is an operous Business, which all have not Capacities for, and few care to attend to. But of Good and Evil every Man is judge; and where they find the Teachers of any *Religion* to be wicked and naught, it is an Inference which they are all apt too precipitately to run into, that the *Religion* must be naught also; and without any further examining into it, condemn it so to be. And I find there is nothing which you your selves are more greedy to lay hold of for an Argument against our holy *Christian Religion*, than the Faults which you observe in some of our *Ministers*, whose Business it is to promote it. And therefore

fore if the Faults of the present Teachers of *Christianity* be apt thus to afford so popular and prevalent an Argument against it, how much more would the Faults of the first Founders and Propagators of it have done so, had there been any such to object against them? And had there been any such, so keen and searching Adversaries would never have suffer'd the Discovery to have escap'd them, or ever fail'd to have objected it for the serving of their turn to the utmost they were able; and it can be owing to nothing but their most unblamable Innocency, that they have been secur'd herefrom. To say that they could not have that Knowledge of their Lives and Actions, as was sufficient for them to discern their Faults, and observe their Mis-carriages, will not solve the Matter. Though *Mahomet* acted his *Imposture* so many hundred Miles within the remoter Parts of *Arabia*, among a People who, by vast Desarts, were in a manner cut off from the Converse of the rest of Mankind, where very few or none of any other Nation ever came to spy out his Actions, or observe his Doings, and where he had none else to be Witnesses of them, but those only who all embrac'd his Forgery, and became

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zealously

zealously addicted to it; yet all this could not serve to conceal his Faults, or hide his monstrous Wickednesses from being observ'd and recorded against him. The foregoing *History* gives you a large Catalogue of them, and they are vouched by the Authority of some of the most authentick Writers of his own *Seēt*. But *Christianity* had not its Birth in such an obscure Hole, nor did the first *Founder* of it, or those who propagated it after him, make their first Appearance among such rude and illiterate *Barbarians* as that *Impostor* did, but on one of the openest Stages in the World, at *Jerusalem*, and in the Land of *Judea*; and not in an Age when, as formerly, that *Nation* separated it self from all others, and had no Converse with any but themselves; but when they had scatter'd themselves abroad, and mingled with all other Nations, and also were forc'd to admit all other Nations to mingle with them by being made a Province of the *Roman Empire*, which brought not only Soldiers and Merchants of other Nations among them, but also open'd the Gate to all others, as they should think fit, to come and reside among them. And the *Temple* at *Jerusalem* being that where all of the *Jewish Religion* worshipped;

ped; this constantly brought thither from all Nations those who profess'd it, which made a very great resort thither from all Parts of the World, especially at their three great *Festivals*. And therefore just after our *Saviour's* Sufferings at the time of *Pentecost* next following, we are told that there were then at *Jerusalem* (*) *Par-* (*) *Acts 2. v. 9, 10, 11.*
thians, Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers of Mesopotamia, Cappadocia, Pontus, Asia, Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt, Libya, and Cyrene, with the Strangers of Rome, Cretes and Arabians. So that to be sure nothing could be hid or conceal'd, which was done on so open a Stage of the World, and in the Sight of so many Nations as were then present upon it; nor is it possible if those who then first deliver'd the *Christian Religion* to the World, had been such wicked Persons as *Mahomet* was, and all other *Impostors* must be, it could ever have escap'd their Observation. And if it had at *Jerusalem*, there were other Occasions enough given for a fuller Discovery afterwards. For the Holy *Apostles* after our *Saviour's* Death, did not confine themselves to *Jerusalem*, and the Land of *Judea* only, but dispers'd themselves throughout the whole Earth, and at *Rome*, at *Athens*, and in many other celebrated Cities

Cities appear'd openly, teaching the *Religion* which they had receiv'd, and forming *Churches* of those whom they had converted thereto, and thereby exposing their *Lives* and *Actions* publickly to the view of the whole World, made all Mankind in a manner *Witnesses* of what they did. And *Christianity* was not such an acceptable thing to the World, as to move the Men of it to be so canded and good-natur'd to the first Authors of it, as to conceal their Faults, and hide their Wickednesses, had there been any such in them. No, it was that which was against the Lusts and Pleasures, and the other evil Courses of this World, more than any other *Religion* which was ever taught therein; and this put the World as much against it, and all that adhered thereto; and therefore we find them to be a Party of Men not only every-where spoken against, but also every-where hated, opposed, and persecuted to the utmost. And when so general an Odium was risen against them, and both *Jews* and *Gentiles* conspir'd together therein, to be sure there were not wanting abundance that made it their Business to pry into their Actions, and examine their Practices with all that Spight, Unfairness, and ill Interpretation

pretation of Things, as is usual in such Cases. And could they by all this Search, Inquiry, and strict Observation, have found any thing to charge upon *Christ* or his *Apostles*, which might cast a Blot upon the *Religion* which they taught, to be sure we should have heard enough of it. For those who propagated their Odi-um against this holy *Religion* to the next succeeding Ages, to that excessive degree, in which the *Primitive Christians* experienc'd it in those terrible Persecutions which they underwent for three hundred Years together, would certainly have propagated therewith all the Accusations they were able against those who were the first Founders and Teachers of it. And to be sure, when (*) *Celsus*, *Porphyry*, and *Julian*, and other bitter Opposers of *Christianity*, as well *Jews* as *Heathens*, took Pen in hand to write against it, we should have been told enough of it. But nothing of this appearing in any of their Writings, or a-

* The main Things which *Celsus* and *Julian* objected in their Books against the *Christian Religion* are preserv'd in the Answers which *Origen* wrote to the former, and *St. Cyril of Alexandria* to the latter; but the Books themselves are perish'd, as are also those of *Porphyry* written by him in fifteen Tomes on the same Argument; for they being full of virulent Blasphemies, *Theodosius* the Emperor, by a Law, caused them every-where to be burnt and destroy'd; but a great many Remains and Fragments of them are still preserv'd in the Works of *Eusebius*, and something also of him in *St. Hieron* in *Præfatione ad lib. 1. Comment. in Epist. ad Galatas*. *Celsus* lived in the second, *Porphyry* in the third, and *Julian* in the fourth Century after *Christ*.

ny of the least Memorial of it being to be found in any Record whatsoever against them; this manifestly proves that they are even in the Judgment of their bitterest Enemies totally free of this Charge, and consequently, being just and righteous

Persons, (and of *Christ* and *St. James* one of his *Apostles*, (*) *Josephus*, though a *Jew*, particularly attests, that they were so) they could never be guilty of so great a Wickedness both against *God* and *Man*, as to have impos'd a Cheat upon us in that *Religion* which they deliver'd unto us.

(*) His Words of our *Saviour* are, that he was a *wise Man*, (a Title not given in those days but to such as were also good) and that he was a *Worker of Miracles*, and a *Teacher of Truth*, lib. 18. c. 4. And of *James* he hath these Words, *These things* (i. e. the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, and the Calamities that attended it) *fell by way of just Vengeance upon the Jews for James the Just, who was the Brother of Jesus call'd Christ, because the Jews had murder'd him, being a most righteous Man.*

It must be acknowledg'd that this Passage is not now extant in *Josephus*, but it is quoted by *Eusebius* in the Second Book of his *Ecclesiastical History*, c. 23. and also by *Origen* in his Second Book against *Celsus*, which would never have been done by them, had it not been extant in the Copies of his Works which were then in use, however it came to be omitted since. For to have falsly alledg'd such a Testimony to the Enemies of *Christianity*, especially to one so acute and sharp as *Celsus* was, would have given them too great an Advantage against it. But what is still extant in *Josephus*, amounts to the same thing; for speaking of his being put to death by *Annas* the High-Priest, *Antiq. lib. 20. c. 8.* he says, *that all good Men were offended at it;* which sufficiently expresth him to be a good Man also. For why else should they be so concern'd for him?

S E C T. III.

III. And if they had been such wicked Persons as thus to have imposed upon us a false *Religion* for their own Interest, both their Wickedness and the Interest which they drove at, must necessarily have appear'd in the very Contexture of the *Religion* it self; and the Books of the *New Testament*, in which it is contain'd, would have as evidently prov'd both these against them, as the *Alcoran* doth against *Mahomet*, every Chapter of which yieldeth us manifest Proofs both of the wicked Affections of the Man, and the Self-ends which he drove at for the gratifying of them.

For, first, when a Man proposeth an End of Self-Interest, and invents a new *Religion*, and writes a new *Law* on purpose for the obtaining of it, it's impossible but that this End must appear in the Means, and the *Imposture*, which was invented of purpose to promote it, must discover what it is. For in this case the new *Religion* and the new *Law* must be calculated for this End, and be all form'd and contriv'd in order thereto, otherwise it can have no Efficiency for the obtaining
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ing of it, nor at all answer the purpose of the Inventor for the compassing of what he propos'd ; and if it be thus calculated, ordered and contriv'd for such an End, that End cannot but be seen and discover'd in those Means. For the End and Means prove each other ; that is, as the Nature of the End propos'd shows us what Means must be made use of for the obtaining of it ; so do the Nature of the Means which we use, discover what is the End which they drive at. And as far as the Means have a tendency to the End, so much must they have of that End in them ; and it is not possible for him that useth the one, long to conceal the other. And therefore nothing is more obvious and common among us, than by the Courses which a Man takes to discern the End which he would have. As *Mahomet* invented his new *Religion* to promote his own Ends ; so the *Alcoran*, in which it is contain'd, sufficiently proves it, there being scarce a Leaf in that Book which doth not lay down some Particulars, which tend to the gratifying either of the Ambition or the Lust of that Monster who contriv'd it. And had the first Founder of our holy *Christian Religion*, or they who were the first Propagators of it,
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any such End therein, the Books of the *New Testament*, in which it is written, would have as palpably shown it. But here we challenge all the Enemies of our *Faith* to use their utmost Skill to make any such Discovery in them. They have already gone through the strict Scrutiny of many Ages, as well as of all manner of Adversaries, and none have ever yet been able to tax them herewith. For instead of being calculated for the Interest of this World, their whole Design is to withdraw our Hearts from it, and fix them upon the Interest of that which is to come. And therefore the Doctrines which they inculcate are those of Mortification, Repentance, and Self-denial, which speak not unto us of Fighting, Bloodshed, and Conquest, as the *Alcoran* doth, for the advancing of a Temporal *Kingdom*; but that renouncing all the Pomps, and Vanities, and Lusts of this present World, we live soberly, righteously, and godly in the Presence of him that made us; and instead of pursuing after the perishable Things of this Life, we set our Hearts only on those Heavenly Riches, which will make us great and glorious and blessed for ever hereafter. For as the Kingdom of *Christ* is not of this World, so neither do those *Books*, in which are
written

written the *Laws* of this Kingdom, favour any thing thereof. The *Mammon* of this World, and the Righteousness which they prescribe us, are declar'd in them to be totally inconsistent. The *Old Testament* indeed, as being under the Dispensation of carnal Ordinances, which were the Shadows only of those Things after to come under the *Gospel*, treated with Men suitably thereto. And therefore we find much of this World both by way of Promise as well as Threat to be propos'd therein. But it is quite otherwise with the *New* : For in that Revelation, being given to the perfecting of Righteousness, all things were advanc'd thereby from Earth to Heaven, and from Flesh to Spirit. And therefore as the whole End of it is to make Men spiritual, so are we directed thereby to look only to spiritual and heavenly Blessings for the Reward hereof. Had our *Saviour* propos'd Victory, or Riches, or carnal Pleasures to his Followers, as *Mahomet* did, then indeed his *Law* would have sufficiently favour'd of this World to make Men suspect that he aim'd at nothing else thereby. But he was so far herefrom, that instead of this, the whole Tenour of his Doctrine runs the quite contrary way, we being told of nothing else through the whole

whole *New Testament*, but of Tribulations, Afflictions, and Persecutions, which shall attend all such, as to this World, who faithfully set their Hearts to become his Disciples ; and the Experience of all Ages since hath sufficiently verify'd the Prediction. And indeed the very *Religion* which he hath taught us, is of that Holiness, that according to the Course of this wicked World, it naturally leads us thereinto. And how then can it be said, that any thing of worldly Interest can be contained either in this *Religion*, or those holy Books in which it is written ?

I cannot deny, that there are some Men so crafty and cunning in pursuing their Interest, that it shall not easily be discerned in the Means what it is which they drive at for their End. But how great a compass soever such may fetch about to the Point which they aim at, or in what bye and secret Paths soever they make forward towards it ; yet if the Means, which they make use of, have any tendency thither, they can never be so totally blended, but there will always appear in them enough of the End to make the Discovery to any accurate Observer ; and at length when the Plot grows ripe for Execution, and the Designer begins to offer at the putting himself in possession of what he

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proposed (as all such Designers must at last) the whole Scene must then be laid open, and every one will be able to see thereinto. And therefore if you will have it that the Holy *Apostles* and *Evangelists*, who were the first Penners of the *New Testament*, were such cunning and crafty Men, as to be able thus artfully to conceal their Designs in those Books, which you suppose they wrote of purpose to promote them (which cannot reasonably be imagin'd of Men of their Education and Condition in the World, they being all, except *St. Paul* and *St. Luke*, of the meanest Occupations among the People, and totally unlearned) yet if they contriv'd those Books with any tendency towards those Designs (and it cannot be conceiv'd how otherwise they could help forward to the obtaining of them) it is impossible they could thus have pass'd thorough so many Ages, and all the strict Examinations of *Heathens*, *Jews*, *Atheists*, and all other Adversaries, who have so strenuously endeavour'd to overthrow their Authority, and no Discovery be made hereof. For supposing at first, under the Mask of renouncing the World, they might a while conceal their Designs for the Interest of it (which is the utmost you can say in this case) yet this could not last long:

long : For if this were all they design'd by teaching that holy *Religion*, and writing those Books in which it is contain'd, some time or other they must have put those Designs in Execution, otherwise they would have been in vain laid; some time or other they must have endeavour'd by them to obtain what they aim'd at, otherwise the whole Projection of them would have been to no purpose; and if they ever did so (as to be sure they would, had this been their End) then, as it happens in all other Stratagems of the like nature, with how much Artifice soever they might conceal what they intended in the Contrivance, all at last must have come out in the Execution; and when they began to put themselves in possession of the End they aim'd at, or at least made any Offer towards it, the whole Cheat must then have been unmask'd, and every one would have been able to see into the depth thereof. But when did our *Saviour*, or any of his holy *Apostles*, by virtue of any of those Doctrines deliver'd down unto us in the Books of the *New Testament*, ever put themselves in possession of any such worldly Interest? Or when did they ever make the least Offer in order thereto? Have any of the ancient Enemies of our Holy *Religion* (and it had bitter ones

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enough

enough from the very beginning) ever recorded any such against them? Or have any other ever since from any good Authority, or any Authority at all, ever been able to tax them herewith? Or is it possible their Names could have remain'd untainted of this Charge amidst so many Adversaries, who have now for near seventeen hundred Years stood up in every Age to oppose that holy *Religion* which they have deliver'd unto us, had they in the least been guilty hereof? Nay, hath it been as much as ever said of them, that they practis'd as to this World, any otherwise than they taught, or ever dealt with the Interests of it in any other manner, than totally to renounce them? Or had they at all any other Portion in this Life, than that of Persecution, Affliction, and Tribulation, as it is foretold in those Holy Books that they should? And what then can be a greater Madness, than to suppose that Men should lay such a deep Design, as that of inventing a new *Religion*, and undergo all that vast trouble and danger, which they did, to impose it on the World for the sake of a worldly Interest, and yet never put themselves in possession of that Interest, or ever make the least Offer towards it?

If you say, That the whole End of the *Religion* was only to gain the Party, and that

that the Steps to the Interest were to be made afterwards; I still go on to ask, Who can tell us, after the Party was gain'd, of any such Steps that were ever made, or of any the least Offer tending thereto? Were not the first *Christians* for many Ages after the first founding of our Faith, what they ought still to be, Men that us'd this World as if they us'd it not, who liv'd in it without being of it, and did truly what they vow'd in their *Baptism*, renounce all the Pomps and Vanities, and Lusts thereof, faithfully to observe that Holy *Law* which they had receiv'd? And in this they persever'd so steadily, that even their very Enemies admir'd the Righteousness of their Lives, and (*) bore witness thereto, and the cruellest Persecutors could never beat them therefrom, but they still went on in the Observance of their holy *Religion* without having any other Design therein, than to practise that Righteousness which it taught, and for three hundred Years together stood firm thereto a-

(*) *Plinii Epist. lib. 10. Ep. 97. — Hanc fuisse summam vel culpæ suæ vel erroris, quod essent soliti stato die ante Lucem convenire, carmenque Christo quasi Deo dicere secum invicem seque sacramento non in scelus aliquod obstringere, sed ne furtiva, ne latrocinia ne adulteria committerent, ne fidem fallerent, ne depositum appellati abnegarent.* In like manner they were also vindicated by *Serenus Granianus*, Proconsul of *Asia*, in his Epistle to the Emperor *Adrian*. *Euseb. Hist. Ecclesiast. lib. 4. c. 8. & 9.* By *Antonius Pius* in his Epistle to the Commons of *Asia*. *Justin Martyr Apol. 2.* and even by the Heathen Oracles themselves. *Euseb. in vita Constantini, lib. 2. c. 50. & 51.*

gainst all those terrible Storms of Persecution which were risen against them, till at length by the Holiness of their Lives, and the Constancy of their Sufferings, they made a Conquest over their very Persecutors, and brought over the World unto them. And are not our Principles still the same, and also, thanks be to *God*, notwithstanding the Corruptions of the present Age, the Practice of too many thousands still among us, who I doubt not will be as ready to undergo the same Sufferings those Primitive *Christians* did, whenever *God* shall try them for that Holy *Religion* which they profess, as they now are to observe the Righteousness thereof. But supposing this had been all otherwise, and the *Mammon* of this World, and not the Righteousness of *God*, were really the End for which our *Religion* was design'd; yet to renounce the World to gain a Party, and afterwards make use of this Party to gain the World, is a Project so unfeasible, that the former Part of it must necessarily have overthrown the latter, whenever it had been attempted. For when Men had been drawn over to a Party under the specious Pretence of renouncing the World, and been instructed and firmly fix'd in this Principle, to make those very same Men
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afterwards to serve their turn for the gaining of a worldly Interest, would be to make their Doctrine and their Practice so monstrously interfere, as must necessarily have broken all into pieces, and destroy'd the whole Design. Certainly, had they any such Design, they would never have thus possess'd their Disciples with such Principles against it by the *Religion* which they taught them; and in that they did so, I think nothing can be a more evident Demonstration, that they could never intend any such End thereby. *Mahomet* knew well enough, this was not a way to carry what he design'd, and therefore openly own'd in his *Religion*, what he aim'd at thereby, and made his *Law* to speak for that *Empire* and *Lust*, which he desir'd to enjoy; and so when he had made his *Religion* to obtain, he gain'd by virtue thereof the whole which he projected by it, and became possess'd of the *Empire* of all *Arabia* for the gratifying of his *Ambition*, and as many Women as he pleas'd for the satisfying of his *Lust*, which were the two Ends which he drove at in the whole Imposture. And had *Jesus Christ* and his *Apostles* had any such Design in the *Religion* which they taught, they must in the same manner have made their *Religion* speak

for it, or else it could never have serv'd their purpose for the obtaining of it. And if their *Religion* had ever offer'd at any such thing, it must necessarily have appear'd in the Books in which it is written.

