



D.^R WOODWARD,

W. Humphrey fecit

From an Original Picture, in the Family of his Executor, the Late Col. R.^d King.

Pub. 2 May 1774 by W. Humphrey.

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Of the Wisdom of the Antient Egyptians, &c.

A

D I S C O U R S E

C O N C E R N I N G

Their ARTS, their SCIENCES, and their LEARNING;

Their LAWS, their GOVERNMENT, and their RELIGION.

With OCCASIONAL REFLECTIONS upon

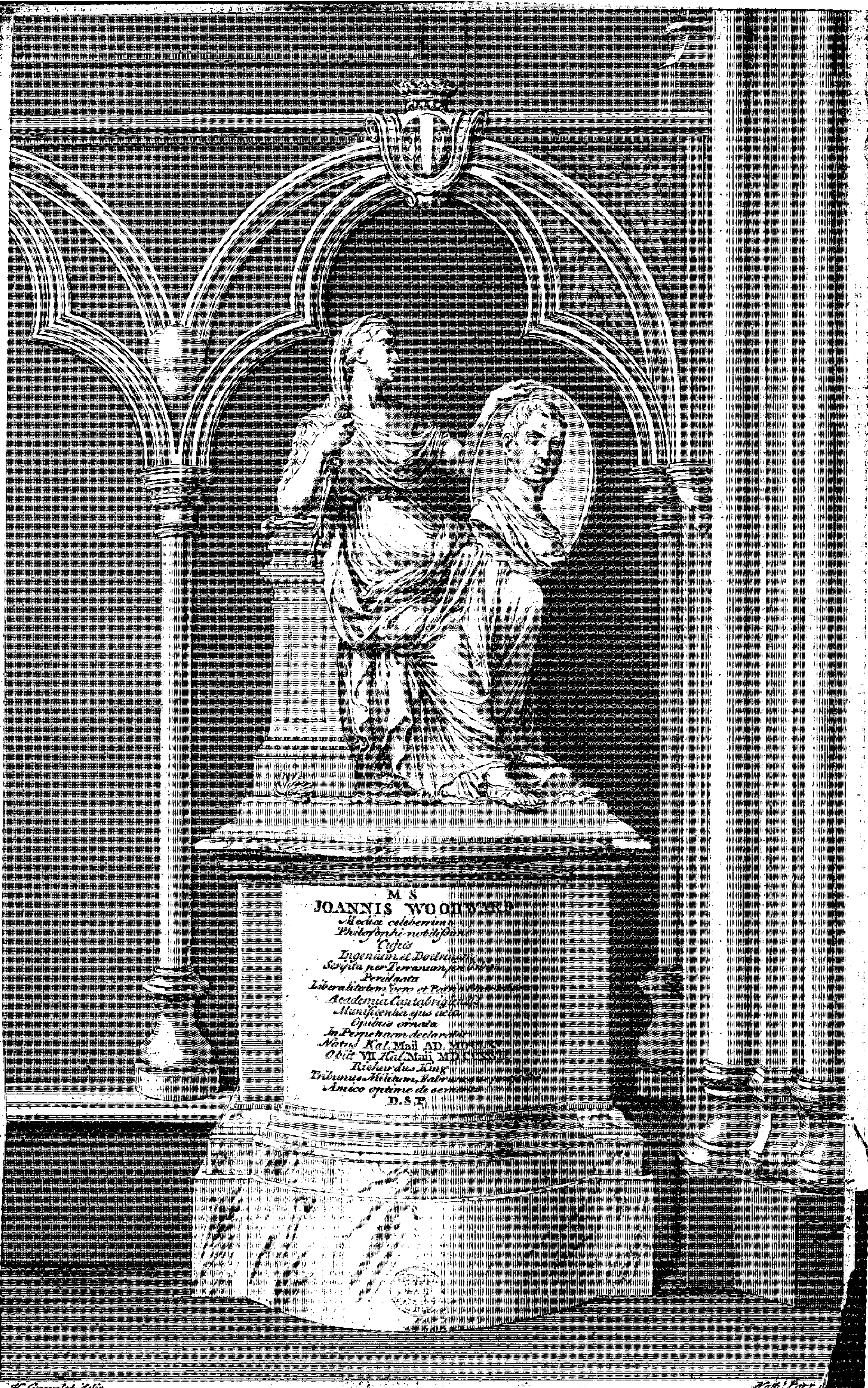
THE STATE OF LEARNING

Among the JEWS, and some OTHER NATIONS.

L O N D O N:

PRINTED BY W. BOWYER AND J. NICHOLS.

MDCCCLXXVII.



M S
JOANNIS WOODWARD

*Medici celeberrimi
Philosophi nobilissimi
Cujus
Ingenium et Doctrinam
Scripta per Terrarum fere Orbem
Perulgata
Liberalitatem vero et Patriæ charitatem
Academia Cantabrigiensi
Munificentia ejus acta
Opibus ornata
In Perpetuum declaravit
Natus Kal. Maii AD. MDCLXX
Obiit VII. Kal. Maii MDCCXXII
Richardus King
Tribunus Militum, Fabrumque praefectus
Amico optime de se merito
D. S. P.*

DR. WOODWARD'S DISCOURSE

O N

THE WISDOM OF THE EGYPTIANS, &c.