And 2dly. If they had been so wicked, as thus to impose upon the World a false *Religion* for the promoting of their own Interest, as that Interest must have appear'd in the Contexture of the *Religion* it self, and in those Books in which it is written, so also must their Wickedness for Words and Writings being the outward Expressions of our inward Conceptions, there is that Connection between them, that although the former may often disguise the latter, they can never so totally conceal them, but every accurate Observer may still be able through the one to penetrate into the other, and by what a Man utters, whether in Speech or Writing, see what he is at the bottom, do what he can to prevent it. There are indeed some that can act the *Hypocrite* so cunningly, as to dissemble the greatest Wickedness under Words, Writings, and Actions too, that speak the quite contrary. But this always is such a Force upon their Inclinations, and so violent a Bar upon their inward Passions and Desires, that Nature will frequently
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break through in spite of all Art, and even speak out the Truth amidst the highest Pretences to the contrary. And there is no *Hypocrite*, how cunningly soever he may act his Part, but must this way very often betray himself. For Wickedness being always uppermost in such a Man's Thoughts, and ever pressing forward to break forth into Expression, it will frequently have its Vent in what that Man speaks, and in what he writes, do what he can to the contrary; the Care, Caution, and Cunning of no Man in this case being sufficient totally to prevent it. Furthermore, there is no Man thus wicked, that can have that Knowledge of Righteousness, as thoroughly to act it under the Mask, with that exactness as he who is truly righteous, lives and speaks it in reality. His want of Experience in the Practice, must in this case lead him into a great many Mistakes and Blunders in the Imitation. And this is a thing which generally happens to all that act a Part, but never more than in Matters of *Religion*, in which are many Particulars so peculiar to the Righteous, as none are able to reach them, but those only who are really such. And supposing there were any that could, yet there will ever
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be that difference between what is natural and what is artificial; and between that which is true, real, and sincere, and that which is false, counterfeit, and hypocritical, that nothing is more easie than for any one that will attend it, to discern the one from the other. And therefore were *Jesus Christ* and his *Apostles* such Persons as this Charge of *Imposture* must suppose them to be, it's impossible but that the Doctrines which they taught, and the Books which they wrote, must make the Discovery, and the *New Testament* would, as a standing *Record* against them in this case, afford a multitude of Instances to convict them hereof. That the *Alcoran* doth so as to *Mahomet*, nothing is more evident; a Strain of Rapine, Bloodshed and Lust running thorough the whole Book, which plainly proves the *Author* of it to be altogether such a Man as the Charge of *Imposture* must necessarily suppose him to be. And were the first Founder of our Holy *Religion*, or the Writers of those Books in which its Doctrines are contain'd, such Men as he, both their Doctrines and their Books would as evidently prove it against them. But here I must again challenge you, and all other the Adversaries of our Holy *Religion*,

ligion, to shew us any one Particular in it, that can give the least Foundation to such a Charge, any one Word in all the Books of the *New Testament*, that can afford the least Umbrage or Pretence thereto. Let what is written in them be try'd by that which is the Touch-stone of all *Religions*, I mean that *Religion* of Nature and Reason, which *God* hath written in the Hearts of every one of us from the first Creation; and if it varies from it in any one Particular, if it prescribes any one thing which may in the minuteſt Circumſtance thereof be contrary to its Righteouſneſs; I will then acknowledge this to be an Argument againſt us, ſtrong enough to overthrow the whole Cauſe, and make all Things elſe that can be ſaid for it, totally ineffectual to its Support. But it is ſo far from having any ſuch Flaw therein, that it is the perfecteſt *Law* of Righteouſneſs which was ever yet given unto Mankind, and both in commanding of Good, as well as in forbidding of Evil, vaſtly exceeds all others that went before it, and preſcribe much more to our Practice in both, than the wiſeſt and higheſt Moraliſt was ever able without it to reach in Speculation. For,

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1st. As to the forbidding of Evil, it is so far from indulging, or in the least allowing us in any Practice that favours hereof, that it is the only *Law* which is so perfectly broad in the Prohibition, as adequately to reach whatsoever may be Evil in the Practice ; and without any Exception, Omission, or Defect, absolutely, fully, and thoroughly forbids unto us, whatsoever may have but the least Taint of Corruption therein ; and therefore it not only restrains all the Overt-acts of Iniquity, but also every Imagination of the Heart within, which in the least tends thereto ; and in its Precepts prohibits us not only the doing or speaking of Evil, but also the harbouring or receiving into our Minds the least Thought or Desire thereafter ; whereby it so effectually provides against all manner of Iniquity, that it plucks it up out of every one of us by the very Roots, and so makes the Man pure and clean, and holy altogether, without allowing the least favour of Evil to be remaining in him : And every one of us would be thoroughly such, could we be but as perfect in our Obedience to this *Law*, as it is perfectly given unto us. And,

2^{dly}. As

2dly. As to the commanding of Good, its Prescriptions are, That we employ our Time, our Powers, and all other Talents intrusted with us, to the best we are able, both to give Glory unto *God*, and also to show Charity unto Men; and this last not only to our Friends, Relations, and Benefactors, but in general to all Mankind, even to our Enemies, and those who despightfully use us and persecute us; and hereby it advanceth us to that height of Perfection in all Holiness and Goodness, as to render us like the *Angels* of Light in our Service unto *God*, and like *God* himself in our Charity to Man. For it directs us in the same manner as the *Angels* to worship and serve our *God* to the utmost Ability of our Nature; and in the same manner as *God* to make our Goodness to Men extend unto all, without Exception or Reserve, as far as they are capable of receiving it from us.

And can any Man think it possible that a *Religion* which so thoroughly and fully forbids all Evil, and in so high and perfect a manner prescribes us all Good, could ever be the Product of a wicked Mind? The Fruit is too good to proceed from so corrupt a Root, and the Effect vastly above the Efficiency of such a Cause ever to produce

duce it. For can it possibly be imagin'd, that a wicked Man could either have Inclination to do so much for the promoting of that Righteousness which all his Passions and Desires so violently run counter unto? or if he would, that such a one could ever be so well acquainted with all the ways thereof, as so exactly to prescribe them? if it be so difficult for such a one to conceal his Inclinations in his Expressions; if it be so hard for him, when he vents himself into Words or Writings, not to let loose something in them of what he really is (as I have already shown) how can any Copy be drawn from such a Mind, but what must in some Feature or other resemble the Original; or any thing at all proceed from thence, but what must carry with it some favour of the Iniquity thereof? Set but such a one to write a Letter, and he will scarce be able to do it without putting so much of his Passions and his Temper into it, as that we may read from thence what he is, as every Man's Experience may tell him, that corresponds with such; and how much more then may we be assur'd will he lay himself open, when he hath the large Scope of a Book to express himself in, and especially when that Book is of such
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a nature, as gives him the fullest Occasion, and the most inviting Opportunity to do? And what Book can be more such, than that which is to propose a new *Law* to Mankind? in the writing of such a Book, if ever, certainly the wicked Man will show himself, and in the same manner as *Mahomet* did, conform his *Laws* to his own Inclinations, and prescribe such Rules of living to others, as may best justify him in those which he himself follows. And although he should not intend any such thing, though he should not design so to do (and it is hard to imagine of such a Man, that he should not,) yet at least the prevailing Bent of his Passions, and the Corruption of his Judgment, which always follows therefrom, must necessarily lead him thereinto; it being, morally speaking, altogether impossible, but that the wicked Man must appear in what the wicked Man doth; and the Deeds, Words, and Writings which proceed from such a one, must in some measure favour of what he is. And therefore if there be nothing in the *Law* of our Holy Religion (as I hope I have fully shown that there is not) which can make the least Discovery of any such thing, nothing that can afford the least Pretence for such a Charge against

against it, where so large a Scope is given for it ; this sufficiently proves, that neither the first *Founder* of the *Christian Religion*, nor those who first wrote it in the Books of the *New Testament*, in which we now have it, could possibly be wicked Men, and consequently not such *Impostors* as you would have them to be.

But here I know it will be objected, That there is no necessity that all *Impostors* should be as wicked as *Mahomet* ; and therefore tho' *Jesus Christ* and his *Apostles* were no such wicked Persons, yet however they may be still *Impostors* for all that. For, first, it hath happen'd that very just and good Men have had recourse to *Imposture* , to bring to pass and establish their most commendable Designs ; as we have an Instance in *Minos* King of *Crete*, and another in *Numa* King of *Rome*, both which, to give the greater Authority to their *Laws*, pretended to have had them by *Divine Revelation*. And, secondly, you will say, It is possible a Man may be an *Impostor* by *Enthusiasm*, and Mistake, and falsely impose Things for *Divine Revelation*, not out of a wicked Design to deceive others, but that he is really deceiv'd herein himself. And if in these two Cases a
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Man that is not wicked may be an *Impostor*; you will urge, That though *Jesus Christ* and his *Apostles* were not wicked Men, yet this will not prove them not to have been *Impostors*, because it is possible, that in one of these two Cases they might have been such.

In order to the clearing of the first of these Objections, I desire you would consider these Three following Particulars.

1. That in every *Religion* there are these two Parts to be observ'd, very distinct from each other. 1. The *Religion* it self. And 2. The Means whereby it is promoted and propagated among Men.

2. When the *Imposture* is only in the former of these two; and a true *Religion*, or at least one that is really believ'd to be such, is promoted by means of *Imposture*; that is, by feigning a *Divine Revelation* where there is none, or by counterfeiting *Miracles*, or by any other such Means tending to deceive Men thereinto; this amounts to no higher than a *pious Fraud*, which out of an over-hot and inconsiderate Zeal some Men have made use of for the promoting of the best Ends.

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And such Men, for the sake of such Ends, may still be denominated good and righteous in the main, how much soever they may have been out in making use of such Means to promote them.

3. When the *Imposture* is in the End as well as in the Means; and not only the *Revelation* pretended, but also the *Religion* it self is all false, counterfeit, and feign'd; this amounts to such an *Imposture* as is totally wicked, without any Mixture of Good therein. In the former Case, where the *Imposture* is only in the Means, there is a good End design'd, and therefore something still from whence the Person using it may be denominated Good; but where the *Imposture* is in both, it is Wickedness all over, without any thing at all in it to exempt him from being perfectly wicked that maketh use thereof.

Which Particulars being premis'd, my Answer to the Objection is as followeth.

(*) Plato in *Minos* & in primo *Dialogo de legibus*. *Dionysius Halicarnassensis*, lib. 1. *Strabo*, lib. 16. *Valerius Maximus*, lib. 1. c. 2.

1. I do acknowledge it to be related by (*) *Authors* of good Credit, That *Minos* King of *Crete*, when he first fram'd the *Laws* of his

his Countrey, to give them the greater Authority, us'd to retire into a Cave on Mount *Dicta*, and from thence to bring them forth to the *Cretans*, as if they had been there deliver'd to him by *Jupiter*. And that *Numa*, when he founded the *Laws of Rome* (†), practis'd the same Art, pretending to have receiv'd them from the Nymph *Egeria*, that so he might procure them to be receiv'd by the *Romans* with the greater Veneration. And by this Device they both obtain'd their End in bringing very rude and barbarous People to submit to those good Orders and Rules which they prescrib'd for their living civilly, peaceably, and justly together. But this, although it were a Fraud in the Means, yet as far as it related only to a Political End, belongs to another matter, and doth not at all fall within that Argument of *Religion* which we are now treating of.

(†) Plutarchus in vita Numæ & Dionysius Halicarnassensis, lib. 1.

2. As to the *Laws of Numa*, I acknowledge that they reach'd not only Matters of State, but those of Religion also; and that the whole Method of the old *Roman Religion* was regulated and stated by them; but that *Numa* founded any new *Religion*, is what I utterly deny. For *Numa* left no other *Religion* behind him in *Rome* at

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his Death, than that very same *Heathenism* which he found there at his first coming thither to be *King*. For the City having been then but newly founded, and the People made up of a Collection of the Refuse and Scum of divers Nations there gather'd together, they were as much out of order in Matters of *Religion*, as in those belonging to the Civil Government; and all that *Numa* did, when he came to reign over them, was to make *Laws* to regulate both; and therefore, as he founded several wholesome Constitutions for the orderly governing of the State, so also did he for the regular worshipping of the *Gods* then acknowledged among them, without making any essential Alteration in the Religion afore practis'd by them. For had he done so, then the *Religion* of the *Romans* must have differ'd from the *Religion* of the other Cities of *Italy*, which we find it did not. For they communicated with each other in their Worship, as they did also with the *Greeks*. And in truth, the old *Roman Religion* was no other than the *Greek Heathenism*, the same which was practis'd in *Greece*, and in all those Countries which were planted with Colonies from thence, as almost all *Italy* was at that time. And there-

therefore the *Romans*, as well as the rest of the Cities of *Italy*, look'd on *Delphos* as a principal Place of their Worship, with the same Veneration that the *Greeks* did, and had frequent recourse thither on Religious Accounts, as the *Roman Histories* on many occasions acquaint us. And this Religion, *Numa*, while he liv'd among his *Sabines*, being accurately vers'd in, and also a diligent Practiser of it, on his coming to *Rome*, and finding the *Romans* all out of order in that little which they had of it (for during the Reign of *Romulus* they minded little else but fighting, and therefore had not leisure, or perchance any great regard for this Matter, he not only instructed them more fully in it, according as it was receiv'd in the Neighbouring Nations, but also fram'd several Rules and Constitutions for their more regular and orderly Practice of it, which did no more make the old *Heathenism* of the *Romans* to be a new Religion, than the Body of *Canons* given us by King *James* the First, for the more orderly regulating of our Worship and Discipline, makes our Religion a new *Christianity*. Only *Numa*, the better to make his Constitutions to obtain among those barbarous People for whom he made them, pretended to have

been instructed in them by a Divine Person; and in this he practis'd a *pious Fraud*, but was by no means guilty of such an *Imposture* as we are now treating of. For he taught them no new *Religion*, but only the very same *Greek Heathenism* which he had receiv'd with the rest of the People of *Italy* from their Forefathers, and really believ'd to be that very *true Religion* whereby *God* was to be serv'd; and therefore notwithstanding the Deceit he made use of, he might from the End which he propos'd, and which he really effected thereby, to the civilizing of a very barbarous sort of People, be still reckon'd a just and good Man; and to give him his due, he really was one of the most excellent Personages of that Age in which he liv'd; and first sow'd among the *Romans* the Seeds of that Virtue with which they so eminently signaliz'd themselves for so many Ages after. But,

3. *Jesus Christ* and his *Apostles* took on them not only to be *Messengers* sent of *God*, but also to teach a *new Religion* to the World; and therefore if they were *Impostors*, they must be so in the largest and fullest Sense, both in respect of the *Religion* itself, as well as the Means whereby they promoted it. And in this case there

there could be nothing to excuse them from being altogether as wicked as I have alledg'd. Where the *Religion* is true, or really believ'd so to be, there is a pious Intention in the End, which may speak some Goodness in him that useth Fraud to promote it ; and such a Goodness as greatly exceeds the Obliquity of the Fault which he committed about it ; and therefore, although he cannot on the account of the Good be excus'd from the Evil (for it is always a Scandal to *Religion* to be promoted by Falshood,) yet still he must be reckon'd more commendable from the one, than faulty from the other ; and in this case there will still be room enough left from the Goodness of the End design'd, and the Piety of the Intention, to denominate the Man good and righteous in the main, notwithstanding the Fault committed in using such Means to bring it to effect. But where the *Religion* is all *Forgery* and *Falshood*, as well as the Means of promoting it, *Deceit* and *Fraud*, the *Imposture* then becomes so totally and perfectly wicked, without the least mixture of Good therein, as must necessarily denominate the *Authors* and first *Propagators* of it to be perfectly wicked also.

If you say, that such a perfect *Imposture* as this can have any good End, for the sake whereof the *Authors* of it may be freed from that Charge of Wickedness which I lay upon them, that good End must be either the Honour of *God*, or the Benefit of Men. But how can *God* be more dishonour'd than by a *false Religion*? Or how can Men be more mischiev'd than by having the Practice of it impos'd on them, whereby they must thus constantly dishonour, and consequently offend and lose the Favour of him that made them? An *Imposture* in this case hath that Aggravation from the Object it is about, as well as from the Perfection of Iniquity which is in the Act, that supposing it could be made productive of any good End, that Good would be so vastly overballanc'd by the Wickedness of the Means, that it would be of no weight in comparison thereof, or at all avail to the rendering of those that shall make use of it, less wicked than I have said. But when a Man can thus far proceed in Wickedness towards *God*, as to be the Author of constant Dishonour unto him in a false Worship; and towards Men, as to ensnare them into all that Mischief which must be consequential hereto; it must necessarily

rily imply such a thorough Disregard of both, as every good Intention in respect of either must be inconsistent with. And therefore, if it be possible that such a wicked *Imposture* can ever be made the Means to a good End, it is scarce to be conceiv'd how they who are so wicked, as to be the Authors of it, could ever intend any such Good thereby.

But further, If the *Authors* of such an *Imposture* as we are now treating of, can be less wicked than I have said, on the account of any Good, which you pretend they may design thereby; I desire to know among what sort of Men you will place them, while you thus plead their Excuse. For they must be one of these three; that is, either *Atheists*, *Deists*, or *Believers of an Instituted Religion*.

1. If you say they are *Atheists*, that Word alone contains enough to prove them perfectly wicked, whatever can be said to the contrary. It is indeed agreeable enough to the Principles of this sort of Men, that such an *Imposture* as we are treating of, may laudably be made use of to a good End. For they hold that all *Religion* is nothing else but a Device of *Politicians* to keep the World in awe. But
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if the *Atheist* be the Deviser, what Intention of Good can the Device carry therewith? None certainly towards *God*, since he utterly denies his Being, or can it in this case have any towards Men, since by denying him, for whose sake it is that we are to do good to others, he casts off therewith all the Reason and Obligation which he hath, abstractive of his own Interest, of doing any such at all. All the Good therefore that such a one can aim at, must totally center in himself to advance his own Enjoyments, and gratify his own Lusts in all those Things which his corrupt Affections carry him after; and to enjoy these without restraint of *Laws*, or fear of Punishment, being that alone which is the real and true cause that makes any Man deny that supreme and infinitely good and just Being, whom all things else prove; whoever is an *Atheist*, must be perfectly wicked before he can be such; and what is there which can, while in that Impiety, ever give him a better Character afterwards?

2. If you say they are *Deists*, such as you profess your selves to be; your main Principle is against all *Instituted Religion* whatever, as if *God* were dishonoured, and Man injur'd by every thing of this nature

nature practis'd among us; and can you then think, that any who are thus persuaded, can without being first corrupted to a great degree of Impiety, as well as Hypocrisy, ever become themselves so contrary to their own Sentiments, on any Pretence whatsoever, the Authors and Teachers of such a *Religion* among us?

3. But if you place them among those who are *Believers of an Instituted Religion*, they must abolish that which they believe to be true, before they can introduce that by *Imposture* which they know to be false. And this must be the case of *Jesus Christ* and his *Apostles*, if they were such *Impostors* as you hold them to be. For they were educated and brought up in the *Jewish Religion*, which they believ'd to be from *God*, and the whole Tenour of the *Religion* which they taught, supposeth it so to be; and that it was the only true way whereby *God* was to be worshipp'd by them, till they deliver'd their new *Revelations*, which totally abolish'd this *Religion*, and establish'd the *Christian* in its stead; and therefore if those *Revelations* were not true and real, as they pretended they were, but all forg'd and counterfeited by them, as you say, they must abolish a *Religion*, which they believ'd

liev'd to be true, to make way for that which they knew to be false, and thereby become wilfully and knowingly, according to their own Belief, the *Authors* of leading Men from saving Truths, into damning Errors, to the utter Destruction of their Souls for ever; and also of depriving *God* of that acceptable Worship, whereby he was truly honour'd according to his own Appointment, to introduce in its stead a false Superstition of their own devising, which must be constant Dishonour unto him as long as practis'd among us. And if *Jesus Christ* and his *Apostles* were such *Impostors*, as all this imports; and such they must be, if they were *Impostors* at all; they must be guilty of that Impiety towards *God*, as well as that Injustice towards Men herein, as must necessarily suppose them the wickedest of Men before they could arrive hereto; and therefore if they were not such wicked Men, this abundantly demonstrates, they could not be such *Impostors* as you charge them to be.

As to the second Objection, That a Man may be an *Impostor* through *Enthusiasm* and Mistake, and falsely impose Things for *Divine Revelations*, not out of
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a wicked Design to deceive others, but that he is herein really deceiv'd himself; and that therefore there is no necessity that all *Impostors* should be such wicked Persons as I have alledg'd: My Answer hereto is,

1. I do acknowledge that *Enthusiasm* hath carry'd Men into very strange Con-
ceits and Extravagancies upon the Foun-
dation of a *Religion* already establish'd,
as we have Instances enough hereof in the

Anabaptists of Germany, the
Quakers here with us, the
(*) *Batenists* among the
Mahometans, and in some
of the *Recluses of the*
Church of Rome. But that
Enthusiasm could never go
so far, as to fancy a *Divine*
Revelation for the esta-
blishing of a *new Religion*,

and upon such a Fancy propagate that *Reli-
gion* in the World, as if it came from *God*,
is that which I cannot believe; and there
is no Instance, that I know of, that can
be given hereof. But,

2dly. Allowing it possible, this Ob-
jection then, as apply'd to the case in
hand, must suppose *Jesus Christ*, and his
Apostles, to have been deceiv'd by *Enthu-
siasm*

(*) They were a sort of *Mahometan Enthusiasts* in the *East*,
who follow'd the Light with-
in them in the same manner as
the *Quakers* with us, and there-
fore were call'd *Batenists* from
the *Arabick Word Baten, intus*.
And on this Principle did a'l
the Villanies imaginable, pre-
tending an Impulse thereto
from this Light within them.

siasm into the *Religion* which they taught ; and that therefore, altho' they were by no means such wicked Men as a wilful *Imposture* must suppose them to be, yet still they might be *Impostors* by Mistake ; and being by *Enthusiasm* so far deluded, as to think That to come to them from *God* by Divine Revelation, which had no other Birth but from their own wild Fancies, might preach it to Men as such, not out of a wicked Design to deceive, but that they were really herein deceiv'd themselves. But is it possible for any Man to conceive, that so grave, so serious, and so wisely a fram'd *Religion* as *Christianity* is, could ever be the Spawn of *Enthusiasm* ? Whatsoever is the Product of that, useth ever to be like the Parent, wild and extravagant in all its Parts, often disagreeing with all manner of Reason, and often as much with it self. But *Christianity* is in all its Parts as rational as it is good, giving us the justest Notions of *God*, the best Precepts of our Duty towards him, and the exactest Rules of living honestly and righteously with each other, and hath a thorough Conformity to it self in every Particular of it ; on which account it hath been approv'd and admir'd for the excellency of its Composition.

sure, and the Wisdom of its Constitutions, even by the best and wisest of those who never submitted thereto; and therefore always carries with it Marks and Evidences enough in the very Nature of it, sufficiently to prove it vastly above the Power of such a Cause ever to produce it.

3. The *Founder* and first *Teachers* of *Christianity* gave such Evidences for the Truth thereof as *Enthusiasm* could never produce. For can *Enthusiasm* raise the Dead to Life again, cure all manner of Diseases, and work such other Miracles as Christ and his Apostles did? Had they by *Enthusiasm* been mistaken in the Doctrines which they taught, certainly God would never have wrought such wonderful Works by their Hands, as give Testimony thereto.

4. Several of the principal *Articles* of our *Faith* depend upon such Matters of Fact, as allow no room for *Enthusiasm* to take place in them; as that of the *Resurrection* of our *Saviour* from the dead, his *Ascension* into *Heaven*, and the *Descent* of the *Holy Ghost* in the *Gift of Tongues*. For in such things as these, which Men see with their Eyes, and hear with their Ears, and feel with their Hands (as one of the *Apostles* did the very Wounds of our *Savi-*

our after his *Resurrection*) no *Enthusiasm* can ever lead Men into a Mistake. For can it possibly be said that it was only by *Enthusiasm* that Five hundred Men together saw *Christ* after he was risen again from the dead? or that it was by *Enthusiasm* that his *Apostles* saw him ascend up into *Heaven* from *Mount Olivet* in the Presence of them all at Noon-day? or that it was only by *Enthusiasm* that the same *Apostles* on the Day of *Pentecost* receiv'd the *Gift of Tongues* by the *Descent* of the *Holy Ghost* upon them, so as to be able to converse with all the several *Nations* then at *Jerusalem* in their own Languages, without ever having learn'd any Thing of them? To say that Men could any way be mistaken in such things as these, will be to deny the Certainty of Sense, and overthrow the Foundations of all manner of Knowledge whatever. It must therefore be said as to these Particulars, as it must also of all the *Miracles* of our *Saviour*, which give Testimony to the Doctrines which he taught, That his *Apostles*, who testify'd them unto the World, and upon the Credit of them built up that *Religion* which they deliver'd unto us, did either see them really done as they relate, or they did not see them.

If they did see them, no *Enthusiasm* could ever make them be mistaken therein; and if they did not, they must be altogether as bad *Impostors* as *Mabomet* himself in testifying them unto us; and what but as great Wickedness as his, could ever induce them so to do?

S E C T. IV.

IV. The next Mark of an *Imposture* is, That it must unavoidably contain in it several palpable Falsities, whereby may be made appear the Falsity of all the rest. For whoever invents a Lye, can never do it so cunningly and knowingly, but still there will be some Flaw or other left in it, which will expose it to a Discovery; and no Man who frames an Invention, can ever secure it herefrom without two Qualifications, which no Man can have; and they are, 1st. A thorough Knowledge of all manner of Truths. And, 2dly. such an exact Memory, as can bring them all present to his Mind, whenever there shall be an occasion. For to make the Lye pass without Contradiction, he must make it put on a seeming Agreement with all other Truths whatever. And how can any one do this without knowing all Truths;
F and

and having them also all ready and present in his Mind to consider them in order thereto? And since no Man is sufficient for this, no Man is sufficient so to frame a Lye, but he will always put something or other into it, which will palpably prove it to be so. For if there be but any one known Truth in the whole Scheme of Nature with which it interfes, this must make the Discovery; and there is no Man that forgeth an *Imposture*, but makes himself liable this way to be convicted of it. This is the Method whereby we distinguish suppositious *Authors* from those which are genuine, and fabulous Writers from true *Historians*. For there is always something in such, which disagrees from known Truths, to make the Discovery, some Flaw always left in spite of the utmost Care and Foresight of the Forgerer, that betrays the Cheat. Thus *Annius's Imposture* of his *Berosus*, *Manetho* and *Megasthenes* became detected, and so also we know the *Tuscan Antiquities* of *Inghiranius* to be a Cheat of the like nature. And by the same Rule is it that we receive *Sallus*, *Tacitus*, and *Suetonius* for true *Historians*, and reject others as Writers of Fables, and of no Authority with us: And if we examine the *Alcoran* of *Mahomet*

by

by the same Method, nothing can be more plainly convicted of *Falsity* and *Imposture*, than that must be by it. For altho' in that Book he allows both the *Old* and the *New Testament* to be of Divine Authority, yet in a multitude of Instances he differs from both : I mean not in Matters of *Law* and *Religion*, for here his Design is to differ ; but in Matters of Fact and History, which if once true, must evermore be the same. They have a fetch indeed to bring him off, by saying, that the *Jews* and the *Christians* corrupted those Holy Books, and therefore where he relates things otherwise than they do, he doth there restore Truth, and not vary from it. But certainly this will not hold, where, by a very gross blunder, he makes the *Virgin* (*) *Mary* the Mother of our Saviour, to be the same with *Miriam*, the Sister of *Moses*. For this would be to put the *Gospel* so close upon the Heels of the *Law*, as to allow no time for the taking

(*) *Alcoran*, c. 3. where observe, that through all that Chapter in every place, where the *French*, and out of that the *English Translation* of the *Alcoran*, hath *Joachim*, in the Original *Arabic* it is *Amran*, and from thence this Chapter in the Original is call'd *Surato'l Amran*, i. e. in the Chapter of *Amran*. But in both these Translations it is call'd the Chapter of *Joachim*. For *Mahomet* mistaking the *Virgin Mary* to be the same with *Miriam*, the Sister of *Moses*, makes *Amran* to be her Father. But *Ryer*, the *French Translator*, very imprudently taking upon him to correct the *Impostor's* Blunder, puts *Joachim* in the Place of *Amran*, and thereby gives us a false Version, where it is very material in order to the exposing of that *Imposture*, to know the true. And the *English Translator* follows him herein.

place of this latter, before it would have been totally abolish'd by the former. But which most discovers his *Imposture*, are the monstrous Mistakes which he makes in the Moral part thereof. For he allows *Fornication*, and justifies *Adultery* by his *Law*, and makes *War*, *Rapine* and *Slaughter* to be the main part of the *Religion* which he taught; which being contrary to the Nature of *God*, from whom he says he receiv'd it, and contrary to that Law of unalterable and eternal Truth, which he hath written in the Hearts of all of us from the beginning; the obvious Principles of every Man's Reason convict him of Falshood herein, and thereby manifestly prove all the rest to be nothing else but an abominable Impiety of his own Invention. And were the *Religion* of *Jesus Christ*, as deliver'd to us in the *New Testament*, an *Imposture* like this, it must have the same Flaws therein, that is, many Falsities in Matter of Fact, and more in Doctrine, and all his *Prophecies* would be without Truth in the Original, or Verification in the Event. And when you can make out any one of these Particulars against it, then we will be ready to say the same thereof that you do, That all is *Cheat* and *Imposture*, and
no

no Credit or Faith is any longer to be given thereto.

And 1st. As to the Matters of Fact contain'd in the *History* of the *New Testament*, whoever yet convicted any one of them of Falshood? or whoever as much as endeavour'd it in the Age when the Books were first written, when the Falshood might have been best prov'd, had there been any such in them, and the doing hereof would have so much serv'd the Designs of those bitter Enemies of the Christian Cause, who from the first did the utmost they could to suppress it? When Relations of Matters of Fact pass uncontradicted and uncontroll'd in the Age in which they were transacted, and among those who thought themselves greatly concern'd to have them believ'd false, this must be taken for an undeniable Argument of their Truth. And this Argument the *History* of the *New Testament* hath on its side in its fullest Strength. For the Books were written and publish'd in the very Age in which the Things related in them were done, yet no one then ever contradicted or convicted of Falshood any one Passage in them, though *Christianity* had from the very beginning the *Professors* of all other *Religions* in most bitter Enmity

F 3

against

against it, who would have been most ready and glad so to do, could they have found but the least Pretence for it. And had any of those Relations been false, there were then means enough undeniably to have convicted them of it. For those Things which are related of *Jesus Christ* and his *Apostles* in the *History* of the *New Testament*, are not there said to have been done in Corners, where none were present to contradict them, but upon the open Stage of the World, and many of them in the Sight of Thousands; and therefore had they not been really done, or done otherwise than related, there could not have wanted Witnesses enough to make Proof hereof. And most certainly those who so bitterly oppos'd *Christianity* from the first, would have found them out, and made use of their Testimonies to the utmost for the overthrowing of the Cause they so violently oppos'd; and had they done so, to be sure we should have had those Testimonies in the Mouths of all its Enemies ever since. For they would have yielded them the strongest and the most prevailing Argument they could possibly have urg'd against it. The false Pretences of all other *Impostors* have been detected by those who liv'd in their Times, and the true History

History is given of them instead of the false ones which they gave of themselves. And had *Jesus Christ* and his *Apostles* been like *Impostors*, and the Things related of them in the Books of the *New Testament* false and forg'd, it is not possible to conceive, especially in the Circumstances above-mention'd, how they could have escap'd the like Discovery; but certainly in this case, amidst so many Witnesses who could have prov'd the Falshood, and so many Enemies who were eager to detect it, all must have come out, and every false Narrative would have been shown to be such, and the true one given in its stead, and we should have heard enough hereof from the Adversaries of our *Holy Religion* through every Age since. And that this was not done when there was such bitter Opposition against the *Christian Religion* from the first propogating of it, and it would have been so strong an Argument against it, can be assign'd to no other cause, but that the Things related were so evidently, and manifestly true, as not to afford the least Pretence for the contradicting of them. But this is not all we have to say in the case. For it hath not only hapned that none of those Matters of Fact have ever been contradicted, or prov'd

F 4

false

false by any of the first Enemies of *Christianity*, who were best able to have done so, had there been that *Imposure* in them which you alledge; but on the contrary many of them have been allow'd true, and attested by them. For two of the most surprizing Particulars related in the Gospels are confirm'd by the Testimony of *Heathen Writers*, I mean the *Murder of the Innocents* by *Herod* at *Bethlehem*, and the wonderful *Eclipse of the Sun*, which hapned at the Death of our *Saviour*, contrary to the Nature of a Solar *Eclipse*, when the *Moon* was in the Full.

(*) Saturnal,
lib. 2. c. 4.
(†) Vide
Chronicon
Eusebii, &
Origenis
contra Cel-
sum librum
secundum, &
Tract. ad
Matthæum
35.

(*) *Macrobius* tells us of the former, and
(†) *Phelegon Trallianus* of the latter. And
that which is the most important part of
all, and bears the greatest Testimony to
the Truth of the whole, was allow'd and
acknowledg'd on all Hands both by
Jews and *Heathens* even in their bit-
terest Opposition against the *Christian*
Cause, I mean the Account which is given
in those Sacred Books of the *Miracles* of
our *Saviour*. For both of them have
yielded to the Truth hereof; only the
Jews say, that he wrought them by ver-
ue of the *Tetragrammaton*, or the Sacred
Name *jebovah*, stolen by him out of the
Temple (which the ridiculoufness of the
Fable

Fable they relate concerning it, sufficiently confutes ;) and the *Heathens*, by *Magic Art*. And therefore *Philostratus* and *Hierocles* finding no other way to overthrow the Authority which those Miracles gave his *Religion*, confronted against him the *History* of *Apollonius Tyaneus*, whom they pretend by the same Art of *Magic* to have done as wonderful Things, and by this means endeavour'd at least to invalidate those miraculous Works of his, which they could not deny. And,

2dly. As to the *Prophecies* of our *Saviour*, the Truth of their Event in every particular proves the Truth of him that predicted them. For did he not come from *God*, how could he have this wonderful Knowledge, as thus to foretel Things to come? Were he not of the Secrets of the *Almighty*, how could he so certainly have foreshewn what in Aftertimes he would bring to pass? If it were only by guess that he did so, how possibly could all things so exactly fall out in the Event, that nothing should in the least happen otherwise than as he predicted, especially since as to most of them it cannot be as much as said, that there was any place for Human Sagacity, or the least probable Conjecture to help him to any Foresight therein?

in? For how improbable was it that the *Religion* which he taught, should, against the bent of the whole World, have made so great and speedy Progress therein, as he foretold that it should? or that such Instruments as he employ'd in this Work, a company of poor, ignorant, and contemptible *Fishermen*, should ever have been able to have effected it, without the extraordinary Providence of *God* overruling the Hearts, as well as the Power of Men? A thing in the ordinary course of Human Affairs so unlikely to succeed, could never have been brought to pass; or could our *Saviour* have any manner of ground from the nature of the thing, so much as to guess at so strange an Event, and therefore could never have so punctually foretold it; but that being sent of *God* to begin this Work, he foreknew all that he would do for the perfecting of it. And the same is to be said of what he further predicted of this *holy Religion* as to its continuance among us to the End of the World; of the calling of the *Gentiles* thereinto, and the rejecting of the *Jews*; of the great Calamities which should attend that People (as accordingly they have thro' all Ages since,) and particularly of that great and terrible Calamity which

was

was to fall upon them in the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, and accordingly hapned about Forty Years after; which he so exactly foretold, not only as to the Time, (for he said it should be before that (*) (*) Matth. Generation should pass away) but also as ^{C. 24. V. 34.} to all other the most considerable Circumstances of it, that nothing can be a more exact and perfect Comment on the 24th Chapter of *St. Matthew*, and those other Passages in the *Gospels* where this dismal Destruction is foretold, than that *History of Josephus* which gives us an account how it was brought to pass. And that part of the *Prophecy* which relates to the final Destruction of the *Temple*, foretelling, *that one Stone should not be left upon another*, hath been so exactly verify'd, that notwithstanding several Attempts which have been made for the re-edifying of it, it could never be effected; no, not as far as the laying of one Stone upon another in order thereto, even to this Day. And when *Julian the Apostate*, out of design to confront this *Prophecy*, and give the Lye thereto, employ'd both the Power and the Treasure of the *Roman Empire* for the re-building of it, *Heaven* it self interpos'd in an extraordinary manner, to make good what he had predicted to be the establish'd

establifh'd Purpose of the *Almighty*, which nothing was able to alter, and by a miraculous Fire destroy'd the Work as fast as it was built, and at length forc'd the Undertakers totally to desist therefrom. For the truth whereof, I will not refer you to the Testimony of *Socrates Scholasticus*, *Sozomen*, *Chrysostom*, or any other of the *Christian* Writers who relate it, but to one whom you cannot suspect of serving the Interest of the *Christian Cause* herein, he being as much an Adversary thereto as any of you; I mean *Ammianus Marcellinus*, who was an *Heathen* Writer, and then serv'd under *Julian* in his Wars in the *East*, at the same time when this hapned. His Words concerning it (*lib. 23. c. 1.*) are as followeth--*Ambitiosum quondam apud Hierosolymam Templum, quod post multa & interneciva certamina, obsidente Vespasiano posteaque Tito, agre est expugnatum, instaurare sumptibus excogitabat immodicis, negotiumque maturandum Alypio dederat Antiocheni, qui olim Britannos curaverat pro Præfectis. Cum itaque rei idem fortiter instaret Alypius, juvaretque Provinciæ Rector, metuendi globi flammarum prope fundamenta crebis assultibus erumpentes fecere locum, existus aliquoties operantibus, inaccessible, hocque modo Elemento destinatus repet-*

repellente cessavit inceptum: i. e. “Julian
“having a design to re-build, with extra-
“ordinary Expence, the Temple of *Jeru-*
“*salem*, formerly a very stately Stru-
“cture (which, first *Vespasian*, and after
“*Titus*, laying Siege thereto, was, after
“many bloody Conflicts, at length with
“difficulty taken and destroy’d) com-
“mitted the care of the Business to *Aly-*
“*pius* the *Antiochian*, who formerly had
“been *Propræfect* of *Britany*, to be with
“all speed expedited by him. But while
“*Alypius* was diligently pressing on the
“Work, and the Governor of the Pro-
“vince helping him therein, dreadful
“Balls of Fire breaking forth from the
“Foundations of the Building, did by
“their frequent Eruptions make the
“Place unaccessible, the Workmen be-
“ing several times destroy’d by the Fire,
“as they went to their Labour; and
“by this means the Element still per-
“sisting as of purpose to obstruct it, the
“Work ceas’d.” And it hath never
since been again attempted, even to this
Day, nor is there now left the least re-
mainder of its Ruins, to show so much as
the Place where this Temple once stood;
or have those who travel thither, any o-
ther Mark whereby to find it out, but the
Make-

Mahometan Mosque, erected on the same Plat by *Omar*, the second Successor of *Mahomet*; and which hath now continued for above a thousand Years to pollute with the worst of Superstitions, that sacred Ground on which it was formerly built. Had our *Saviour* been an *Impostor*, and foretold all these things without any Knowledge of the Counsels of him who was to bring them to pass, something certainly must have hapned in the Event of so many Particulars, as would have given the Lye to his Predictions, and you the opportunity of convicting him thereof by plain Matters of Fact falling out contrary to them. And although this could not have been done at first, but possibly such Prophecies as these might have impos'd for a while on the Credulity of many; yet we that have pass'd the time of their Completion, could never be deceiv'd thereby; but by the Event must plainly know, whether what he foretold be true or false, and from thence have enough to make a Judgment also of the Truth of him that predicted them. And therefore had our *Saviour*, like *Mahomet*, invented his *Religion* to deceive the World; if he intended it should have continu'd, he must have taken the
same

same course that *Mahomet* did, and never ventur'd at any *Prophecy* at all, that he might not be confuted by the Event, and so lose his whole Design. If you answer, That our *Saviour* foretold future Events after the same manner as the *Pharisees* said he wrought his *Miracles*; that is, by the *Prince* of the *Devils*; you ascribe that Knowledge to the wicked one which is above his reach to attain unto. The *Oracles* which he gave in the *Heathen Temples*, only prove him able to cheat Mankind with dubious and dark Answers, but never clearly to inform them of the future Purposes of the *Almighty*. And indeed, how ever can it be imagin'd that such an accursed one, as he that is cast off at the greatest distance from *God* (who alone governs all the Works of his Creation, and by the Wisdom of his Providence orders every Event that attends them) should ever be so privy to his Counsels, as to be able to foreknow any thing that he determines concerning them; unless it be where he himself is employ'd as an Executioner of his Justice to bring it to pass? But all our *Saviour's Predictions* were clear and full, foretelling Things to come, in the same manner as *Historians* relate them when
past,

past, without Ambiguity in the Words, or Perplexity in the Matter, or the least room left for Evasion or Deceit in them, and were all as exactly fulfill'd in their appointed time; and we have the Continuance of his *Gospel*, the spreading of it through all the *Nations* of the *Earth*, the Rejection of the *Jews*, the Calamities of those People in a continu'd Exile, and the total Destruction of their *Temple*, standing Evidences hereof, even to this Day. And how could all this ever have happened so exactly according to his Word, but that he was that Holy and Blessed One, who had the *Counsels* of the *Almighty* communicated unto him, and was sent by Him on purpose to declare unto us as many of them as were necessary for us to know, in order to the attaining of Everlasting Life? And;