Read at the SOCIETY of ANTIQUARIES, Nov. 30, 1775.

To the Rev. W^m. NORRIS.

SIR,

Cambridge, Nov. 7, 1775.

THE progress made by the antient Egyptians in Arts and Sciences, beyond other nations their contemporaries, has been much insisted on by various writers, and by some chiefly with a view to depreciate the characters of Moses and the Israelites. But a very ingenious writer, the late Robert Wood, esq; in a posthumous work of his, lately published [a], has given his opinion, and some reasons for it, that “ the high
“ compliments which have been so long paid to the knowledge
“ and wisdom of the antient Egyptians have not been so well

[a] An essay on the original genius and writings of Homer, 4to. 1775.

“founded as is generally imagined [b].” The subject, indeed, is only incidentally handled by Mr. Wood; which it is to be wished he had treated more at large, as few men could be better qualified for it than himself. It is of great importance on many accounts, and deserves a particular discussion; such a discussion, we are assured, was given to it by the celebrated Dr. John Woodward. This gentleman has hitherto been chiefly known to the learned world by his writings in one branch of natural history, and his theory of the universal deluge, in support of the truth of that great event, as recorded by the Jewish legislator. But Dr. Woodward did not confine his opinion of Moses’s veracity to this particular transaction; but being himself, upon mature examination, convinced of the truth of all the other great events which are recorded in the Pentateuch, he very laudably undertook to convince others. Accordingly, he formed a very extensive plan for the defence and support of the Jewish Lawgiver, against the formidable attacks that had been made upon him. Some specimens of this great undertaking are given by Mr. Holloway, in his translation from the Latin of *Dr. Woodward’s natural history of the earth illustrated, enlarged, and defended* [c]. He has also given the titles of several distinct treatises which composed a part of this plan; one of which is, “Of the antient Egyptians, a discourse concerning their arts, their learning, and their religion, with occasional reflections on the state of learning amongst the Jews, and some other nations [d].” In this, besides other things, says Mr. Holloway, the Mosaic institution is vindicated; and the charge of Sir John Marsham [e], and Dr. Spencer [f], that some parts of this institution were taken from the Egyptians, is refuted.

[b] P. 118.

[c] 8vo. 1726.

[d] P. 108.

[e] Chron. Canon. Saec. 9.

[f] De Legib. Hebraeor. l. iii.

Now,

Now, Sir, it has so happened, that this treatise, written out fair, and seemingly prepared for the press, is fallen into my hands, being communicated to me by a gentleman who has very frankly given it up to my disposal [g]. To this learned Society I as freely communicate it, thinking it not unworthy their attention; and, if it shall be found to deserve a place in their memoirs, I shall esteem myself fortunate in having been in any degree instrumental in rescuing this learned tract from oblivion.

I am, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

M. LORT.

[g] Mr. Herbert, of Cheshunt.

Of the Wisdom of the Antient Egyptians; a Discourse concerning their Arts, their Sciences, and their Learning: their Laws, their Government, and their Religion. With occasional Reflections upon the State of Learning among the Jews; and some other Nations.

By DR. JOHN WOODWARD.

I HAVE here laid open a scene that is very unpleasing, and shewn mankind in a state extremely low and mean, under mighty difficulties and distresses. This, indeed, I had given some intimations of in a former discourse [b], and have now made the thing out more at large; pleasing myself with the hopes that there will come a time in which I shall have leisure and opportunity of doing so to all parts of that discourse, for which I have long had the materials in readiness. As I have here exhibited the dark side of the globe, I am sure I could with far greater satisfaction shew that which is luminous and

[b] Nat. hist. of the earth, p. 55. and 94. 2d edit.

bright,

Bright, set forth the first appearances of science in the world, and trace her thorough all ages and climates. But as this is what my present subject does not require, so neither will my affairs give leave to pursue it. Yet a few brief sketches I can hardly forbear giving here; and shall rejoice to see some fit hand exert itself to the finishing of the piece. It would be a work, as of mighty importance and advantage to the world, so of vast pleasure to him who should perform it. And this is not a task for a declaimer, or vender of meer words, but for a person of genius and real knowledge; one who is thoroughly apprized of history, and the transactions of mankind in all ages; who is a master of the subject he treats of, and has a real understanding of the arts, and of the sciences, of which he writes; and one who has a true knowledge of nature, and a deep insight into things. Such a one will see that nature has been steady, invariable, and alike, thorough all ages; the earth and its productions, the water, the air, and heavens, ever the same. But, as the soils in the several parts of the globe are very different, likewise are the productions there, the fruits, and herbage. Nor do they vary only in kind: but those of even the same sort differ in strength, in goodness, and perfection. The animals that feed and live upon these differ too. This is, indeed, only a consequence of that, and what nobody can well wonder at. Nor is it to be imagined that even mankind, that, in the various parts of the earth, subsists upon those very vegetables, and animals, can be exempted from a like difference. No; assuredly the inhabitants of each country partake of the good, or ill, the happiness or unhappiness of it. And there is no man, that is conversant in the world, but must observe that the people of some countries are considerably superior to those of others, in constitution, in stature, in strength,