3dly. As to the *Doctrinal part of his Religion*, what can be more worthy of *God*, than the Notions which he gives us of him, and the Worship which he directs us to render unto him? And what more worthy of us, and perfecting of our Nature than that Law for the Conduct of our Lives which he hath deliver'd unto us? And what can be more holy, pure, and perfect than the Precepts thereof? Here the
Subli-

Sublimity and vast Extent of the Matter give Scope large enough for the wisest of Men to bewilder and lose themselves in Error and Mistake ; and yet convince us but of any one such in the whole Extent of our *Religion*, and that alone shall be sufficient to prove the *Imposture* you would charge it with, and I will yield you all you would have for the sake thereof. But it is so far herefrom, that I durst make you yourselves the Judges, whether it delivers any thing else unto us of the Nature and Excellencies of God, but what the Reason of every Man (altho' barely that alone, thro' that Cloud of Ignorance and Error which the Fall hath over-spread us with, could never clearly make the Discovery) must now, when thus discover'd, ever justify and admire : Whether it prescribes us any one particular relating to his Worship, but what is most agreeable to those his Excellencies : And whether the Precepts and Laws therein laid down unto us for the governing of our Lives and Conversations, be any other than what do all correspond so exactly with every thing which the rational Dictates of our Nature direct us to, that they take them all in without Omission or Defect, and improve them to the utmost without Error or Mistake in

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the least Circumstance that belongs unto them? If you say, that all this might be attain'd to by Human Wisdom and Study; I answer, supposing it could, yet looking on our *Saviour* barely as a Man, and his *Holy Apostles* without any other Assistance than that of their own natural Endowments, how possibly could they reach so high? To do this requires that vast compass of Knowledge in all the things of Nature, Law, and Morality, as it is not possible to conceive Men of their Education and low Employments in the World could ever have arriv'd unto. If you examine what other Men have done by Human Wisdom and Study only, you will find those of the most elevated *Genius* and sublimest Understanding could never with their utmost Industry and Search attain unto what you suppose herein, or that the highest Knowledge of Men could ever reach that Perfection in any of the Particulars above mention'd, in which the *Gospel* of *Jesus Christ* delivers them unto us. For what Blunders and Absurdities do the wisest of the *Philosophers* lay down concerning the *Deity*? What Errors and Follies have they taught and practised concerning his Worship? And what Mistakes have those who exalted *Morality*

to the highest pitch among Men, made therein? *Plato* in his Commonwealth allow'd the common use of Women. *Aristotle* asserts it to be natural and just for the *Greeks* to make War upon the *Barbarians*, for no other Reason but that they are so; and both he and *Tully* place Revenge among their Virtues. And whoever had vaster Capacities for Human Knowledge, or ever went higher by the Abilities of natural Reason and Understanding only in the Search thereof, than those Men? Yet still being no more than Men, they could not avoid putting something of the Infirmities of Man even into that wherein they made appear their highest Perfections; Error, Mistake, and Ignorance being so natural unto all of us, that neither the greatest, the wisest, nor the best among us can be totally free therefrom. And therefore had *Christ* and his *Apostles* no other help in the Doctrines which they taught, but that which is Human, they must also in like manner have put that which is Human thereinto, and the Infirmities, Mistakes and Errors that attend Human Nature, would have appear'd in all that they deliver'd unto us. But the Doctrines which they taught, and the Books in which they deliver'd them unto us being so totally free

from all such Errors and Mistakes, as I have already shewn that they are, this directs us to look higher than Man for the *Founder* of this *Holy Religion*, and the *Original Author* of those *Books* in which it is contain'd; and necessarily prove, that only he who is infinite in Knowledge and infinite in all other Perfections, could thus give us a *Law* so exactly like himself, throughly perfect in the whole, and infallibly true in every particular thereof.

S E C T. V.

V. Another Mark of *Imposture* is, That where-ever it is first propagated, it must be done by Craft and Fraud; and this is natural to all manner of Cheats. For the End of such being to deceive, Craft and Fraud are the Means whereby it is to be effected. In this case a *Lye* must be made to go for a Truth, and an Appearance for a Reality; and to compass this, a great deal of Art must be made use of, both to dress up the Cheat, that it may appear to be what it pretends, and also to cast such a Mist before the Eyes of Men, that they may not see it to be otherwise, and that especially where the Cheat is an *Imposture* in *Religion*. For whoever comes with a *new Religion* to be propos'd to the World, must find all Men so far prejudic'd and pre-

prepossess'd against it, as they are affected to the *old one* they have before profess'd ; and therefore when Men are educated, or any otherwise fix'd and settled in a *Religion* (and all Mankind are in some or other) they are not apt easily to foregoe it, but it must be something more than ordinary that must bring them over to another contrary thereto. When the *new Religion* really comes from *God* (as the *Jewish Religion* first, and after the *Christian* did) it brings its *Credentials* with it, the Power of *Miracles* to make way for its Reception. For when Men find the Omnipotency of *God* working with it, they have from thence sufficient Evidence given them from whom it comes, and there is need of no other Means to induce them to believe, but that the *Religion* which *God* doth in such a manner own and attest, must be from him. But where there is no such Power accompanying the *New Religion* to gain Credit thereto, the defect hereof must be made up by somewhat else to draw over the People to its Belief ; and this is that which must put all *Impostors* upon Craft and Fraud in order to the compassing of their Ends. But that *Jesus Christ* and his *Apostles* made use of no such Craft or Fraud to induce Men into the Belief of that *Holy Religion*

gion which they taught, and consequently could be no such *Impostors*, will be best made appear by going over all those ways of Craft and Fraud which *Mahomet* serv'd himself of; and by showing you that none of them can possibly be said to have been practis'd by any of them. For *Mahomet* being one of the craftiest Cheats that ever set up to impose a *false Religion* on Mankind, and the only Person that ever carry'd on his wicked Design with Success, you may be sure he left no Art or Device unpractis'd, which could possibly be made use of with any Advantage for the compassing of it. And therefore by proving unto you that none of those Methods of Craft and Fraud, which were made use of for the first propagating of *Mahometism*, were ever practis'd in the first preaching of *Christianity*. I shall sufficiently prove that no Craft or Fraud at all, which is any way practicable on such Occasions, can ever be charg'd thereupon. For,

1. *Mahomet* made use of all manner of insinuation both with rich and poor, for the gaining of their Affection, thereby to gain them to his *Imposture* also. But our *Saviour Christ* and his *Apostles* did quite the contrary, freely convincing all Men of their Sins, without having regard to any thing else but the faithful Discharge of the

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the *Mission* on which they were sent ; which instead of reconciling Men to their Persons, provok'd the World against them, and they sufficiently experienc'd it from the ill Usage which they found therein.

2. *Mahomet*, the easier to draw over the *Arabians* to his Party, indulg'd them by his *Law* in all those Passions and corrupt Affections which he found them strongly addicted to, especially those of *Lust* and *War*, which those *Barbarians*, above all the *Nations* of the *Earth*, were by their natural Inclinations most violently carry'd after, and therefore he allows them a Plurality of Wives, and a free use of their Female Slaves for the satisfying of their *Lust*, and makes it a main part of his *Religion* for them to fight against, plunder, and destroy all that would not be of it. But *Jesus Christ* and his *Apostles* allow'd no such Practices, but strictly prohibited all manner of Sin, how much soever in Reputation among Men, even to the forbidding of many Things till then allow'd and held lawful among those who were call'd God's own People; and therefore instead of seeking the Favour of Men by indulging them in their Lusts and sinful Practices, they laid a much stricter Restraint upon them than was ever done before.

3dly. *Mahomet*, to please his *Arabians*, retain'd in the *Religion* which he taught them, most of those Rites and Ceremonies which they had been accusom'd to under that which he abolish'd, and also the *Temple* of *Mecca*, in which they were chiefly perform'd. But *Jesus Christ*, without having any regard to the pleasing of Men, abolish'd both the *Temple* and the *Law*, which the *Jews* were so bigotted unto, and also the total worshipping of *God* by *Sacrifices*, without being at all influenc'd to the contrary, by that extravagant Fondness which he knew the whole World had then for them.

4. *Mahomet*, when he found any of his new *Laws* not so well to serve his turn, craftily shifted the *Scene*, and brought them about to his Purpose by such Alterations as would best suit therewith; and therefore when his making his *Kebla* towards *Jerusalem* did not so well please his Country-men, he turn'd it about again towards *Mecca*, and order'd all his *Pilgrimages* thither, as in the time of their *Idolatry*. And the like Changes he made in many other Particulars, according as he found his Interest requir'd. And this is that which every *Impostor* must do. For Interest being the End which all such aim

aim at, it is impossible that they can so well lay their Designs in order to it, but that emerging Changes in the one, will frequently require Changes in the other also. But *Jesus Christ* never made the least Alteration in any of the Doctrines or Precepts which he deliver'd, but what he first taught, both he and his Disciples immutably persisted in, without at all regarding how violently all the Interests of the World ran counter against them herein. And what can be a more certain Evidence that none such was the bottom which they were built upon.

5. *Mahomet*, under pain of Death, forbid all manner of *Disputes* about his *Religion*, and nothing could be a wiser course to prevent its Follies and Absurdities from being detected and expos'd. For they being such as could never stand the trial of a rational Examination, they must all have soon been exploded, had every Man been allow'd the free use of his Reason to inquire into them. But *Christ* and his *Apostles* direct the quite contrary course. For our *Saviour* bids the *Jews* search the *Scriptures* for the trial of those Truths which he taught them, (*John* 5. v 39.) And the *Noble Bereans* are commended, that they did so, before they would receive

ceive those Doctrines of the *Christian Religion* which were preach'd unto them, *Acts 17. v. 11.* And *St. Paul* gives us this general Rule, first to prove or try all Things, and then to hold fast that only which we find to be good, 1 *Thess. 5. v. 21.* It is only Error and Falshood that desires to shelter it self in the dark, and dares not expose it self to an open View and Trial. But Truth being always certain of its own Stability, makes use of no Art to support it self, but dares venture it self abroad on its own Foundation only, and boldly offers it self to every Man's Search ; and the more it is sifted and examin'd into, the more bright and refulgent will it always appear. And since *Christianity* from the first ever took this course, (as it still doth where-ever purely profess'd) and instead of prohibiting *Disputes* about it, invites all Men to search and examine thereinto; this sufficiently argues, how certain the first *Teachers* of it were of its Truth, and that no Cheat or *Imposture* could ever be intended thereby.

6. *Mahomet* made choice of a People first to propagate his *Imposture* among, who were of all Men most fitted to receive it ; and that on two Accounts :
 1. Because of the Indifferency which they
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were then grown to as to any *Religion* at all; And, 2. Because of the great Ignorance they were in of all manner of Learning at that time, when he first vented his Forgeries among them, there being then but only one Man among all the Inhabitants of *Mecca* that could either write or read. For who are more fit to be impos'd on than the Ignorant? And who can be more easy to receive a *New Religion*, than those who are not prepossess'd with any other to prejudice them against it? The *Papists*, who, next *Mahomet*, have the greatest claim to *Imposture*, as to those Errors which they teach, very well understand how such a Cause is to be serv'd both by these Particulars; and therefore make it their Business, as much as they can, to keep their own People in Ignorance, and pervert all those they call *Hereticks*, to *Atheism* and *Infidelity*, that so having no *Religion* at all, they may be the better prepar'd again to receive theirs. And that there are so many *Atheists* now among us, it is too well known, how much it is owing to this their *Hellish Artifice* against us. But all was quite contrary as to those whom *Christ* and his *Apostles* first preach'd our *Holy Religion* unto. Our *Saviour* did not chuse such ignorant

norant Times to come among us in, or a People so indifferent in *Religion*, first to manifest himself unto. For the *Jews* were so far from being weary of that *Religion*, which they had so long profess'd, when he first appear'd in his *Mission* among them, that they were then grown into the contrary Extreme; a very extravagant Bigottry and Superstition concerning it; so that nothing was more difficult, than to withdraw them from it; nor could any thing be more offensive to them, than an Offer tending thereto; and so it continues with them, even to this Day. And the Case was not much otherwise as to all the rest of Mankind; the *Gentiles* being then grown almost as tenacious of their *Idolatry*, as the *Jews* of their *Law*; and *Learning* was in that Age among both at the highest pitch that ever it was in the World; and consequently, Men were never less dispos'd than at that time, to receive a *New Religion*, or ever better able to defend their *Old*. And therefore had *Christianity* been an *Imposture*, it could never have escap'd in such an Age as that a full Detection, or ever have been able to have born up against it; such inquisitive Heads and piercing Wits, as were then in the World, would have sifted it to

to the bottom, div'd into its deepest Secrets, and unravell'd and laid open the whole Plot, and the prejudic'd World would immediately have crush'd it to pieces thereon, so that it should never more have appear'd among Mankind. But the Truth of our *Holy Religion* was such, that it boldly offer'd it self to this Trial; and it seems to have chosen such an Age as this, first to come into the World, of purpose to undergo it, that so it might be the better justify'd thereby. And justify'd by it, it was; for although it were oppos'd by the utmost Violence of the prejudic'd World, they could get no ground of it; though it were thoroughly examin'd and diligently search'd into by the accutest and subtilest Wits of those Ages in which it first appear'd, they could never discover any Fraud, or make out the least Flaw therein; but, in spite of both, it triumph'd, by its own naked Truth, only, over all manner of Opposition, and by *God's* Mercy continues still so to do, even to this Day. That a Cheat and a Fraud in a thing of this nature should be imposed on Men totally ignorant and illiterate, or that such as they, when void of all manner of Religion, (as the Men of *Mecca* for the most part were when *Mahomet* began his

his *Imposture* among them) should be easy to embrace a new one, is no hard matter to conceive ; but that an *Imposture* should be receiv'd, and obtain such Prevalency over Men in so learned and discerning an Age, as that wherein *Christianity* first appear'd in the World, or that they who were then so zealously addicted to the *Religion* they had been educated in, whether *Jews* or *Gentiles*, should ever have been induc'd to forsake it for a new one, founded only on a Cheat and Fraud, is what, morally speaking, we may very well reckon impossible.

7. *Mahomet* offer'd at no *Prophecies*, that he might not run the hazard of being confuted by the Event. But *Jesus Christ* deliver'd many clear and plain *Prophecies*, several of which respected that very Age in which he liv'd, and were all in their proper time as plainly verify'd by the Completion of them.

8. *Mahomet* offer'd at no *Miracles* in publick, although continually call'd upon and provok'd to it by his Opposers. For not being able to work any true ones, he would not hazard himself to a Discovery by those which were counterfeit. And therefore all those Things which he would have go for *Miracles*; that is, his
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Converse with the *Angel Gabriel*, his *Journey to Heaven*, and the *Armies of Angels* that help'd him in his *Battles*, are only related by him as Things acted behind the Curtain, of which there was no other Witness but himself alone, and consequently there could be no Witnesses on the other side ever to contradict them. But *Jesus Christ* and his *Apostles* having the real Power of working *Miracles*, did them openly in the Sight of Thousands, where all manner of Opportunity was given to every Spectator to examine into them, and try whether they were true or no; and therefore had there been any Cheat or Fraud in them, it is not possible to conceive how they should have escap'd a Discovery. And yet no such Discovery could ever be made; which was so convincing an Argument of their Truth and Reality, that even the bitterest Enemies of our *Holy Religion* from the first yielded in this particular, and both *Jews* and *Heathens* allow'd all those miraculous Works which are related of our *Saviour* and his *Apostles* in the Books of the *New Testament* to have been really and truly wrought by them, as hath been afore observ'd. And indeed the Evidence was too manifest to be deny'd, since those very Blind that receiv'd

ceived their Sight, those Dumb that were enabled to speak, those Deaf that were restor'd to their hearing, those Lame that were made to walk, and those Dead that were rais'd again to Life, liv'd many Years after to be as standing Monuments of the Truth of those things, which no one could contradict. And therefore the Opposers of the *Gospel of Jesus Christ* have all along rather chosen to invalidate the Authority of those *Miracles*, than deny the Truth and Reality of them.

For they allowing the Matters of Fact, object that there are other Powers lower than the Divine, that are able to bring them to pass; and therefore, although those Works were wrought, they do not yet prove either the Persons or the Doctrines which they taught to come from *God*, and consequently can give no such Evidence, as that which we insist upon from them for the Truth of that *Religion* which we profess; That others, by *Magick Art*, have done the same Things; That the *Scriptures* themselves tell us so of *Jannes*, and *Jambres*, and *Simon Magus*; and profane Writers of *Apollonius Tyaneus*, *Apuleius*, and others; and both *Moses* and *Jesus Christ* knew this very well, and therefore fore-warn'd their *Disciples* against it,

it, telling them that *false Prophets* should arise, who should show Signs and Wonders to deceive, if possible, the very Elect; and that they should take care not to hearken to them. And therefore, say they, if Signs and Wonders can be wrought by *False Prophets*, how can they be Evidences for the true? Or how can we at all rely upon them for the verifying of any Doctrine which they deliver unto us? Or if those *Miracles* which were wrought by them who are sent of God, be only true *Miracles*, and all others false ones, how shall we distinguish the one from the other, so as by them to discern, whether the Doctrines be of *God* or no?

But these Difficulties will be easily remov'd, and the *Miracles* of our *Saviour* and his *Apostles*, as they are allow'd to be truly wrought by them, so also will they as truly prove the Doctrines which they taught, to come from *God*, if you will but consider these following Particulars.

I. *Miracles* are Works done which are strange and amazing to us, as being brought to pass out of the ordinary road, and in a manner which we cannot comprehend; and these are of two sorts:

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I. Such

1. Such as exceed only the Power of Man to effect them; and these we call *Signs* or *Wonders*: And, 2. Such as exceed the Power of any created Being whatsoever; and these only are properly *Miracles*.

2. Where-ever such *Miracles* are wrought, as are of this last sort, *God* alone must be the *Author* of them; and therefore, where-ever such are found, they manifestly prove the Power of *God* co-operating with the Persons, at whose Word they are done; and with whomsoever it doth thus co-operate, it necessarily demonstrates their *Mission* from him, and puts such an authentick Seal to the Truth of the Doctrines which they teach, as cannot be deny'd.

3. Where-ever a creating Power is necessary to the Effect produc'd, or the stated Laws of Nature are alter'd, there it is certain none but *God* himself can be the *Author* of the Work done. For he alone is able to create; and he having created all Things according to his infinite Wisdom; and given to each their proper Essence and Operations, he allows none but himself to alter the Natures of them, or change that Course which he hath put them into.

4. But

4. But within the Laws and Powers of *Nature*, there are abundance of Things which exceed the Power of Man to effect, and therefore seem as *Miracles* to us, which may be produc'd by other created Beings, and these are *evil Spirits* as well as good.