in

in courage, and even in genius, in capacity, and abilities of mind. The things all depend wholly upon causes that are fixt and permanent. But then there are others that are accidental and uncertain, that have a great influence upon sciences and arts, and are the cause that they vary and alter much, even among the same people, and in the same country. Such are the changes and revolutions of empire; the genius and disposition of the prince, and of men of figure and fortune in the commonwealth; the nature of the government; liberty or oppression; peace or war; the particular gusts and inclinations of persons that are stirring, active, and have an influence upon the people; different maxims and opinions in religion, in policy, and in philosophy, that happen to prevail; the various sorts of entertainments, recreations, and ways of pleasure, that are in fashion; and the different modes of study, *e. gr.* of philosophy, antiquity, history, oratory, poetry, or philology, that happen to obtain and come in vogue. All these ought to be exactly attended to, and well weighed, by one that would know the true springs that set things in motion; in order to the rightly conducting himself in the compiling a history of science. If the brief landscape I am here about to give of the wisdom of the Egyptians, may contribute any thing towards it, I shall not think the few hours spent in the drawing wholly misapplied.

EGYPT is a country assuredly very happy, sending forth all things useful to human life in great plenty and perfection; and this too without much labour or culture, the Nile, in its yearly inundations, deposing a slime upon it that renders it fruitful beyond measure; so that the inhabitants have scarcely any thing more to do than only to scatter a little grain upon the land, and, without further trouble, they have a return in great abundance. It is hardly credible what vast numbers of people have been supported

supported in this country in great plenty and luxury, and it was inhabited very early. The Egyptians, indeed, were here much in the same state, that mankind were before the universal deluge [i]. Their country was vastly productive, and with little or no labour or toil. In truth, the consequences and effects in both cases were much the same; and the Egyptians were not perhaps inferior in vice and immorality [k] to the unhappy people of the ages before that dismal catastrophe [l]. But this fruitfulness of their country allowed them time and leisure for thought and study, for improvement of science and arts. While their neighbours, on every side, were at great pains upon their much more barren soils, and their time taken up in making provision for the support of life, the Egyptians had little or nothing of that sort to do. This gave them a mighty advantage over the countries all round; and it is not to be wondered that they had the start of them as to science, and had very anciently a great reputation for their superiority in learning. But we shall have a truer and more certain idea of the learning of those times, when we know of what size this was, that was so much admired by all the neighbour nations. For I cannot assent to the common opinion that there was ever really any considerable learning among the Egyptians. It might indeed be thought such by the Cyrenians, Arabians, and the inhabitants of the other barren countries round about, where the people had enough to do to procure meat and cloaths, and had little leisure to attend to study or the improvement of the mind. And the great plenty, luxury, and opulency, that strangers,

[i] Nat. Hist. of the Earth, part ii. p. 83. et seqq.

[k] V. Herodot. l. ii. c. 48, 49. 60. 89. et 111. Strabo, l. xvii. p. 801. a. Ammian. Mar. l. xxii. c. 16. alios.

[l] Nat. Hist. of the Earth, p. 85. et seqq.

the Greeks, and others, saw in Egypt, made them imagine there was somewhat very extraordinary in the thing, and that the Egyptians were masters of some mighty knowledge, by means of which, they were intitled to that superiority and those advantages over all their neighbours; whereas in reality they were all owing wholly to the goodness of their country. Then they had a very high opinion of their own nation, and the vanity to think the rest of mankind besides very weak, illiterate, and meer children [*m*], in comparison of themselves. They were the most ostentatious, boasting [*n*] people in the universe, and every body was forward enough to imagine there could not be all that outcry without something at the bottom very considerable to warrant it.

BUT what most favoured the opinion of their learning were the Hieroglyphic figures that appeared on their obelisks, their pyramids, and other monuments, on every side. They talked of wondrous matters that were couched under those representations; in which they could not be contradicted by the Greeks, who travelled into those parts, or other foreigners, who knew little or nothing of the meaning of them. They might gaze and admire, but must be much in the dark as to what they imported, the sculpture being not only rude, but done in a manner much different from that of Greece. As to the Egyptians,

[*m*] Ventosa et insolens natio. Plin. de Aegyptiis in Panegyri. p. 350. a. Aegyptii viri ventosi, furibundi, jactantes, injuriosi, atque adeo vani, &c. Fl. Vopiscus in Saturnino, p. 718.

[*n*] Αἰγυπῖες μὲν γὰρ τῶν ἄλλων προκεκρίθαι. Herodot. l. ii. c. 121. Conf. etiam c. ii. τό τε Αἰγυπτιακόν, ἐκ φύσεως καὶ διαφερόντως, ἐστὶν ὑπέραυχον. Philo Jud. de Agricult. 196,

I am the son of the wife, Isai. xix. 11.

—Became vain in their imaginations, professing themselves to be wise. Rom. i. 21, 22.

they

they only carried on a vain amusement, and aimed meerly at the aggrandizing and extolling the riches, the power, and the wisdom of their own nation, having little regard to fact. This is evident from the very accounts they gave of these things. The Hieroglyphicks upon the obelisks were the most considerable; and some of them interpreted these as setting forth matters of *religion*[o]; others of *philosophy* and *nature*[p]; others of history, and the *riches, power, victories, and actions* of their *princes*[q]. The very obelisk which these last take upon them to interpret, I mean that of Rameses, is at this day in being; and, after all, the gravings upon it apparently set forth only something of their religion, and the sacred animals[r]. Among the rest, there are, in the several parts of this pillar, representations of above fifty owls, and almost double that number of serpents. What these could ever possibly denote of *victories, riches, and power*, it will, I believe, be no easy thing to find, whatever the vain-glorious humour of the Egyptian priests might prompt them to give out; but it is known to every body in how much veneration those animals were had, and how great a figure they made in the religion of the Egyptians. It will be thought perhaps strange by those who are less conversant with these things, that there should be so great numbers of these, and other animals, upon the same pillar: but it is what is very common in all these works, in the obelisks,

[o] Obeliscos—Antiqui reges—Diis superis in religione dicarunt. Ammian. Marcellin. l. xvii. c. 5.

[p] Rerum naturae interpretationem Aegyptiorum opera philosophiae continent. Plin. l. xxxvi. c. 9.

[q] Sacerdos Aegyptius ap. Tacit. Annal. l. ii. c. 60. Hermapion ap. Ammian. Marcellin. l. xvii. c. 4. et Strabo, l. xvii. p. 816. c.

[r] ἱερὰ ζῷα. Manetho ap. Josephum contra Apion. l. i. p. 1053. d.

the canopi [s], and other idols, the shrouds and swathes of the mummies [t], and other remains of that nation. The design was partly to express their great devotion to those creatures, and partly to make a shew in their gravings or paintings. It was not unusual with them to exhibit great numbers of the same animals all together, and all figured in the very same manner [u]; by which they could design nothing but meer shew and ornament, such as it was. The obelisks, the gravings of which are very much alike in all, commonly exhibit, towards the top, one of their chief deities, generally Osiris; with the figure of a priest before him, kneeling, and making some oblation. This is usually represented in the same form precisely, on all the four sides of the obelisk. For the rest beneath, there is usually expressed a great number and variety of the sacred animals, *e. gr.* the Lion, Apis, Mnevis, Hawk, Ibis, Crocodile, Scarabaeus, and several others; but all set forth in the most disorderly, wild, and unskillful manner that can well be imagined. In fine, whoever shall consider the sculpture upon the Mensa Isiaca, upon the obelisks, and other like monuments, and the painting upon the shrouds and bandages of the mummies, will plainly discover that they only represent the Egyptian deities, Osiris, Isis, Horus, Apis, and the rest; the rites and solemnities of their worship; the utensils and instruments used in their sacrifices; their religious pomps [w]

[s] V. Canop. ab Ant. Lafrerio ed. Rom. 1547. et alium ap. J. J. Boissard. Antiq. Tom. vi. Tab. 6.

[t] V. Nardium in Lucret. tab. iii. fig. 1.

[u] V. Nard. ib. fig. 2. et alios.

[w] Harum egregiam descriptionem concinnavit Cl. Alexandr. Strom. l. vi. p. m. 633. V. Pompam Isaicam in Marm. antiq. Romae ap. Jac. Spon. Miscell. Eruditae Antiquitat. p. 306. De *ιεροφοραις* et *ιεροσολοις*, confer Plut. de Isid. et Osir. p. 352. b.

and

and procession [x]; and the sacred animals. These, with here and there a rude scrawl, according to the fancy of the Designer, to fill up a vacancy, and the exorcisms and charms upon the shrouds of the mummies, are the main things that are set forth in that vast variety of the Egyptian works, that have been brought to light by the diligence and curiosity of this and the last age; and it is plain from the accounts of the ancients, those that are perished and destroyed were of the like sort. So that any one who shall go about to make a symbolical construction of these, as Diod. Siculus [y], Plutarch [z], Clement Alexandrinus [a], the author under the name of Horus Apollo [b], and some other of the Ancients have done, to pass by the voluminous and fanciful works of J. Pierius [c], N. Caussin [d], F. Kircher [e], and some later writers, may, with full as much reason, make the like interpretation of the *Ἀνάγλυφα* and Basso-Relievos of the ancient Greeks and Romans, or the History-paintings of Raphael, M. Angelo, Rubens, or M. Le Brun. A view of the things themselves will soon shew any one that the design of these Egyptian sculptures and pictures was chiefly to give an historical representation of the religious customs of that nation. Nor can it be thought strange there should be such numbers of these, to any one who knows how infinitely superstitious the Egyptians were above all other people. But then this way of expression was tedious, difficult,

[x] De Deorum *Κωμωσίων*, v. Clem. Alexand. *Στρωμ.* l. v. p. 567. et Th. Gale. V. Cl. in Not. ad Iamb. de Myst. p. 252, 253.