5. To the producing of these Effects, *evil Spirits* as well as *good* are enabled two manner of ways : 1. By their greater Knowledge of the Powers of *Nature* ; And, 2. By the greater Agency which they have to apply them to effect. For,

6. There are a multitude of Things in *Nature*, that those *Spirits* know the Nature of, which we do not. For their Abilities of knowing are vastly above ours, as not working by the dull Tools of Earth and Clay, as we do, and their Experience exceedingly greater, as having known the Works of *God* from the beginning, and by long Observation pry'd deep into the Secrets of them. If a *Chymist* or a *Mathematician*, by his Skill in the Powers of *Nature*, can do many Things, which, to the ignorant and unlearn'd, shall seem as *Miracles*, (as we often find) how much more can those knowing *Spirits* do so, whose Knowledge of the Powers of Na-

ture is vastly more above all ours put together, than the highest and perfectest of ours is above that of the most ignorant that lives among us. But,

7. As those *Spirits* have a vastly greater Knowledge of the Powers of *Nature* than we can have, so also have they a vastly greater Power to apply them to effect. For they are of a much greater Agility in their Motion, of a much finer Substance to penetrate into Things, and actuate them into Operation; and also of a much stronger Agency or Power to work than we have, and which, no doubt, they are endow'd more or less with, according to the different Orders and Degrees in which *God* hath created them; and by both these together, that is, their greater Knowledge of natural Causes, and their greater Power to apply them to effect, can they do a great many Things within *Nature's* Limits, which exceed all the Powers of Men to effect, and seem as miraculous and wonderful unto us, whenever brought to pass.

8. *Good Spirits* never work those *Miracles*, but in subserviency to the Divine Will, as they are necessary for the effecting of those Things which *God* hath ordain'd by their *Ministry* to bring to pass
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And to them those *Miracles* mention'd in *Scripture*, which exceed not the Power of such created Beings, may be referr'd as the immediate Authors of them ; it not being likely that *God* would interpose his immediate Power, excepting only in such cases, as where there was need of it. For why should the *Lord* himself put his Hand to that Work, which may as well be discharg'd by the *Ministry* of his *Servants* ?

9. *Evil Spirits* having in a great measure the same Knowledge of Natural Causes as the *Good*, and the like Power to bring them to effect, can also work the like *Wonders*, and, by *God*, are often permitted so to do, both for the Trial of Men, and also for other good Causes which to him, of his infinite Wisdom, seem fitting ; and we have a plain Instance of it in the case of *Job*.

10. *Evil Spirits* have not only this Power of working the like *Wonders*, which *Good Spirits* do, but also another, which *Good Spirits* will never make use of ; that is, by Juggle, Delusion, and Deceit to imitate those true and proper *Miracles*, which none but *God* himself can really effect. And thus, by the Delusion of the *Devil*, was a Cheat put upon *Saul*

in the raising of *Samuel* to him from the Dead. For really, to raise *Samuel* from the dead, none but *God* could, and therefore that Appearance which *Saul* saw, was no more than a false Appearance, contrived by the *Devil* to put a Cheat and Delusion upon him. And of this same sort may we reckon the *Miracles* which *Jannes* and *Jambres* wrought in imitation of *Moses*. For to turn a Rod into a Serpent, and Water into Blood, or to cause Frogs to come up upon the Land (in which three Particulars they did the same thing by their Inchantments, that *Moses* did by the Hand of *God*, are Works, which, if really done, require the creating Power to bring them to effect, which none but *God* hath; and therefore in this case the *Devil* acted for them, not by his effecting, but only by his deluding Power. And such *Miracles* the *Scripture* calls *ψεῦδος ἔργα καὶ ἐνέχυρα τῆς σατανᾶς* ;

2 Thess 2. 9. i. e. *Lying or false Miracles, which are not really wrought, but only made so to appear by the juggle and delusion of Satan.*

II. Those Cheats and Delusions of the *Devil*, whereby he imitates the true and real *Miracles of God*, which he cannot work, are only in transient Effects, like those of Jugglers upon a Stage, never in such

such as are lasting and permanent. And where the Effect is totally transient, *God's Works* are often so far above the *Devil's Imitation*, that even in these there will be still a multitude of Particulars, wherein he can have no Power, as much as by Juggle or Delusion, to do any thing like unto them.

12. Whatsoever *Signs* or *Wonders* are wrought by *Magicians* or *False Prophets*, must be referr'd to one of these two Heads; that is, that they are either the *Devil's Works*, or the *Devil's Delusions*: And the *Scriptures*, which tell us of *Magicians* and *False Prophets* working such *Signs* and *Wonders*, do in many Places refer them hereto.

13. Those *Signs* or *Wonders* which are really wrought by the *Devil* and his *Evil Spirits*, are to be distinguish'd from those which are wrought by the Power of *Angels* or *Good Spirits*, by these following Marks: 1. That *Angels* or *Good Spirits* never work those *Wonders*, but in suberviency to the Will of *God*, for the promoting of Truth and Righteousness; but the *Devil* and his *Evil Spirits* only for the promoting of Error and Wickedness. 2. *Angels* or *Good Spirits* never co-operate in the Production of those *Wonders* with

any *Prophet* or *Teacher*, but such only as being sent of *God*, are good and righteous Persons; but the *Devil* and his *Evil Spirits* only with such, as not being sent of *God*, are Evil like themselves. 3. *Angels* or *Good Spirits* never exert their Power to work these *Wonders*, but in Things serious and grave, whereby either the Good of Men, or the Honour of *God* is promoted; but the *Devil* and his *Evil Spirits* do it mostly in Things mischievous both to *God's* Honour and Man's Good, or else in such trivial and foolish Matters as are beneath *God* or his Holy *Angels* to be concern'd in. And by the same Marks also may we distinguish *God's Miracles* from the *Devil's Juggles*, and those wonderful Works which the Hand of the *Almighty* really effecteth, from those false Appearances which the *Devil* makes in Imitation of them to put a Cheat and a Delusion upon us. Which Particulars being premis'd, the Answer to the foregoing Objections will be as followeth,

1. We do acknowledge that abundance of very wonderful Works may be effected by Powers lower than the Divine, and that not only by *Good Spirits*, but also by *Evil*.

2. That

2. That therefore such Works alone are never sufficient Proof of a Divine *Mission*, unless corroborated by such concurring Circumstances as prove them not to be from *Evil Spirits*, but only from *Good*.

3. That where-ever such wonderful Works are done at the Word of a wicked Man, or to a wicked Purpose, (*i. e.* either to influence to a wicked Practice, or to give Credit to some false Doctrine) or else in such mean and trivial Cases as are beneath the *Majesty* of God or his *Ministring Spirits* to be concern'd in, there we may be sure that he that doth those Works, how much soever he may pretend to a Divine *Mission*, is only a *False Prophet*; and that it is not by the Power of God or his *Good Spirits*, but only by the Power of the *Devil* and his *Wicked Spirits* that they are wrought; and against those *Wonders* is it, and the Workers of them, that *Moses* warneth the *Jews*, and *Jesus Christ* his *Disciples*, that they should be aware of them.

4. Where they who work those *Wonders* are holy and righteous Men, and do not teach any Doctrine contrary to the certain Dictates of *Natural Religion*, or the *Revelations of God* afore given unto us, and
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the *Wonders* which they work are in such serious and grave Matters as are not unworthy of *God* or his *Ministring Spirits* to be concern'd in, there we have no reason to suspect *Satan's Power* in the effecting of them; and therefore such Works may, although not of themselves alone, yet with these concurring Circumstances be sufficient Proof of the Truth of any Doctrine which they give Testimony unto. For although they cannot be prov'd to be immediately from *God*, because produceable by inferior Beings; yet with these Circumstances accompanying them, they must at least appear to be the Works of his *Ministring Spirits*, who can bear Testimony to nothing but what is from *God*, whose Will they are in all Things subservient unto.

5. As such Works which the *Devil* and his *Evil Spirits* can do, are not of self-sufficient Proof to a *Divine Mission*, so neither are such which he can by *Juggle* or *Delusion* imitate, because Men may be deceiv'd by the one as well as the other; and therefore the same concurring Circumstances are necessary to these also, and by the same Marks are they to be try'd, whether they be of *God*, or no.

6. But

6. But where the *Works* are such as no created Being can either really produce, or by *Juggle* or *Delusion* imitate, there those *Works* do of themselves alone prove a *Divine Mission*, and give an authentick Seal of undeniable Truth to every Doctrine thus reveal'd unto us.

7. Although therefore it should be allow'd that some of the *Miracles* which *Christ* and his *Apostles* wrought, might be produceable by Powers lower than the Divine; yet since they who did them were most holy and righteous Persons, and did not teach any Doctrine contrary either to the Dictates of *Natural Religion*, or the *Revelations of God* afore given unto Men; and the *Miracles* themselves were not in such mean and trivial cases as are related of *Apollonius Tyaneus*, and others like him; with these Circumstances they sufficiently appear to be, if not immediately from the Hand of *God*, yet at least from his *Ministring Spirits*, and their *Works*; since all done in subserviency to the Divine Will, do as thoroughly prove a *Divine Mission*, where-ever they evidently appear to be theirs, as those of *God* himself. That *Christ* and his *Apostles* were most holy and righteous Persons, and taught no Doctrine which was in the least contrary to

to the Dictates of *Natural Religion*, hath been afore shown; and how far their *Miracles* were from being in mean and trivial Matters, the Works themselves make evident: and it is as certain, that no Doctrine of theirs ever contradicted in the least any *Divine Revelation afore given unto Men*. For *Jesus Christ* and his *Apostles* every where allow both the *Law* and the *Prophets* to be from *God*. Had they taught any thing which would have charg'd a Falshood on either, they must then indeed have been said to contradict *Divine Revelations afore given*, and would thereby have fallen under that Character and Mark of *False Prophets* which I have above laid down; but they were so far from this, that the *Law* and the *Prophets* were the Ground-work which they founded all their Doctrines upon. For the *Law* contained in *Types* and *Shadows*, and the *Prophets* in their *Prophecies* and *dark Sayings*, whatever the *Gospel* hath in Substance and Reality since clearly deliver'd unto us, and laid down all that in the *first Rudiments* which *Christ* and his *Apostles* afterwards built up into Perfection in that *Holy Religion* which they have given unto us. And therefore, although the *Gospel* hath abolish'd the *Law*, it was not by contradicting

dicting or condemning it, but by perfecting and fulfilling it in that manner, as all the *Prophets* fore-show'd that it should.

8. But the *Miracles* of *Jesus Christ* and his *Apostles* were most of them undeniably such as could not be produc'd but by the immediate Hand of God himself, as necessarily requiring the *creating Power* to effect them; and also of that *Permanency* as allow'd no room for *Juggle* or *Delusion* to take place in them. For what other Power but that of the *Almighty* could raise a Man, who had been four Days dead, again to Life? Or what other Hand, but that of the *Creator* himself, could make him see who had been without the natural Organs of Sight from his very Birth? Or what but the same Power which first form'd Man of the Dust of the Earth, could restore him, in so many Instances as our *Saviour* and his *Apostles* did, to Health and Perfection, when the very Parts and Vessels necessary thereto, were thoroughly perished; and in so miraculous a manner, with a Word of their Mouth, bring back total Privations again to their former Habits? Or what Craft of *Satan* can reach as much as to an Imitation of such wonderful Works as these, which left behind

hind them, for many Years after, Effects of lasting Permanency in the Persons cured, not only to be Monuments of the Things done, but also undeniable Evidences of the Truth and Reality of them? It would be too long to go over all the *Miracles* of this Nature, which *Christ* and his *Holy Apostles* did for the Confirmation of those Holy Truths which they taught. These already mention'd are sufficient to show, that some of their *Miracles* at least were such as are above the Powers of all created Beings either to effect or imitate; and therefore these certainly must be allow'd to be from *God* alone, without Possibility of *Imposture*, *Deceit*, or *Delusion* in them; and in that they are so, they must necessarily prove the *Mission* of them, at whose Word they were done, to be from him also, and consequently become a Witness to the Truth of every Doctrine deliver'd by them, as firm, certain, and infallible, as the Veracity of *God* himself, which can never err or deceive for ever. And so much of the fifth Mark of *Imposture*.

SECT.

S E C T. VI.

VI. No *Imposure*, when entrusted with many *Conspirators*, can be long conceal'd. For what *Plot* or *Conspiracy* have we ever known or heard of, which hath been thus manag'd, and hath not had some false Brother or other to discover it; especially if there be any great Wickedness intended by it, or any great Danger attending the Execution of it (as mostly is in such Designs.) For then if the thing itself doth not work the Conscience into an Abhorrence, the Fear of the Consequence may at least deter from it; and it seldom fails but one of these two, in all such cases, drives some or other into a Discovery; and in this Age of Plots we have Instances enough hereof. And what *Plot* can be more wicked, than to impose a *false Religion* upon Mankind? And what can be more dangerous than to attempt it? What hath been already said, sufficiently proves both these Particulars; and therefore if the first planting of *Christianity* were such a *Plot*, certainly one of these two, that is, either the Wickedness, or the Danger, would have wrought some or other into a Discovery of it. For they
were

were not a few that were admitted there-
 (*) 1 Cor. 15. into. They were at least (*) *five hundred*
 6. that were in that, which you must call
 the greatest Secret of it; I mean the *Re-*
surrection of our *Saviour* from the dead;
 For that is the main *Article* of our *Holy*
Christian Religion; the Truth of which
 proves all the rest, and without which all
 the rest must have fallen to the Ground,
 (†) 1 Cor. 15. and our whole *Faith become* (†) vain. And
 17. therefore had but any one of these *five*
hundred, who are asserted to have been
 the Witnesses of it, discover'd the thing
 to have been only a *Conspiracy of Impos-*
ture between them, this Discovery must
 have laid open the whole Design, and put
 a total End thereto. And were not the
 thing certainly true which they attested,
 it is scarce to be conceiv'd but that some
 or other of them must have done so. A-
 mong the *Twelve Apostles* one was found
 a *Traytor* to his *Master*; and how much
 more then may we expect that there
 should have been one such among *five*
hundred? and especially in a case where
 all ought to have been so; that is, to dis-
 cover a *Plot* against the Souls of all Man-
 kind, and deliver the World from being
 impos'd on thereby. Among so many it
 scarce happens, but some or other prove
 false

false to the best Cause ; and how hard is it then to conceive, that in such a number none should be found to betray the worst ? And can we call it any other than the worst, if it be such an *Imposture* as you would have it to be ? Were *Christianity* really such, and this Doctrine of the *Resurrection* of our *Saviour* totally the *Forgery* of those who attested it, so many as *Five hundred* could never have all kept the Secret ; or if they should, out of love to their own Invention, or any Self-ends which they might have therein, be inclin'd so to do ; yet Punishment, Pain, and Torture, use to extort the most hidden Devices, and make the most obstinate Offenders, the closest Designers, and the most reserv'd Plotters of Mischief, to come to a Confession. And what Punishments, what Pains, what Tortures did those first Witnesses of this main and fundamental *Article* of our *Faith* go through for the sake of that Testimony which they did bear thereto ? And yet did any one of them ever flinch from it ? Did any one of them ever retract what he had attested concerning it ? Prove but this, and then you will say something to make out the Charge which you lay against it. But they were so far herefrom, that they all persisted in

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it to the last ; and not only so, but were every one of them ready to shed their Blood for a Witness to the Truth of what they asserted, and a great many of them actually did so ; and all the Terrors, Threats and Tortures of the Persecutors were not able to deter them herefrom. And what greater Evidence then can there be given to any Truth in the World, which depends upon Matter of Fact, than that which *Christianity* hath from the Testimony of those Men, in so great a number and such a manner bearing Witness thereto ?

S E C T. VII.

VII. The last Mark of an *Imposture* is, That it can never be establish'd without Force and Violence. For if it hath wicked Men for its Authors, worldly Interest for its End, Falsity and Error for its Doctrines, and receives its Rise from the Craft and Fraud of its first Promoters, as I have already shown, the Search of the Inquisitive will soon find it out, and Mankind will not long bear the *Imposture*, unless they be over-ru'd by Violence, and have all Objections against it silenc'd with the Sword at their Throats. This was the Method which *Mahomet* took to establish that *False Religion* which he invented.

vented. For he prosecuted with War all that would not submit thereto, and made it no less than Death for any to gainsay it, or as much as raise the least Dispute against any of the Doctrines of it. And without his doing this, the Reason of all Mankind must have appear'd against it, and it could never have stood. And the *Romanists* have learnt from him to take the same course, as to those Doctrines of *Imposture* which they have superadded to the *Christian Religion*. For they declare all those to be *Hereticks*, and prosecute them with Sword, Fire, and Faggot, that refuse to receive them; and thus by the Power of their *Dragoons* and their *Inquisitions*, they have establish'd and still keep up those gross Errors in their *Church*, which neither *Reason* nor *Religion* can ever support; and the same must be done as to all other Falsities impos'd on Mankind before they can have any firm footing among them. For it is only Force and Violence that can cram such things down Men's Throats, which their Reason and their Judgment must ever renounce. The unthinking Multitude may for a while be carry'd away by the Craft of the *Impostor*, and by the Arts of *Hypocrisy* and *Delusion* be made easy to swallow any Forgery

that shall be offer'd unto them ; but when the Heat of the first Zeal is over, and the Matter comes to be examin'd into by Reason, and coolly scann'd through by the Inquisitive, *Imposture* cannot stand the Test, but must soon be laid open, blasted, and exploded thereon. And therefore unless it be accompany'd with Force to suppress this Enquiry, and hath Power on its side to compel Men to acquiesce therein, how much soever it may delude Men at first, it can never obtain any lasting Establishment among them. And this hath been the case of all the *Impostors* which have ever yet appear'd in the World, without this Power to back them ; and how great Progress soever any of them may have made in the first Heat, they have all at length been detected, and exploded, and sunk to nothing, for want of his Support on their side to keep them up. For nothing but Truth can of it self alone stand the Test of Ages upon its own bottom only. Falshood and Error are too weak for such a Trial, and therefore unless supported by some external Strength, and fenced thereby against all Assaults of Opposers, they must necessarily fall to the Ground, and again come to nothing ; and where Education, or the force of long-re-

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ceiv'd Custom is not strong enough for this (and neither can in the first propagating of an *Imposture*) there the Sword must come in to over-rule all, or nothing of this nature can be establish'd among Men. But *Jesus Christ* and his *Apostles*, instead of making use of any such Force to establish the Religion which they taught, had all the Force and Powers of the World in Opposition against it, and yet in spite of the World it at length prevail'd over the World by the dint of its own Truth only; and after having stood the Assault of all manner of Persecutions, as well as other Oppositions, for three hundred Years together, carried the Victory over the fiercest of its Enemies, and made the greatest of them, even the *Roman* Emperors themselves, to submit thereto; and all this while it had sharpened against it, not only the Sword of the Superior Powers, but also the Tongues of the Slanderers, and the Wits of all the Learned of those Times. But how much soever it was oppress'd by the first of these, blacken'd by the second, and sifted and searched into by the last, it stood all these Trials without losing any thing thereby, but at last came out of them all, like Gold out of the Furnace, still of the same Weight, Fineness, and

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Purity, without receiving from that Fire which consumeth all Things else, the least waste or diminution thereof. Had it been false, and ow'd its Original only to Deceit and *Imposture*, it would have needed all those means of Violence for its Establishment and Support ; but since it thus stood not only without them, but also in spight of them ; when all arm'd on the Adversaries side for three Centuries together in bitter Opposition against it, what greater Argument can we have for the Truth thereof ? For can you think that *Falsbood* and *Imposture* could ever have held out with such steady and unshaken Constancy for so many Years, as *Christianity* thus did ? or that it is possible for any sort of Men so long to have born all this for the sake of a *Lye* ? *Falsbood* can have no Foundation for such a Constancy, or *Imposture* any reason to engage Men thereto. The Interest of this World is ever the bottom and foundation of all such *Forgeries* ; and therefore as soon as Punishments and Persecutions make it to be no Man's Interest to be for them, they ever fall of themselves, for want of that Foundation on which they afore stood. But *Christianity* having come into the World contrary to all the Interests of it, and in its very Infancy thus stood

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the shock of all the Powers thereof engag'd in Persecution against it, as I have mentioned ; and not only so, but also prosper'd and became establish'd in the midst of the hottest Assaults thereof, this plainly shows that it had another kind of Foundation on which it was built, a Foundation of Truth and Righteousness, and not only so, but a Foundation that was laid and fix'd in such a manner by the Hand of *God* himself, as never to be shaken. For what Truth of itself alone could ever have made its way into the World in such a manner as the *Christian Religion* did, or ever have gain'd, against all the Powers thereof, such a Prevalency over it, without some extraordinary assistance conducting and helping it therein ? The strongest Truths we know are crush'd by such means of violence as that encountred with, and even first Principles themselves have been overpower'd by them. And therefore that *Christianity* should thus enter the World, and thus from its first Entry bear up against such long and terrible Trials of Persecution and Oppression as it met with, without the least flinching under them, must be owing to somewhat more than its own bare truth. And what but the hand of *God* himself backing and strengthening it

in the Conflict, could be sufficient to give it such a Victory therein; For that a few poor *Fishermen*, the *Disciples* of a *Crucified Master*, should without Power, Learning, or Reputation, or any other of the Interests or Favours of the World on their side, be able to introduce a *new Religion* into the World directly opposite to all the Interests, Pleasures, and prevailing Humours of it, as *Christianity* then was, and that this *Religion* in spite of all the Powers, Cunning, Malice, and Learning of the World joyn'd together in most fierce Opposition, and bitter Persecution against it for three hundred Years together, should not only bear up, but also at length prevail over the World, and subject the highest Powers therein to the Obedience of its Laws, is an Event so strange and wonderful, and morally speaking, so far above the Possibility of all ordinary Means to bring it to pass, as plainly manifesteth the extraordinary working of *God* himself therein. And for my part, had the *Christian Religion* no other *Miracle* to bear witness thereto, this alone would be *Miracle* enough to me sufficiently to convince me of the Truth thereof. At least since it thus enter'd into the World, and thus became establish'd in it, it must be allow-

ed to be so far differing from an *Imposture* in that Method of Violence which that needs for its Establishment, as to be totally opposite thereto, and in this Particular (as I hope I have shown of all the rest) not to have the least Mark or Character thereof.