[y] Bibl. Hist. l. iii.

[z] De Isid. et Osir.

[a] *Στρωμ.* l. v. p. 566. et seqq.

[b] *Ἱερογλυφ.* l. ii.

[c] Hieroglyphica.

[d] De Symb. Aegypt. Sapiencia.

[e] Oedip. Aegypt. et. Obelisc. Pamph.

and much inferior to that which now obtains in China. For though this was originally the same with the Egyptian, yet the Chinese rendered it by degrees much more practicable and expeditious. At first they made use of only a few of the out-lines of the drawing to represent any thing by. Afterwards they reduced these to characters, designing them to denote words. At length they hit upon a method of making a connexion of them, by somewhat that answered to the particles in speech. Thus by degrees they found out a way of setting forth a language, and this was truly symbolical. But that was an advance far beyond what the Egyptians had any prospect of. And yet, with all that improvement, this method falls far short of that of letters; it carries-on learning very slowly, as will appear hereafter when I come to speak of the state of it in China. And I think it is by this time pretty plain, that, stript of its varnish and amusement, the Egyptian method of propagating and delivering knowledge down, was vastly more defective than even the Chinese.

I KNOW well that the Egyptians, in their wonted boasting manner, and pretences to things of which they were never really masters, bragged they had letters. This we learn from Herodotus [f]. But there is not in history, nor any of all their numerous monuments yet remaining, so much as a single instance of any one letter, till the antient Greeks came amongst them. For want of these, how highly soever they might boast, they had no records of their nation, their kings, or the transactions amongst them. Nothing but a mere loose tradition. This is the reason that their antient history is so fabulous, and so much in the dark, beyond that of almost all other nations; and that

we know little or nothing of them, with any certainty, till after the Greeks came among them.

As little is there to be said for the sense and virtue of the Egyptians. I believe there can be not any one single instance produced of either in all their whole story. If they had any, they would have shewn it when their country was the hardest pressed, when it was attacked by foreign enemies, and their lives, liberties, their families, their country, and every thing that was dear to them, was at stake; as on occasion of the descent of Cambyfes, of the Greeks, of the Romans. The Egyptians, on these great urgent occasions, far from concerting measures for the defence of themselves and their country, acted ever rather like men wild and distracted than possessed of any thought or reason, so that they fell an easy prey to any invader. Cambyfes took Pelusium, the very key of Egypt, by putting cats, dogs, sheep, in the front of the army. The Egyptians immediately laying down their arms, and choosing rather to give up their whole country to their utter enemy, a foreigner, a tyrant, than risque the hurting their cats, or any of the sacred animals. At their final reduction by the Romans, the several provinces were engaged in a very fierce war about their gods, a dog, a lion, a crocodile, and the rest; which was to have the preference, and be reputed the superior deity: till the Romans, partly beat, and partly laught them out of that so foolish strife, having easily made themselves masters of their country, and got their persons, and all they possessed, in their power.

NOR had the Egyptians really any reputation for wisdom but during those times that their neighbours were savage, and had none. While the inhabitants of Greece and the other more barren countries were wholly taken up in search and toil
for

for food, and the common necessities of life, Egypt, being rendered exuberantly fruitful by the yearly inundations of the Nile, and productive of those necessities without any considerable labour, the Egyptians had time on their hands, which the neighbour nations wanted, to consider of methods of living. They therefore formed themselves into communities, settled under a government, built houses, such as they were, improved on the common diet, acorns, chesnuts, and such things as grew chiefly upon trees and shrubs, by finding out better fruits, bread-corn, and other things. They made cloaths; fell, by degrees, into some little practice of art and embellishment, painting, and sculpture. The Greeks, all this while, were wild, dwelling in caves and woods. Some of these, happening to make excursions into Egypt, long after Moses and the Israelites had dwelt amongst, and much improved, the Egyptians, seeing there vast numbers of people, and a so much different face of things from what they had left at home, fell into loud acclamations of the *Wisdom of the Egyptians*. But, taking from them hints of all these things, and methods of life, they soon, not only came up to them, but so vastly exceeded them, that, in theirs, there hardly remained any footsteps, or the least shew of their first patterns. I have not now time to set forth the histories and particular facts, and therefore shall content myself with leaving here that brief but excellent sketch that Horace, who as well understood those antient times as any man, hath left us of the state of things, in Greece, before Orpheus, and Amphion, travelling into Egypt, brought thence back those rudiments of arts, and knowledge, which were afterwards successively improved in Greece, to so incredibly great a degree, above the Egyptian originals, which they themselves never exceeded.