And thus far having laid before you all the obvious Marks of *Imposture*, and proved that none of them can belong to *Christianity*, I hope what hath been said will sufficiently infer the Conclusion, which I have undertaken to make out unto you, That our *Holy Christian Religion* cannot be such an *Imposture*, as you would have it to be, but really is that Sacred Truth of *God*, which you are all bound to believe.

It is too common with Mankind to frame their judgments according to their Inclinations, and upon very slight Grounds hastily to run away with Ideas of things, when they correspond with the prevailing bent of their Affections, which, whenever put into a true Light before them, must all appear to be false and wrong taken. And this I reckon to be your case. Your Inclinations strongly leading you into Infidelity, you would fain have *Christianity* be an *Imposture*, and therefore have over-easily and hastily been induced

duced on very weak Grounds to believe it so to be. And that you may be undeceiv'd in so dangerous and destructive an Error, I have endeavour'd in the easiest and most familiar manner I could think of, to put this Business in a true light before you. 1. By letting you see what an *Imposture* is, in that true Picture which I have drawn of it in the Life of him who was really and truly such an *Impostor*, as you would have *Jesus Christ* to be. And, 2. By examining into the Marks and Properties which naturally belong to every such *Imposture*, and showing of each of them that they cannot belong to that *Holy Religion* which we profess. And I hope, when you have consider'd all this thoroughly, you will see how much you have been deceiv'd in those Opinions which you have so precipitately given up your selves unto.

You cannot but be sensible how great the Stress is which we lay on this Matter, and how very ill your Case must be, if we are in the right, and you in the wrong; and therefore the thing is of sufficient Importance to deserve your most serious Consideration, and that in such a manner as to make you lay aside all those groundless Prejudices and wrong Byasses which
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may obstruct an impartial Inquiry ; and if you will be pleas'd, for the sake of your own Souls, to do thus much, I am content to leave the Success of what I now offer unto you, to *God's* Grace, and your own Judgments.

As to the particular Reasons which you may alledge for your Disbelief of our *Holy Christian Religion*, whether they be Objections drawn against it either from *History, Philosophy*, or the *Inconsistencies* which you imagine you find in the Books of Holy Writ, in which it is deliver'd down unto us, it is not my Purpose now to enter into any Disputes with you about them. That which I at present purpose, is not so much to consider those *Premisses*, as the *Conclusion* which you pretend to draw herefrom, That *Christianity* must therefore be an *Imposture* ; and from the nature of such an *Imposture*, and the nature of our *Holy Christian Religion* laid in a true light, and compar'd together with each other, to evidence unto you the Inconsistency of this Charge ; and if what I have now said can be of any Force to let you into a clear Sight of this Matter, it will be totally needless for me to meddle any further. For all those Objections which you pretend to have been the particular Reasons

sons of your Infidelity, have been already abundantly answer'd and confuted by others. But the Opinion which you have conceited, that *Christianity* is an *Imposture*, having so far prepossess'd your Judgment, as to influence it against all Things of this nature that can be propos'd unto you, it will be in vain to offer any thing farther as to those Particulars, till this Prejudice be remov'd; and were it once remov'd, what hath already been said in Answer to them, will be abundantly sufficient to give you full satisfaction. Although this Method may seem illogical thus to assault the *Conclusion* without meddling with the *Premisses* from which you pretend to have deduced it; yet it is no other than what you your selves have necessitated me unto by taking up the *Conclusion* first, and the *Premisses* afterward. Had you indeed first began with those Reasons which you offer for your Infidelity, and been really, by the Conviction of them led into this *Conclusion*, That *Christianity* is an *Imposture*, it would then have been proper and fitting that I should have begun there too, and no otherwise have endeavour'd to overthrow the *Conclusion*, but by first overthrowing the *Premisses* from whence you deduc'd it. But since it is well known
that

that the *Conclusion* hath been of greater Force with the most of you to make you assent to the *Premisses*, than the *Premisses* to prove the *Conclusion*; and it is only the fond Conceit you have taken up in compliance with ill Company, or worse Inclinations, that *Christianity* must be an *Imposition*, that hath made any of those Arguments seem so conclusive with you, which are brought to prove it; this makes it necessary for me to begin my Endeavours for your Conviction at that same Point where you first began your Infidelity, and to attack the *Conclusion* in the first place, before any Success can be expected towards the setting you right as to any thing else. For as long as you are wilfully bent out of a meer Fondness for Infidelity, to hold *Christianity* to be an *Imposition*, this will make every Argument seem strong to you that is brought to prove it, and every Solution insufficient which is given thereto, and render all Means for your Conviction utterly ineffectual unto you. And therefore this being in truth the first Error which hath influenc'd your Mind to all the rest, this must be first remov'd; and if what I have said can be of any Force in order thereto, by letting you see how much you have been
mistaken

mistaken herein, this I hope will remove that Prejudice which hath hinder'd you from seeing the Strength of those Arguments which have been already offer'd for your Conviction as to all other Particulars of that Infidelity which you have given up your selves unto, and make you clearly discern how much you have been mistaken in them also, and thereby become the Means of delivering your Souls from that terrible Danger which you expose them unto ; the accomplishing of which is the whole End, Scope, and Design of the Discourse which I now offer unto you.

But here perchance it may be ask'd, and I think it reasonable to give you Satisfaction herein, Why I have set forth unto you an *Imposture* by so foul a Picture as that of *Mahomet* ? And to this I have these two Answers to return ? 1. Because I have none other to do it by, *Mahomet* being the only *Impostor* who could ever prevail so far as to establish his *Imposture*, and make it a standing *Religion* in the World ; and had it not gone so far, it could not have been such an *Imposture* as you would have *Christianity* to be, or at all fit to be compar'd with it in the Argument now before us. And, 2dly, How
foul

foul soever the Picture of *Mahomet* may be, we have no reason from the nature of the thing ever to imagine that any other *Impostor* can have a fairer, till you bring us an Instance thereof. And these two I hope may be sufficient to clear me from acting any way unfairly in this Matter, as if I had made choice of the Life of so wicked a Person as *Mahomet*, therein to picture out an *Imposture* unto you only to make it appear in the foulest Dress it is capable of, the better to advantage thereby that Cause which I handle.

But to the first of these Answers, I foresee this Objection will be made: If *Mahomet* be the only *Impostor* that ever establish'd his *Imposture* in the World, how then hath it come to pass, that there have been so many false *Religions* among Mankind? To which I reply, Not by *Imposture*, such as *Mahomet's* was, and such as *Christianity* must be, if it be such an *Imposture* as your Charge against it supposeth, but by Corruptions insensibly growing on from that *Religion* which was first true. The first *Religion* which God gave unto Man, was that *Natural Religion* which he imprinted on his very Nature, when he first created him, and as much of that as escap'd that Ruin with which
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the Fall overwhelm'd him, was that where-
by *God* was worshiped and served by him
afterwards ; only with this Addition,
That whereas Man in his Innocency ad-
dress'd himself to *God* immediately of
himself alone, and in his own Name, he
could never after his Fall from it, have any
more Access unto him, but through a *Me-
diator* ; *God's* infinite Purity and Greatness
on the one hand, and Man's infinite Guilt
and Vileness on the other, after that fatal
Miscarriage of our first Parents did put
them at so vast a distance the one from the
other, that in the nature of the thing there
could be no other way thenceforth of
maintaining any Communion between
them ; and therefore had not this Way
been found out again to bring Man to God,
he must totally have been estranged from
him for ever after. But God of his infinite
Mercy having resolved not thus to cast
us off, he appointed us a *Mediator* as soon
as we had fallen, and promis'd to send him
in his appointed time to take our Nature
upon him, and therein pay down that
Price of Redemption for us ; by vertue
whereof his *Mediation* should always
be sufficient to obtain Mercy, and Par-
don, and Acceptance for us. And this is
that which was meant by *God's* promising
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immediately after the Fall, that *the seed of the Woman should break the Serpent's head*; which being farther explained by *After-Revelations*, the whole *Religion of God's People* after that was to offer up their *Worship* unto him through hope in this *Mediator*; and all the *Idolatry, Polytheism*, and other *false Worships* which after arose in the *Heathen World*, were all by such corrupt deviations therefrom, as the superstitions of men, the unfaithful way of transmitting *Divine Revelations* by *Tradition* only, and the decay of all *Divine Knowledge* occasioned thereby, in process of time introduced among them. For when Mankind began to increase after the Flood, and they were taught from *Noah* their Forefather thus to worship *God* through hope in a *Mediator*, as the knowledge of those *Divine Truths* which he delivered to them began to decay, and *Superstition* to increase among them, they began to determine themselves to such *Mediators* as their own *Imaginations* led them to fancy, and some chose *Angels*, and others *Men deceased*, for this *Office* and in process of time erected *Temples* and *Images* unto them, and honoured them with *Divine Worship*, in order to render them the more helpful and beneficent un-

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to them. The *Babylonians* or *Chaldeans*, who were the first form'd State after the Flood, looked on *Angels* to have been the *Mediators* God had appointed, through whom they were to come unto him; and for this reason directed their Worship to the *Sun*, and *Moon*, and the rest of the *Planets*, which they fancy'd

(a) Hence *Aristotle* seems to have had his Doctrine of the *Intelligences* moving the *Spheres*; and *Plato* that which he taught of the Stars being living Bodies. For it was the Opinion of the Ancient *Chaldeans*, as it is of the *Sabii* now, who are descended from them, That there was in each Star an *Angel* in the same manner as our Souls are in our Bodies, and that the Stars are animated by these *Angels*, and hence have all their Motion, and also that Influence which they are suppos'd to have over this World, and for this reason was it that they worshipped them.

to be the Habitations (a) where those *Angels* dwelt; & also erected *Images* unto them, into which they reckon'd their Influence and Divine Power did descend, and remain with them, when those Luminaries themselves were set and disappear'd in their Horizon; so that their Notion was to make their Addresses thro' the *Images* to the *Planets*, and thro' the *Planets*

to the *Angels* that dwelt in them, and thro' the *Angels* to God himself, whom they acknowledg'd to be the One Supreme Being, who was the *Creator* and *Governor* of all Things. And this was the first *Idolatrous Religion* which was establish'd in the World, and long prevail'd over a great part of it, and is still preserv'd in the

the *East* among the *Seet* of the *Sabians* even to this Day. But the *Persians* not liking the Worship of the *Planets* by *Images*, would endure no other *Symbol* to represent those *glorious Luminaries* by, but *Fire* only, of which they reckon'd them to be constituted ; and therefore wherever they prevail'd, they destroy'd all *Images* out of the *Temples*, and plac'd *Fire* in their stead : And from hence the *Magi* or the *Worshippers of Fire* had their Original. But from their having one *Symbol*, they speedily came to the asserting but of one *Deity* represented by it, which they would have to be *Light*, and that of the Mixture of this and *Darkness*, all Things in this World were compounded ; that *Light* was the Cause or Principle of all Good, and *Darkness* the Cause or Principle of all Evil ; and therefore under the *Symbol* of *Fire* they worshipp'd *Light* as their *God*, but detested *Darkness* in the same manner as we do the *Devil*. And from hence *Manes* the *Heretick* had his two Principles, which he would have introduc'd into the *Christian Religion*. But above both these they acknowledg'd a *Supreme God*, in respect of whom their *God Light* was but an inferiour *Deity*, or a *God Mediator*, by whom they were to

have Access unto him. And this *Religion* obtain'd through all *Persia*, and other Parts on the *East* of it, and doth there remain even unto this Day among the *Persees* in *India*, and the *Inhabitants* of the *Province* of *Kerman*, on the *Southern Coast* of *Persia*. But the Practice of the *Babylonians* or *Chaldeans* in worshipping their *Gods Mediators* by *Images*, obtain'd in all the *Western Parts* of the *World*. For they holding, that they were to have Access to *God* through *Angels* as their *Mediators*, and to the *Angels* through the *Planets*, and to the *Planets* through the *Images* which they erected to them, did give to those *Images* the Names of the *Planets*, and under those Names paid Divine Worship unto them; which *Idolatry* passing from *Babylon* or *Chaldea* into *Arabia*, and from thence to the *Egyptians* and *Phœnicians*, was by them carry'd into *Greece*, and from thence spread it self into all Parts on this *Western* side of the *World*, as that of the *Magi* did on the *Eastern*. For the chief *Gods* of the *Greeks*, as well as the Names by which they were call'd, came from the *Egyptians* and *Phœnicians*, and were no more than the *Images* by which the *Babylonians* worshipped the *Sun*, *Moon*, and other *Planets*,
with

with the Names of those *Planets* given unto them. Afterward indeed they added to their number other *Deities* also, which were originally either some of the fix'd Stars, or else the Souls of Men departed, as of *Eel* or *Belus* among the *Babylonians*, *Abraham* and *Ismael* among the *Arabians*, *Orus* and *Osiris* among the *Egyptians*, *Æsculapius* and *Hercules* among the *Greeks*, and *Romulus* or *Quirinus* among the *Romans*. For it early began a Custom among all the Worshippers of *Images*, as well *Greeks* as *Barbarians*, to Deify Men departed, reckoning those who liv'd justly and righteously, or had made themselves eminent by any great and worthy Actions in this Life, to have those Habitations allotted them in the *Heavens* above, where they were in a Capacity to be *Mediators* to God for them; and therefore they offer'd Divine Worship to them as such. And this was it that gave occasion to so many *Apotheoses's* or *Deifications* among them, and so vastly encreas'd the number of their *Gods* in all the *Idolatrous Parts* of the *World*, and also the various Methods of Superstition, whereby they paid their Worship unto them. Yet they all still held to their Notion of *One Supreme God*, and rec-

koned all the others to be no more than *God's Mediators* under him. And this *One God*, whom they held to be made of none, and to be the Maker or Father of all Things else that are, was among the *Chaldeans* of old (as still among the *Sabians*, who are the remainder of them) call'd *Deus Deorum*, and among the *Arabs*, *Allah Taal*, i. e. *the High or Supreme God*; and agreeable hereto, among the *Greeks*, was there also their *παῖς ἀνδρῶν τε θεῶν τε*; i. e. *One Supreme God, who was the Father both of Gods and Men*. And thus far in Answer to your Question, have I given you an Account how all the *False Religions* in the *Heathen World* had their Original; and herein I have been the longer for the sake of two Reflections which are obvious for you to make hereon.

I. That the *Notion* of a *Mediator* between *God* and *Man* was that which did run through all the *Religions* that ever were in the *World*, to the Coming of *Jesus Christ*, and was the Fundamental Principle which prevail'd in every one of them as to all the *Worship* which was practis'd in them, which could no otherwise become so universal among *Mankind*, but by a *Tradition* as universally deliver'd

deliver'd unto them. And what can better account both for this *Tradition*, and also the *Universality* of it, than what is deliver'd unto us in *Scripture*, of our being descended from one common Parent, who on his Fall from the Favour of *God*, having had this Promise of a *Mediator* made unto him, through whom we might be again reconcil'd unto him, transmitted it to all his Posterity.

2dly, That the Mistakes and Errors about the Worship of *God*, and the Service we owe unto him, which Men are apt to run into, when left to the Conduct of their own Light only, are monstrous and endless, and therefore evidently demonstrate the Necessity of *Divine Revelations*. For if *God* doth expect from us an Account of our Actions, it is necessary he should give us a *Law* for the Rule of them, and if the *Law* of our Reason alone be insufficient for this (as from the continual Errors and endless Absurdities, which Mankind, when left to themselves, have ever hitherto run into, it doth evidently appear that it is :) this demonstrably proves the Necessity of another to supply its Defect, and that in our Case we must have a *Revealed Religion* as well as a *Natural*, or else we can have no cer-

certain Knowledge of the Will of *God*, or any of those Duties of Worship and Service which we are to perform towards him. And if this proves the Necessity of such a *Revealed Religion* (as I think it undeniably must to every one that believes *God* will account with us for what we do;) all that I have farther to offer, is, That you would thoroughly examine and consider that *Holy Christian Religion* which we profess, and compare it with all the other *Religions* that are in the World; and if it do not appear vastly above them all, the worthiest of *God* for him to give unto us, and the worthiest of us to observe, and that not only in respect of the Honour given to him, but also of the Improvement and Perfection brought to our own Nature thereby, I will be content that you shall then persist to believe it an *Imposture*, and, as such, reject it for ever.

Humphrey Prideaux.

A N
ACCOUNT
OF THE

Authors quoted in this Book.

Arabic Authors.

Abul Faraghius, a Physician of Malatia in Lesser Armenia, of the Christian Religion, and the Sect of the Jacobites. He is an Author of eminent Note in the East, as well among Mahometans as Christians. His *History of the Dynasties* is from the Creation of the World to the Year of our Lord 1284. It was publish'd at Oxford with a *Latin Version* by Dr. Pocock, A. D. 1663. He flourished about the time where his *History* ends. His Name at length is Gregorius Ebn Hacim Abul Faraghi.

Abul Feda, an Author of great Repute in the East for two Books which he wrote : The first a *General Geography* of the World, after the Method of Ptolemy ; and the other a *General History,*

History, which he calls *the Epitomy of the History of Nations*. He was born A. D. 1273. He finish'd his *Geography* A. D. 1321. Twenty Years after that he was advanc'd to the *Principality of Hamah* in *Syria*, from whence he is commonly call'd *Shahab Hamah*, i. e. *Prince of Hamah*, where after having Reign'd three Years, two Months, and thirteen Days, he dy'd A. D. 1345, being Seventy two Years old. He was by Nation a *Turk*, of the Noble Family of the *Jobidæ*, of which was *Saladin* the famous *Sultan* of *Egypt*. His Name at length is *Ismael Ebn Ali Al Melec al Moaiyad Amaddodin Abul Feda*. *Eccbellensis* quotes him by the Name of *Ismael Shiabinshiab*.

Abunazar, a *Legendary Writer* of the *Mahometans*, much quoted by *Hottinger*.

Agar, a Book of great Authority among the *Mahometans*, saith *Guadagnol* (pag. 165.) wherein an Account is given of the Life and Death of *Mahomet*. *Joannes Andreas* makes great use of it under the Name of *Azaer*, as doth *Bellonius* in the Third Book of his *Observations* under the Name of *Afaer*. *Guadagnol* who had a Copy of the Book, calls it the *Book Agar*, and takes most of what he objects against the Life and Actions of *Mahomet* out of it.