Sylvestres

Sylvestres homines facer interpreſque Deorum
Caedibus, et victu foedo, deterruit Orpheus ;
Dictus ob hoc lenire tigreis, rabidoſque leones.
Dictus et Amphion, Thebanæ conditor arcis,
Saxa movere ſono teſtudinis, et præce blanda
Ducere quo vellet. Fuit hæc Sapientia quondam,
Publica privatis ſecernere, ſacra profanis :
Concubitu prohibere vago, dare jura maritis :
Oppida moliri : leges incidere ligno [g].

BUT how much ſoever the Grecians and other nations might afterwards ſurpaſs and outſtrip them, the *Cry of the Wisdom of the Egyptians* being once raiſed, and ſpread about, the notion of it was ſtill kept up ; and many living at a diſtance in other countries, ſo as to know nothing in reality of the Egyptians, fancied them, for a long time afterwards, to be wiſer than their neighbours. Nay ſome there are, particularly that famous Atheiſt Jordano Bruno [b] Nolano, and others of like libertine principles, who bear no good-will to Chriſtianity, knowing how much this is built upon Moſes, do not care to have it thought his writings came from God, but from Egypt. Theſe therefore extoll the Egyptians beyond meaſure, decry the Jews, and vilify that nation, their archives and laws, as meerly of Egyptian extract ; an attempt as groundleſs, as vile, and dangerous. Though there are very many that are, I do not ſay that all concerned are directly in this deſign, or perhaps are well apprized of the conſequences of it.

BUT, if arts flouriſhed among the Egyptians to the height that ſome imagine, this muſt needs be apparent in the remains

[g] Hor. de Arte Poet.

[b] Spaccio della Beſtia triumpante, 8vo. p.

of their works. Or if they were possessed of so great a share of learning and wisdom, it could not but discover itself in their actions and conduct, in their sense and in their doctrines, in their life and manners. This is the true and proper standard by which we may judge of this question, and it is to this that I would have recourse for the determining of it.

THERE are now few other remains of their buildings but the pyramids. These are unquestionably the most ancient fabricks in the world, and their having stood for so many ages is an undoubted proof of their strength and firmness. Not but that the benignity of the air there contributes much to their preservation. They have seldom any rain, or moist weather, to injure or annoy them, and are wholly free from the vitriolic and other salts that arise with the smoak from our coal fires, and so greatly prey upon and endamage our buildings [i].

SOME

[i] The Newcastle coal, which is the chief fuel in London, contains in it a considerable quantity of vitriol; which, being thus, in form of smoak, buoyed up into the atmosphere, whenever there is any considerable fog, or humidity in it, this vitriolic matter immediately liquifies, and so constitutes a sort of menstruum, which, hovering about and lighting upon the bodies within its verge, frets and erodes those that are liable to be wrought upon by it. This it is that makes the efforts we see upon our buildings; causing the iron-work to rust and shiver, the stones to moulder, and in time to fall to pieces. It is now known to be this likewise, that, along with the air in which it is dissolved, entering the lungs, contributes greatly to the coughs that are so frequent here, and is very troublesome and offensive to those persons that are phthical, asthmatic, or labour under any indisposition of the lungs. And they suffer more from it when the fogs are the thickest, and there is the greatest quantity of this floating low and in the region of the atmosphere wherein they breathe. Nor does any thing give them the relief that a brisk wind does, by its dissipating and removing this matter. Its effects are indeed proportioned to the quantity of it. Where the houses stand thick, and the hearths are many, these effects are so much the more quick and sensible. Some of the churches built since the fire, that are in the throng and center

SOME of the pyramids, and one in particular, shew something in their fabrick that is truly very stately and great. And indeed the Greeks, and others who travelled anciently into those parts, agreed that *these works must needs be allowed by far the most considerable of any in all Egypt* [k]. Nay the Egyptians themselves thought so very highly of the performance of the Architects that built them, that they were wont to declare they

center of the city, have already suffered more from these erosions than the banqueting house at Whitehal', that is built of the very same sort of stone, and has stood three times as long. That therefore this, so noble a pile, is likely to stand firm, and a great while, is what will be reflected upon with pleasure by those that think this, of the sort, the finest piece of architecture in England. At the same time that all the well-wishers to History and Chronology cannot but greatly regret it should so unhappily fall out, that the Marmora Arundelliana and other ancient monuments brought from Greece and Anatolia, and now repositied at Oxford, have suffered more in seventy or eighty years there, than in perhaps two thousand in the countries from whence they were first fetched. But these vitriolic salts are not so detrimental to the buildings here, as our frosts sometimes happen to be. It is known that water in freezing expands itself, taking up a sensibly greater room than before, and its expansive power is so great as to force all obstacles; nor do we know any body strong enough to resist it. And therefore whenever a building is exposed to rain, and frost follows, the water that happened to light in the joyntings and intervals of the stones, in freezing, distances and enlarges them, and that which sunk into the pores bursts and shatters the stone; but this more or less, answerably to the laxity and porousness of the stone, to the quantity of the water, and the depth that it penetrates. Upon this account it is that builders are so careful in covering their stone work, and securing it, as much as may be, from the fall of rain. Now there falling very little rain in Egypt, and it being besides a country so excessively hot as not to be subject to frost, it being likewise not liable to the other inconvenience, the vitriolic salts in the air; we have a very assignable reason, to say nothing of the great hardness of the stone and marble there, why their buildings have endured so long, and stood firm thorough so many ages.

[k] Ὁμολογεῖται δὲ ταῦτα τὰ ἔργα πολὺ προέχειν τῶν κατ' Αἰγύπτον. Diodor. l. i. p. 58. e.

were much more to be *admired* than the *princes* that were at the *expence* of those works [l]. It being therefore agreed on all hands, that the pyramids were by far the most considerable of all their buildings, I shall fix upon these as a sample of their skill in this art. And indeed there is nothing that deserves the name of architecture in the whole frame of any of them. A great many very vast stones, placed indeed very firmly upon one another, and in such sort as to contribute greatly to the strength and duration of the pile, but without any consideration of ornament or beauty; the whole speaking much more the industry and labour of the undertakers, than their ingenuity or contrivance. For as to the particular structure of the pyramids, the foundation is square, consisting of four equal sides. Upon these are piled several tire or ranks of squared stones, placed upon each other in such manner, that the upper approach nearer the axis of the whole than those underneath; and so gradually lessening, each side drawing closer still and closer, till they all join and terminate finally in a point. A pile the most plain and simple that can well be imagined. For the rooms within, they are dark and ill contrived. The ceiling or coverture of them is made by large stones passing quite cross from side to side, and resting at each end upon the opposite walls, which probably was the only way of coverture that they had any notion of. At least Diodorus, describing another of their most celebrated buildings, takes particular notice that *it was topt with only one stone* [m]. They seem not at all to have been apprized of the strength, beauty, or convenience of arch-work, any more than of the method of forming it. In truth, as to

[l] Diodor. *ibid.*

[m] Μονόλιθος ἦν ὁροφή. Diodor. l. i. p. 60. b.

the pyramids, there appears so little workmanship or art in the whole, that I do not by any means think it strange, that, when these works came to be scanned and considered by a nation that were judges, and that had so many vastly fairer patterns of architecture in view, they should pronounce these piles *barbarous* [n] and uncouth, and think the money expended in the raising of them very *idly* [o] and *indiscreetly* employed. So mistaken were M. Belon [p] and H. Conringius [q], in judging the pyramids preferable to all the works of Greece and Rome.

AFTER these, the labyrinth was thought one of the most considerable of the Egyptian structures. And, by their accounts, it seems to have been a very vast pile indeed; but very wild, rambling, and without any good design. Pliny [r] calls it *a most portentous work*, and such truly it was. Not, as Pinitianus observes [s], on account of any art or *ingenuity* to be discovered in it, but of the great *expence* of the building. Though as to that, the country was ever incredibly populous, and there were hands in such numbers as would soon execute almost any practicable design. So that we are not to wonder at the greatness of any of their works; and indeed that is not the subject of this enquiry, but the judgement and understanding of the architects. What that was, may be learned from Strabo [t], who declares *the workmanship of the labyrinth like that of the pyramids*, of which enough has been said above.

[n] Barbara Pyramidum fideat miracula Memphis. *Martialis*, l. i. Ep. 1.

[o] Pyramides in Aegypto Regum pecuniae otiosa ac stulta ostentatio. *Plin.* l. xxxvi. c. 12.

[p] Observ. l. ii. c. 42. et de Op. adm. l. i.

[q] De Herm. Med. c. xii. p. 122.

[r] Portentosissimum opus, l. xxxvi. c. 13.

[s] Not. in Loc.

[t] Λαβυρίνθος καλῶς τεκταινόμενον, ὡς οἱ πυραμίς ἐστιν ἔργον. l. xvii. p. 811. a.

THEIR temples were likewise usually very great, but every thing confused, barbarous, and ill-contrived, in them. This is very plain from Strabo [u], who had been in the country, and is pretty full and particular in his account of them. To pass by what Diodorus [w] and Hecatoæus [x] say of the buildings of Heliopolis, especially the great temple there, as carrying no great appearance of certainty, one of the most extraordinary of all was that of Minerva at Sais. Herodotus [y] speaks of it with some admiration, not because of the excellence, but of the vastness of the work, and the huge bigness of the stones that compiled it. Near the entry of it was an edifice, twenty-one cubits in length, fourteen in breadth, and eight in height, the whole consisting of only one stone. There will be no great difficulty to a man of sense to pass judgement what their skill in building was who engaged in such a work as this, how great soever their labour and industry might be. They were indeed very great, if this edifice was, as the Egyptians pretended, in their usual boasting strain, brought from Elephantine, which is in their account distant twenty days sail from Sais.

As to their private *houses*, they made them anciently of only reeds [z]; nay, Diodorus [a] informs us, that such were in use among the meaner sort of people, even in his time: nor were there any that were considerable in all the country. The same author expressly avers, of the people here in general, that they were wont to be at [b] *very little care or pains in the structure of their houses*. At the same time he tells us they

[u] L. xvii. p. 805, 806.