Abmed Ebn Edris, an Author that writes in the Defence of the *Mahometan Religion* against the *Christians* and the *Jews*.

Abmed Ebn Yuseph, an *Historian* who flourish'd A. D. 1599, for then he finish'd his *History*.

Abmed

Abmed Ebn Zin Alabedin, a Nobleman of *Hispan* in *Persia*, of this last Age, who hath wrote the sharpest and accutest Book against the *Christian Religion*, in Defence of the *Mahometan*, of any they have among them on this Argument. It was publish'd on this Occasion. *Ecbar* the Great *Mogul*, Great Grandfather to *Aurang Zeb*, who at present reigneth in *India*, for some Reasons of State making show of encouraging the *Christian Religion*, did in the Year 1595 write to *Matthias de Albuquerque*, then *Viceroy* of the *Portuguese* in *India*, for some *Priests* to be sent to him to his Court at *Agra*. The Persons pitch'd upon for this *Mission*, were *Feronimo Xavier*, then *Rector* of the Colledge of the *Jesuits* at *Goa*, and *Emanuel Pigneiro* and *Benedict de Gois*, two others of that Society. On their coming to *Agra*, they were very kindly receiv'd by the *Mogul*, and had a Church there built for them at his Charges, and many Privileges and Immunities granted unto them, which on the Death of *Ecbar* (which happen'd *A. D.* 1604.) were all confirm'd to them by his Successor *Jehan Guire*. At the Command of this *Ecbar*, *Xaverius* wrote two Books in *Persian* (which is the Language of that Court ;) The first the *History of Jesus Christ*, collected for the most part out of the *Legends* of the *Church of Rome*, which he intended to be instead of the *Gospel* among them ; and the other call'd *A Looking Glass shewing the Truth*, which is a Defence of the Doctrines of that *Gospel* against the *Mahometans*. What the former

former is, those who have the Curiosity to see what kind of Gospel the *Jesuits* preach in the *East*, may satisfy themselves, for the Book is translated into *Latin* by *De Dieu*, and was publish'd by him with the *Original*, A. D. 1639. This Gospel of the *Jesuits* was first presented to *Echar* by *Xaverius* at *Agra*, A. D. 1602. But the other Book was not publish'd till a Year or two after. When it first came abroad, it unluckily fell into the Hands of this learned *Persian Gentleman*, who immediately wrote an Answer to it, which he calls *The Brusher of the Looking-Glass*, wherein he makes terrible Work with the *Jesuit*, through the Advantages which he gave him by teaching the *Idolatry*, and other *Superstitions* and *Errors* of the *Church of Rome*, for the *Doctrines* of *Jesus Christ*. When this Book came abroad, it so alarm'd the *Colledge de propaganda Fide* at *Rome*, that they immediately order'd it to be answer'd. The first who was appointed for this Work was *Bonaventura Malvasia*, a *Franciscan Friar* of *Bononia*, who publish'd his *Dilucidatio Speculi verum monstrantis*, in Answer to this *Brusher*, A. D. 1628. But this, I suppose, not being judg'd so sufficient by the *College*, they appointed *Philip Guedagnol*, another *Franciscan Friar*, to write a second Answer thereto. And on this Occasion he compos'd his Book stild *Apologia pro Christiana Religione*, which was publish'd at *Rome* first in *Latin*, A. D. 1631, and after in *Arabic*, 1637. For this, I suppose, meeting with better Approbation from the *College*, they order-
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ed it to be translated into that Language, and it being accordingly done by the same *Author*, they sent it into the *East* to be dispers'd among the *Mahometans*, for the Defence of the *Jesuit's Looking Glass* against this rude *Brusher* of it. But his Performance doth by no means answer the Design, abundance of his Arguments being drawn from the *Authorities* of *Popes* and *Councils*, which will never convince an *Infidel* of the Truth of the *Christian Religion*, how much Noise soever they may make with them among those of their own *Communion*.

Al Bochari, an Eminent Writer of the *Traditionary Doctrines* of the *Mahometan Religion*. He is reckon'd by *Johannes Andreas*, c. 3. and *Bellonius*, lib. 3. c. 4. to be one of the *Six Doctors*. who, by the Appointment of one of the *Califs* meeting at *Damascus*, first made an *Authentick Collection* of all those *Traditions* which make up their *Sonnab*. His Book contains the *Pandects* of all that relates either to their *Law* or their *Religion*, digested under their several Titles in Thirty Books, and is the Ancientest and most Authentick which they have of this Matter, and, next the *Alcoran*, of the greatest Authority among them. He was born at *Bochara* in *Cowarasnia*, A. D. 809. and dy'd A. D. 869.

Al Coran, i. e. *The Book to be read*, or the *Legend*, it is the *Bible* of the *Mahometans*. The Name is borrow'd from the *Hebrew Kara* or *Mikra* (Words of the same Root, as well as Signification, with the *Arabick Al Coran*) by which

which the *Jews* call'd the *Old Testament*, or any part of it; And so any part of the *Mahometan Bible* is call'd *Alcoran*. The whole together they call *Al Moshap*, i. e. *The Book*, which also in respect of the Chapters, into which it is divided, they call *Al Furkan*, from the *Arabic Word Faraka*, which from the *Hebrew Pharack* signifies *to divide* or *distinguish*; but others will have that *Book* to be so call'd in respect of the Matter or Doctrine therein contain'd, because, say they, it distinguisheth Good from Evil.

It hath been lately publish'd in *Arabic*, with a large Preface before it in *Latin* by *Abraham Hinckelman* at *Hamburg*, A. D. 1694. Had he added a *Latin Version*, he would have made it much more useful. For that which hath been publish'd by *Bibliander* for a *Latin Version* of the *Alcoran*, is only an absurd Epitome of it, compos'd by *Robertus Retinensis*, near 600 Years ago, whereby the Sense of the Original is so ill represented, that no one can by the one scarce any where understand what is truly meant by the other. In the Year 1647, *Andrew du Ryer*, who had been Agent for the *French Merchants* at *Alexandria*, publish'd a Translation of it in *French*, from which it had been put into *English* by *Alexander Ross*. *Hottinger* and *Plempius* much commend this Translation, and, indeed, it must be said that it is done as well as can be expected from one who was only a Merchant.

Al Fragani,

Al Fragani, an *Astronomer* of *Fragana* in *Persia*, from whence his Name *Al Fragani*, i. e. *Fraganensis*, by which he is commonly called. His Name at length is *Mohammed Ebn Katir Al Fragani*. He wrote a Book called, *The Elements of Astronomy*, which hath been several times publish'd in *Europe*, at *Neurenberg* A. D. 1537, at *Paris* A. D. 1546, at *Frankfort cum Notis Christmanni*, A. D. 1590, in *Latin*; and afterwards by *Golius* in *Arabic* and *Latin* at *Leiden*, A. D. 1669, with large Notes of great use for the understanding of the *Geography* of the *East*. He flourish'd while *Al Mamon* was *Calif*, who dy'd A. D. 833.

Al Gazali, a famous *Philosopher* of *Tusa* in *Persia*. He wrote many Books, not only in *Philosophy*, but also in Defence of the *Mahometan Religion* against *Christians*, *Jews*, *Pagans*, and all others that differ therefrom, whereof one is of more especial Note, entitled, *The Destruction of Philosophers*, which he wrote against *Al Farabius*, and *Avicenna*, and some others of the *Arab Philosophers*; who, to solve the monstrous Absurdities of the *Mahometan Religion*, were for turning many things into *Figure* and *Allegory*, which were commonly understood in the *literal Sense*. Those he violently opposeth on this account, accusing them of *Heresy* and *Infidelity*, as *Corrupters* of the *Faith*, and *Subverters* of *Religion*, whereon he had the Name of *Hogbatol Eslam Zainoddin*, i. e. *The Demonstration of Mahometism, and the Honour of Religion*. He was born A. D. 1058, and dy'd A. D. 1112. His Name

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at length is *Abu Hamed Ebn Mohammed Al Gázali Al Tusi*.

Al Fannabi, an *Historian* born at *Fannaba*, a City in *Persia*, not far from *Shiras*. His *History* comes down to the Year of our Lord 1588, and therein he tells us, that he went in *Pilgrimage* to *Mecca*, and from thence to *Medina*, to pay his Devotions at the Tomb of the *Impostor*, in that Year of the *Hegera* which answers to the Year of our Lord 1556: His Name at length is *Abu Mahammed Mustapha Ebnol Saiyed Hasan Al Fannabi*.

Al Kamus, i. e. *The Ocean*, a famous *Arabic Dictionary* so call'd, because of the Ocean of Words contain'd in it. It was written by *Mohammed Ebn Jaacub Ebn Mohammed Al Shirazi Al Firauzabadi*. He was a Person of great Esteem among the *Princes* of his time; for his eminent Learning and Worth, particularly with *Ismael Ebn Abbas*, King of *Yaman*, *Bajazet* King of the *Turks*, and *Tamerlane* the *Tartar*, from the last of which he receiv'd a Gift of Five thousand pieces of Gold at one time. He was born *A. D.* 1328, being a *Persian* by Birth, but he liv'd most at *Sanaa* in *Yaman*. He finish'd his *Dictionary* at *Mecca*, and dedicated it to *Ismael Ebn Abbas*, under whose Patronage he had long liv'd, and afterwards dy'd at *Zibit* in *Arabia*, *A. D.* 1414, being near Ninety Years old.

Al Kodai, an *Historian*. He wrote his *History* about the Year of our Lord 1045, and dy'd *A. D.* 1062. His Name at length is
Abu

Abu Abdolla Mohammed Ebn Salamah Ebn Jaafar Al Kodai.

Al Masudi, an Historian. He wrote an *History* call'd the *Golden Meadows*, but in what Time he liv'd, I do not find. His Name at length is *Ali-Ebn Hosain Al Masudi*. He wrote also another Book, wherein he makes it his Business to discover and expose the Fraud which the *Christians* of *Jerusalem* are guilty of about lighting *Candles* at the *Sepulchre* of our *Saviour* on *Easter-Eve*. For then *three Lamps* being plac'd within the *Chappel* of the *Sepulchre*, when the *Hymn* of the *Resurrection* is song at the *Evening Service*, they contrive that these *three Lamps* be all lighted, which they will have believ'd to be by Fire from *Heaven*, * and then a multitude of *Christians* of all *Nations* are present with *Candles* to light them at this *holy Fire*, which hath been a fraudulent Practice kept up among them for many hundred Years. And the *Emperor Cantacuzenus* was so fair impos'd on by this Cheat, that in this *Third Apology* for the *Christian Religion* against the *Mahometans*, he makes mention of it, and urgeth it against those *Infidels*, as a *Miracle*, which being annually perform'd in their Sight, ought to convince them of the Truth of the *Christian Religion*, and convert them thereto. But the *Imposture* hath all along been too well known to the *Mahometans* to be of any such Effect with them. For the *Patriarch* of *Jerusalem* always compounds with the *Mahometan Governor* to permit him to practise this Trick for the sake

* Vide W. Malmsburiensem de gestis Regum Anglorum, lib. 4. c. 2. f. 79, & f. 83.

of the Gain which it brings to his *Church*, and annually allows him his Share in it. And therefore, instead of being of any effect to convert them, it becomes a Matter of continual Scandal among them against the *Christian Religion*. And not only this *Author*, but *Ahmed Ebn Edris*, and most others of the *Mahometans*, that write against the *Christian Religion*, object it as a Reproach thereto (as in truth it is,) and urge it with the same earnestness against the *Christian Religion*, that *Cantacuzenus* doth for it. *Al Mansor Hakem Beamrilla*, *Calif* of *Egypt*, was so offended at it, that *A. D.* 1007, he order'd the *Church* of the *Resurrection* at *Jerusalem*, wherein this *Chappel* of the *Sepulchre* stands, to be for this very reason pull'd down and raz'd to the Ground, that he might thereby put an end to so infamous a Cheat. But the *Emperor* of *Constantinople* having by the release of Five thousand *Mahometan Captives*, obtain'd leave to have it re-built again, the *Imposture* hath still gone on at the same rate and it is there, to the great Sport of the *Mahometans*, (who come in Multitudes every Year to see this *Farce*) acted over in their Sight in the same manner as is above related even unto this Day. *Thevenot*, who was once present at it, gives us a large Account of this whole *Foolery* in the first part of his *Travels*, Book II. Chap. 43.

Al Mostatraf, the Name of a Book, written by an unknown Author.

Al Motarrez, the author of the Book called *Mogreb*, he was born *A. D.* 1143, and dy'd

dy'd A. D. 1213. His Name at length is *Nasir Ebn Abil Macarem Abul Phatab Al Motarrez*. He was of the Sect of the *Motazali*, and seems by his last Name, *Al Motarrez*, (by which he is usually call'd) to have been by Trade a *Taylor*, that being the Signification of the Word in *Arabic*.

Assamael, a Book much quoted by *Johannes Andreas*, and also by *Guadagnol*.

Bidawi, a famous Commentator on the *Alcoran*. He dy'd A. D. 1293. His Name at length is *Naseroddin Abdollah Ebn Omar Al Bidawi*. His Commentary is written for the most part out of *Zamachshari*.

Kazwini, an *Arabic Author*, so call'd from the City *Kaswin*. His Name at length is *Zacharias Ebn Mahammed Ebn Mahmud Al Kaswini*. In what Age he liv'd, I cannot find.

Dialogus Mahometis cum Abdollah Ebn Saalem, a Book wrote in *Arabic*, containing a great many of the Fooleries of the *Mahometan Religion*, under the Form of a Dialogue between *Mahomet* and this *Jew*, who was his chief Helper in forging the *Imposture*. It was translated into *Latin* by *Hermannus Dalmata*, and that Version of it is publish'd at the end of the *Latin Alcoran* set forth by *Bibliander*.

Disputatio Christiani contra Saracenum de Lege Mahometis. It was written in *Arabic* by a Christian, who was an Officer in the Court of a King of the *Saracens*, to a *Mahometan* Friend of his, who was an Officer with him in the same Court, and contains a Con-

futation of the *Mahometan Religion*. Peter, the famous *Abbot* of *Cluny* in *Burgundy*, who flourish'd *A. D.* 1130, caus'd it to be translated into *Latin* by *Peter of Toledo*; an *Epitome* of which is printed with the *Latin Alcoran* by *Bibliander*, taken out of the 24th Book of the *Speculum Historiale* of *Vincentius Bellovacensis*.

Elmacinus, an *Historian* of the *Christian Religion*. His *History* is from the *Creation* of the *World* to the *Year* of our *Lord* 1118. The latter part of it, which is from the beginning of *Mahometism*, was publish'd by *Erpenius*, under the Title of *Historia Saracenica*, *A. D.* 1625. He was Son to *Yaser Al Amid*, who was Secretary of the Council of War under the *Sultans* of *Egypt*, of the Family of the *Jobidae*, for 45 Years together, and in the *Year* of our *Lord* 1238, (in which his Father dy'd) succeeded him in his Place. His Name at length is *Georgius Ebn Amid*; and for his Eminent Learning, he was also stil'd *Al Shaich Al Raiis Al Macin*, i. e. The prime Doctor solidly Learned. The last of which Titles, *Almacin*, was that whereby *Erpenius* (who pronounceth it *Elmacin*) chose to call him; but by others he is generally quoted by the Name *Ebn Amid*.

Ebnol Athir, a *Mahometan Author*, who was born *A. D.* 1149, and dy'd *A. D.* 1209. His Name at length is *Abussaadat Al Moharac Ebn Mohammed Al Shaibani Ebnol Athir Al Fazari Magdoddin*.

Ali Ebnol Athir, an *Historian*, Brother to the former *Ebnol Athir*. His Name at length is *Abul Hasan Ali Ebn Mohammed Al Shaibani Ebnol Athir Al Fazari Ezzoddin*. He was born *A. D.* 1160, and dy'd *A. D.* 1232. His *History*, which he calls *Camel*, is from the beginning of the World, to the Year of our Lord 1230.

Ebnol Kassai, Author of the Book called *Taarifat*, which is an Explication of the various Terms us'd in *Arabic* by Philosophers, Lawyers, Divines, and other sorts of Learned Professions among them.

Ebn Phares, a *Mahometan* Author, who dy'd *A. D.* 1000.

Eutychius, a *Christian* Author of the Sect of the *Melchites*, his Name in *Arabic* is *Said Ebn Batrik*. He was born at *Cair* in *Egypt*, *A. D.* 876, and became very eminent in the Knowledge of *Physick*, which he practis'd with great Reputation, being reckon'd by the *Mahometans* themselves to have been one of the Eminentest *Physicians* of his Time. But towards the latter part of his Life giving himself more to the study of *Divinity*, he was *A. D.* 933, chosen *Patriarch* of *Alexandria* for his Sect (for there was another *Patriarch* of that Place for the *Jacobites* at the same time) and then he first took the Name of *Eutychius*. But he hapned not to be so acceptable to his People, for there were continual Jars between them until his Death, which hapned Seven Years after, *A. D.* 940. His *Annals of the Church of Alexandria* were publish'd at

Oxford in Arabic and Latin by Dr. Pocock, A. D. 1656, at the Charge of Mr. Selden, and this is the meaning of these Words in the Title-Page, [*Johanne Seldeno Chorago*] for he who was the *Choragus* in the Play, always was at the Charges of exhibiting the *Scenes*. And therefore Mr. Selden having born the Expenses of this chargeable Edition, the most Worthy and Learned Author of that Version acknowledg'd it by those Words in the Title-Page, which several having mistaken to the robbing him of the Honour of his Work, as if Mr. Selden had begun the Translation, and Dr. Pocock finish'd it, I cannot but do this Justice to that Worthy Person. now with God, as to clear this Matter. For he needed no Partner in any of his Works. The Translation was totally his, and only the Charges of Printing the Book Mr. Selden's. Mr. Selden did, indeed, publish a Leaf or two of the *Author*, which he thought would serve his Purpose to express his Spight against the *Bishops* of the *Church of England*, in Revenge of the *Censure* which was inflicted on him in the *High Commission-Court* for his *History of Tythes*; but he made those Slips in that Version, that Dr. Pocock was not at all eas'd of his Labour, by having that little part of it translated to his Hands.

Liber de Generatione & Nutritura Mahometis, a most frivolous and silly Tract, wrote originally in *Arabic*; and being translated into *Latin* by *Hermannus Dalmata*, is publish'd with the *Latin Alcoran* by *Bibliander*.

Geographia

Geographia Nubiensis, so the Book is called by *Sionita* and *Hesronita*, who publish'd it in Latin with a *Geographical Appendix* annex'd thereto, *A. D.* 1619. But this Book is only an *Epitome* of a much larger and much better Book written by *Sharif Al Adrisi*, at the command of *Roger*, the second of that Name, King of Sicily, for the explaining of a *Terrestrial Globe*, which that King had caus'd to be made of a very large size, all of Silver. He finish'd this Work *A. D.* 1153, and entitl'd it *Ketab Roger*, i. e. *the Book of Roger*, from the Name of him who employ'd him to compose it. The Author was of the Race of *Mahomet*, and therefore is call'd *Sharif*, which Word signifieth one of a Noble Race, especially that of *Mahomet*, and was descend'd from the Noble Family of the *Adrisidæ*, who reign'd in some Parts of *Africa*, and therefore he is call'd *Al Adrisi*, that is, of the Family of *Adris*. His Name at length is *Abu Abdollah Mohammed Ebn Mohammed Ebn Adris Amir Olmuminin*. There was a very fair Copy of this Book among *Dr. Pocock's Arabic Manuscripts*.

Georgius Monachus, Abbot of the Monastery of *St. Simeon*. He wrote a Tract in Defence of the *Christian Religion* against the *Mahometans*, which is a *Disputation* he had with three *Mahometans*, of whom the chief Spokesman was *Abusalama Ebn Saar* of *Mosul*.

Faubari, the Author of a famous *Arabic Dictionary*, call'd *Al Sahab*: His Name at length is *Abu Naser Ismael Ebn Hammad Al*

Faubari. He was by Nation a *Turk*. He dy'd A. D. 1007. This is reckon'd the best *Dictionary* of the *Arabic Language* next *Kamus*. *Golius* makes his *Arabic Lexicon* mostly out of it.

Falalani, i. e. the *Two Falals*. They were two of the same Name, who wrote a short *Commentary* upon the *Alcoran*, the first began it, and the second finish'd it. The first was call'd *Falal Oddin Mohammed Ebn Ahmed Al Maballi*; and the second *Falal Oddin Abdorrahman Al Ojuti*. This latter on the Death of the former, finish'd the Book A. D. 1466, and was also *Author* of an *History* called *Mexbar*.

Shabrestani, a *Scholastical Writer* of the *Mahometan Religion*. He was born at *Shabrestan*, A. D. 1074, and dy'd A. D. 1154.

Safioddin, the *Author* of a certain *Geographical Dictionary* in the *Arabic Tongue*.

Zamachshari, the *Author* of the Book call'd *Al Cesbaf* which is a large *Commentary* upon the *Alcoran*, and that which is of the best Esteem among the *Mahometans* of any of its kind. His Name at length is *Abul Kasem Mohammed Ebn Omar Ebn Mohammed Al Chowarasmî Al Zamachshari*. He was born at *Zamachshar*, a Town of *Chowarasmia*, A. D. 1074, and dy'd A. D. 1143.

Hebrew and Chaldee Authors.

Chaldee Paraphrase, an Interpretation of the Old Testament in the Chaldee Language. That of Onkelos on the Pentateuch, and that of Jonathan on the Prophets are ancient, being written, according to the Account which the Jews give of them, before the Time of our Saviour. But those which are on the other Parts of Scripture, as also that which bears the Name of Jonathan on the Law, were written by some later Jews. The Author of the Chaldee Paraphrase on Job, the Psalms, and Proverbs, was Rabbi Joseph Cæcus.

Sepher Cozri, a Book written by way of Dialogue between a Jew and the King of the Cozars, from whence it hath its Name *Sepher Cozri* or *Cozari*, i. e. the Book of the Cozar. The Author of it was Rabbi Judah Levita, a Spanish Jew, who wrote the Book originally in Arabic about the Year of our Lord 1140, and from thence it was translated into Hebrew by Rabbi Judah Ebn Tibbon, in which Translation it was publish'd by Buxtorf, with a Latin Version, A. D. 1660.

Rabbi David Kimchi, a famous Jewish Commentator on the Old Testament. He was by Birth a Spaniard, Son to Rabbi Joseph Kimchi, and Brother to Rabbi Moses Kimchi, both Men of eminent Learning among the Jews; but he himself far exceeded them both, being the best Grammarian in the Hebrew Language

guage which they ever had, as is abundantly made appear not only in his *Commentary on the Old Testament* (which gives the greatest Light into the literal Sense of the *Hebrew Text* of any extant of this kind) but also in a *Grammar and Dictionary* which he hath wrote of the *Hebrew Language*, both by many degrees the best of their kind: The first of these he calls *Miclol*, and the other *Sepher Sborashim*, i. e. the *Book of Roots*. Buxtorf made his *Thesaurus Linguae Hebraeae* out of the former, and his *Lexicon Linguae Hebraeae* out of the latter. He flourish'd about the Year of our Lord 1270.

Maimonides, a famous Jewish Writer; his Book, *Yad Hachazakah*, is a Digest of the Jewish Law according to the *Talmudists*. His Book *Morek Nevochim*, contains an Explication of Words, Phrases, Metaphors, Parables, Allegories, and other Difficulties which occur in the *Old Testament*. It was first wrote in *Arabic*, and after translated into *Hebrew* by Rabbi Samuel Ebn Judah Ebn Tibbon, from which Translation it was publish'd in *Latin* by Buxtorf, A. D. 1629. He was born at Corduba in Spain, A. D. 1131, but liv'd mostly in Egypt, from whence he is commonly call'd Rabbi Moses *Aegyptius*, where he dy'd A. D. 1208.

Mishnah, a Collection of all the Ancient Traditions of the Jews, to the Time of Rabbi Judah Hakkodish, the Compiler of it, who flourish'd about the middle of the second Century, in the Reign of the Emperor Anto-

ninus Pius. This Book is the *Text* to the *Talmud*, and that a *Comment* on it. The *Jerusalem Talmud* was compil'd by the *Jews* who dwelt in *Judea*, about 300 Years after *Christ*; and the *Babylonish Talmud* by those who dwelt in *Mesopotamia*, about 500 Years after *Christ*, according to the Account which the *Jewish Writers* give of them. But there are several things contained in the latter, which seem to refer to a much later Date. These Three, with the Two *Chaldee Paraphrases* of *Onkelos* and *Jonathan*, are the ancientest Books which the *Jews* have, next the *Bible*. For how much Noise soever may be made about their *Rabbinical Writers*, there are none of them above Seven hundred Years old. There are some of them indeed lay claim to a much ancients Date, but without any reason for it.

Greek Authors.

A *Ristotelis Ethica & Politica.*
Bartholomæi Edesseni Confutatio Hagaræni, a *Greek Tract* against *Mahometism*, publish'd by *Le Moyne* among his *Varia Sacra*. The Author was a *Monk* of *Edessa* in *Mesopotamia*. In what Age he liv'd, it doth not appear.

Cantacuzenus contra Sectam Mahometicam.
 This Book contains four *Apologies* for the *Christian Religion*, and four *Orations* against the

the *Mahometan*. The Author had been *Emperor of Constantinople*, but resigning his *Empire* to *John Palæologus* his Son-in-law, A. D. 1355, he retir'd into a *Monastery*, where being accompany'd by *Meletius*, formerly called *Achæmemid*, whom he had converted from *Mahometism* to the *Christian Religion*, he there wrote this *Book* for the said *Meletius*, in Answer to a Letter written to him by *Sampsates*, a *Persian* of *Hispahan*, to reduce him back again to the *Mahometan Superstition*.

Cedreni Compendium Historiarum, an *History* from the beginning of the *World*, to the *Year* of our *Lord* 1037.

Chrysostomi Homiliæ.

Confutatio Mahometis, a *Greek Tract*, publish'd by *Le Moynes* among his *Varia Sacra*; the Author not known.

Dionysii Halicarnassæi Antiquitates Romanæ.

Eusebii Historia Ecclesiastica, and *Præparatio Evangelica*.

Hierocles, the Fomenter and chief Manager of the Tenth *Persecution* against the *Christians*. He was first Governor of *Bythinia*, and after of *Egypt*, in both which Places he prosecuted the *Christians* with the utmost Severity, and not content herewith, he also wrote two *Books* against them, which he call'd *Δόγας φιλαλήθειας*, wherein, among other things, he compar'd *Apollonius Tyaneus* with *Jesus Christ*, and endeavour'd to prove him in working of *Miracles* to have been equal to him; to which Particular *Eusebius* wrote an *Answer*, which is still extant among

mong his Works ; but these Books of *Hierocles* are now wholly lost, excepting some Fragments preserv'd in the said Answer of *Eusebius*.

Josephi Antiquitates Judaicæ, and de Bello Judaico.

Origines contra Celsum.

Philostratus de vita Apollonii Tyanei.

Phelegon Trallianus, a Freed Man of *Adrian* the Emperor. He wrote a *Chronicon* or *History*, which he call'd the *History of the Olympiads*. It contain'd 229 *Olympiads*, whereof the last ended in the Fourth Year of the Emperor *Antoninus Pius*. But there is nothing of this Work now extant, except some few Fragments, as they are preserv'd in such Authors as have quoted it. That relating to the *Eclipse* of the Sun at our Saviour's Crucifixion is preserv'd in *Eusebius's Chronicon*, and is also made mention of by *Origen* in his 25th Tract on *St. Matthew's Gospel*, and in his second Book against *Celsus*.

Plato.

Plutarchi Vitæ.

Strabonis Geographia.

Socratis Scholastici Historia Ecclesiastica.

Sozomenis Historia Ecclesiastica.

Theophanis Chronographia, This is one of the *Byzantine Historians*, and contains a *Chronological History* of the *Roman Empire*, from the Year of our Lord 285, to the Year 813. The Author was a Nobleman of *Constantinople*, where he was first an Officer of the *Imperial Court*, but afterwards turning Monk wrote this

this *History*. He was born A. D. 758, and A. D. 815; dy'd in Prison in the *Island of Samothracia*, a Martyr for Image Worship, for which he had been a zealous *Champion* in the *Second Council of Nice*.

Zonaræ Compendium Historiarum. Another of the *Byzantine Historians*. It contains an *History* from the beginning of the World to the Death of *Alexius Comnenus*, Emperor of *Constantinople*; which hapned A. D. 1118; when the Author flourish'd. He was first a Prime Officer of the *Imperial Court* at *Constantinople*; but afterwards became an *Ecclesiastic*, and is the same who wrote the *Comment* on the *Greek Canons*.

Latin Authors Ancient and Modern.

Ammiani Marcellini *Historia*.
Anastasi Bibliothecarii Historia Ecclesiastica. The Author was a Priest of the Church of Rome, and Library Keeper to the Pope. He flourish'd about the Year of our Lord 870.

Bellonii Observationes de locis ac rebus memorabilibus in Asia. The Book was first publish'd in French, A. D. 1553. and after in Latin, A. D. 1589.

Bocharti Hierozoicon.

Busbecquii Epistolæ, the Author was *Embassador* from the Emperor Ferdinand the First to the Port, from whence he wrote his *Epistles*.

Buxtorfii

Buxtorfii Lexicon Rabbinicum.

Buxtorfii Synagoga Judaica.

Caroli à Sancto Paulo Geographia Sacra, sive Notitia antiqua Episcopatum Ecclesiæ Universæ Lutetiæ Parisiorum, A. D. 1641.

Clenardi Epistolæ. The Author of these *Epistles* was the famous *Grammarian* of his Age. Out of love to the *Arabic Tongue*, he went to *Fez* of purpose to learn it, A. D. 1540. when well advanced in Years, from whence he wrote many Things in his *Epistles*, of the Manners and Religion of the *Mahometans*. He dy'd at *Granada* in *Spain* as soon as he returned.

Cusani Crebratio Alcorani. The Author of this Book was the famous *Nicolas de Cusa*, the eminentest Scholar of the Age in which he liv'd. In the Year 1448, he was made *Cardinal* of *Rome*, by the title of *St. Peter's ad vincula*, and dy'd A. D. 1464, about Ten Years after the *Turks* had taken *Constantinople*. Which seems to have given him the Occasion of writing this Book, that so he might provide an Antidote against that *False Religion*, which on that Success had gotten so great an Advantage for its further spreading it self in those Parts of the World. For it appears by the Dedication that this Book was not written till after the Loss of that City; it being dedicated to *Pope Pius Secundus*, who entred not on the *Papacy*, till the *Turks* had been about three Years in possession of it.

Abrahami Ecchellensis Historia Arabum. This Book is subjoyn'd to his *Chronicon Orientale*,
in

in Two Parts, collected out of the *Arab Writers*. The Author was a *Maronite* of *Mount Lebanon* in *Syria*, and was employ'd as *Professor* of the *Oriental Languages*, in the *College de Propaganda Fide* at *Rome*, from whence about the Year 1640, he was call'd to *Paris*, to assist in preparing the great *Polyglott Bible* for the Press, which was there Publishing, and made the *King's Professor* of the *Oriental Languages* in that City. The Part assign'd him in this Work, was that which they had afore employ'd *Sionita* in, a Man of thorough Abilities to perform it; but on some Distaste taken against him, they discharged him, and sent to *Rome* for *Ecchellensis*; of whose Performance herein, a Learned *Sorbonist* making a Censure, truly says, *Ibi peccatum est toties ac tam enormiter in apponendis vocalibus & apiculis, ut quod ibi primum inter legendum occurrerit summam sapere videatur Tyronis alicujus oscitantiam*. He was indeed a Man but of little Accuracy in the Learning which he profess'd, and shews himself to be a very Futilous and Injudicious Writer, in most of that which he hath publish'd.

Abrahami Ecchellensis Eutychius vindicatus; which Book is in Two Parts; the first writ against Mr. Selden's *Eutychii Patriarchæ Alexandrini Ecclesiæ suæ Origines*; and the second against Hottinger's *Historia Orientalis*. The greatest Skill which he shews in this Book, is in railing. It was publish'd at *Rome* A. D. 1661.

Forbesii Instructiones Historico-Theologicæ, publish'd at *Amsterdam*, A. D. 1645.

Fortalitium Fidei, a Book written in Defence of the *Christian Religion* against the *Jews*, *Mahometans*, and other Adversaries. The Author takes occasion to acquaint us *Lib. 2do Consideratione 6a, Hæresi 5a*, That he was at work in writing this Book *An. Dom. 1458*, and the Title of the first Printed Edition tells us, that it was finish'd the Year following, and that the Author was an Eminent Doctor of the Order of the *Franciscan Friars*. It was Printed first at *Nuremberg*, A. D. 1494, and after that at *Lyons*, A. D. 1511, and again at *Lyons*, A. D. 1525. But in all these Editions the Name of the Author being suppress'd, some have call'd it the Work of *William Toton*, who was only the Editor of the Second Edition; and others have ascrib'd it to others. But *Marianus* in the Second Tome of his *Spanish History*, *Lib. 22. Cap. 13.* tells us, the true Author of the Book was *Alphonfus Spina*, a *Franciscan Friar* of *Castile* in *Spain*, who from a *Jew* turning *Christian*, enter'd himself of that Order, and after, by several Advances, came to be a *Bishop* in that Kingdom. But the present General of the *Jesuits*, notwithstanding the Authority of this Great Man of his Order, in a Book lately publish'd by him against the *Mahometan Religion*, still ascribes it to *William Toton*. But the Book is of better use to acquaint us with the Doctrines and Opinions of the *Christians* of that Age, than

to give us any true Light either of *Mahomet*, or his Religion. For in that Part, which is levell'd against this Imposture, too many of his Arguments are built upon such Relations both concerning it and the Author thereof, as have no other bottom, but the mistaken Traditions of the Vulgar.

Golii Notæ ad Alfragani Elementa Astronomica; which are exceeding useful for the understanding of the Geography of the East. The Book was publish'd at *Leyden*, A. D. 1669.

Philippi Guadagnoli Apologia pro Christiana Religione, contra Objectiones Ahmed Filii Zin Alabedin Persæ Asphahensis. Of which Book I have already given an Account, in what I have written of *Ahmed Ebn Zin*, against whom it is written.

Gentii Notæ ad Musladini Saadi Rosarium Politicum; publish'd at *Amsterdam*, A. D. 1651.

Grotius de Veritate Christianæ Religionis; & Epistolæ ad Gallos.

Hottingeri Historia Orientalis. Of this Book there are two Editions; the first A. D. 1651, and the second A. D. 1660, the latter is much enlarg'd. The Author was Professor of the Oriental Tongues, first at *Zurich* in *Switzerland*, and afterwards at *Heidelberg*; from whence being call'd to be Professor at *Leyden*, he was, while on his removal thither, unfortunately drown'd in the *Rhine*. He was a Man of great Industry and Learning; but having written very much within the
com-

compass of a few Years (for he dy'd young) his Books want Accuracy ; tho' all of them have their Use.

Historia Miscella, a Roman History begun by *Eutropius*, continu'd by *Paulus Diaconus*, and finish'd by *Landulphus Sagax*.

Johannes Andreas de Confusione Sectæ Mahometanæ. The Author of this Book was formerly an *Alfaki*, or a Doctor of the Mahometan Law ; but in the Year 1487, being at *Valentia* in Spain, converted to the Christian Religion, he was receiv'd into Holy Orders, and wrote this Book in Spanish against the Religion which he forsook ; from whence it was translated into Italian, by *Dominicus de Gazelu*, A. D. 1540. And out of that Translation it was publish'd in Latin by *Johannes Lauterbach*, A. D. 1595, and re-printed by *Voetius* at *Utrecht*, A. D. 1656. He having thoroughly understood the Religion which he confutes, doth much more pertinently write against it, than many others do that handle this Argument.

Macrobian Saturnalia.

Caii Plinii Secundi Naturalis Historia.

Caii Plinii Cæcilii Secundi Epistolæ.

Pocock : The Famous Professor of the Hebrew and Arabic Tongues at Oxford ; who was, for Eminency of Goodness, as well as Learning, the greatest Ornament of the Age in which he liv'd, and God blessed him with a long Life to be useful thereto. He was born A. D. 1604, and dy'd at Christ-Church in Oxford in the Month of September, A. D.

1691. He was for above Sixty Years a constant Editor of learned and useful Books. The first which he publish'd contains an Edition of Four of the *Catholick Epistles* in *Syriac*, i. e. the Second of *St. Peter*, the Second and Third of *St. John*, and the *Epistle* of *St. Jude*, with Versions and Notes, which was printed at *Leyden*, A. D. 1630, by *Vassius*, to whom he presented it the Year before at *Oxford*, on his coming thither to see that *University*; and the last was his *Commentary* on *Joel*, which came forth the Year in which he dy'd. His *Specimen Historiæ Arabicæ*, which I frequently make use of in this Tract, was publish'd A. D. 1650, and is a most accurate and judicious Collection out of the best *Arab Writers*, relating to the Subject which he handles.

Richardi Confutatio Legis Saracenicæ. The Author was a *Dominican Friar*, who in the Year 1210, went to *Bagdat*, of purpose to study the *Mahometan Religion* out of their own Books, in order to confute it; and on his Return publish'd this Learned and Judicious Tract concerning it. *Demetrius Cydonius* translated it into *Greek* for the Emperor *Cantacuzenus*, who makes great use of it, taking thence most of that which he hath of any Moment in his Four *Oration*s against the *Mahometan Religion*. From this *Greek Version* of *Demetrius Cydonius* it was translated back again into *Latin* by *Bartholomæus Picenus*, which Translation is publish'd with the *Latin Alcoran* of *Bibliander*, and that is all we
now

now have of it, the Original being lost. This and *Johannes Andreas's Tract de Confusione Sectæ Mahometanæ*, are the best of any that have been formerly publish'd by the *Western Writers* on this Argument, and best accord with what the *Mahometans* themselves teach of their Religion. Others have too much spent themselves on false Notions concerning it, for want of an exact Knowledge of that which they wrote against.

Roderici Toletani Historia Arabum. It contains an *History* of the *Saracens* from the Birth of *Mahomet* to the Year of our Lord 1150. The Author was *Archbishop* of *Toledo* in *Spain*, and was present at the *Lateran Council*, A. D. 1215. His *History* from the Tenth Chapter is mostly confin'd to the *Saracens* of *Spain*, and is but of little Credit, where he relates any thing of them out of that Country. It was publish'd with *Erpenius's Historia Saracenica* at *Leyden*, A. D. 1625.

Schekardi Tarich seu Series Regum Persarum, *Tubingæ*, A. D. 1628.

Spanhemii Introductio ad Historiam Sacram, *Amstel.* A. D. 1694.

Scaliger de Emendatione Temporum, and *Notæ ejus ad Sphæram Manilii.*

Valerius Maximus.

Varinus, a famous *Atheist*. He was by Birth a *Neapolitan*, and came into *France* on purpose to promote the *Impiety* he had embrac'd, of which being convicted at *Tbolouse*, he rather chose to become a *Martyr* for it, than renounce it ; and therefore was publicly

lickly burnt in that City, A. D. 1619, persisting to deny the Being of a God with a wonderful Obstinacy even in those very Flames in which he perish'd. He wrote two Books; the first was publish'd A. D. 1615, entitled *Aeternæ Providentiæ Amphitheatrum*; and the other the next Year after, which is his *Dialogi de admirandis Naturæ*, in both which he serves that Cause for the sake of which he dy'd.

English and French Authors.

Purchas's Pilgrimage.

Ricaut's History of the Present State of the Ottoman Empire.

Smyth's Remarks upon the Manners, Religion, and Government of the *Turks*.

Thevenot's Travels.

E N D

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Dr. *Clagget's* Sermons upon several Occasions, with his Paraphrase on the 6th of *St. John*, in 2 Volumes 8vo.

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