[w] L. i. p. 43, 44.

[x] Ap. Diodor. ib.

[y] L. ii. c. 175.

[z] Οἰκῆσεις, ἐκ τῶν καλὰ μὲν κατασκευάζεσθαι. Diodor. l. i. p. 41. b.

[a] Ibid.

[b] Τῶν μὲν καλὰ τὰς οἰκίας κατασκευῶν ἥτιον φροντίζουσι. Diodor. l. i. p. 47. d.

thought

thought they could never be at too much in the building and adorning their *sepulchres* : which can never pass for any other than a mighty paradox among men of sense, to be so negligent of their houses, on the contrivance of which so much of the happiness and convenience of life depends ; and spare no labour or expence upon their tombs, which are of no manner of real use. In a word, whether we reflect on the remains of them that are extant at this day, or the accounts that the ancients have left us, both of the public and private buildings of this country, it is most certain little can be collected in favour of the Egyptian skill in architecture.

NOR have they been more successful in their carving and imagery, though this was what they were much practised in ; and a great variety of their works of this sort is extant to this very time. If they had any skill, to be sure they would shew the utmost of it in carving and forming their idols, and the images of their Gods [c]. This was a mighty employ among them ; and no nation in the universe used such multitudes of these in their temples, in their houses, and in their coemeteries as the Egyptians did ; which I believe will hardly pass for a proof of their judgement and sagacity. Of these there are great numbers in being at this day, of stone, of several sorts of metal, and of *argilla*, preserved in the cabinets of persons curious in antiquities. I have seen several of them, and have some now by me in my own collection. Icons likewise of many of them have been published by the writers of Egyptian history, and the editors of museums [d] ; amongst all which, there never appears

[c] Τῶν Σεῶν ζόαντα. Manetho ap. Joseph. c. Apion. l. ii. p. 1053. d.

[d] Varias Idolorum Aegyptiorum Icones exhibuerunt, J. B. Cafalius, de veterib. Aegypt. ritibus ; & A. Kircher, Oedipus Aegypt. Tom. iii. Synt. 17.

appears one single figure that shews any thing of art or good work. Their limbs are stiff, and ill-proportioned; their bodies awkward, shapeless, and far inferior to the life. Nor were the formers of them wanting only in art and performance, for their very design was bad. No people living had ever so enormous and perverse a fancy as they appear to have had. They really aimed at something that was hideous, deformed, and monstrous; a beast, or a fowl, with the head and face of a man; the head of a dog, or some other brute, of an hawk, or the like, upon an human figure [e]. Such were the κυνοκέφαλοι, the ἱερακόμορφοι, the Θεοὶ ἀπορροπαῖοι, Sphynxes, and some others; of which there are several instances in Kircher, add the rest just now mentioned. They seem to have affected what was ugly and irregular, as much as the Greeks, the Romans, and others who had something of spirit and a genteel fancy, did what was handsome, well-proportioned, beautiful, and like nature. So that we are the less to wonder that a Roman historian, who knew so much better, should speak of them with the utmost slight and contempt [f]. In like manner in their historical or

L. Pignorus. *Menfa Isiaca.*

G. Cuperus. *Harpocrates.*

J. Nardius. *Animadv. in Lucretium.*

Oët. Ferrarius. *De re vestiaria. Par. ii. l. 2. c. 7.*

Donatus. *Roma vetus et recens.*

Ol. Wormius. *Museum, p. 348.*

Cl. du Moulinet. *Cabinet de la Biblioth. de S. Genevieve, p. 7. et seqq.*

Museo Cospiano, l. v.

Museo Moscardo, l. i.

[e] *Aegyptii effigies compositas venerantur. Tacit. Hist. v. 5. Conf. Porphyr. περί ἀπορχῆς. l. iv. § 9. p. 259. a.*

[f] *Deorum Simulachra, Regum Statuae, monstrificae effigies. Plin. N. H. xxxvi. c. 13. p. 657. agens de Labyrintho Aegyptio. Et Laëtant. Portentificas animalium figuras colerent. De Orig. Erroris, l. ii. § 13.*

hieroglyphic

hieroglyphic gravings, upon their obelisks, and other monuments, every thing is flat, stiff, and ill finished. It is plain, from what discovers itself every where, they were very poor masters in the art of design, or drawing; and it is most certain that such could never be good painters. This may be determined with great certainty, even at this distance, though there were not one scrap of their paintings now in being. But yet some there are upon the shrouds and bandages of the mummies brought from thence; and these shew us, that their performance in this was nothing better than in graving, and the statuary art.

AFTER such a representation of their buildings as the great distance from those times would allow, and of the state of the arts made use of for adorning them, sculpture and painting, it may not be amiss to add something concerning their manner of providing for the securing their persons against the injuries of heat, the air, and weather, by their dress and habits. And these were likewise very rude and mean. There are vast numbers of persons exhibited in their marbles, and monuments; of which, many are quite naked, and several with only a slight cincture reaching from their waist to their knees. Nay, those that are best cloathed, have their garments extremely strait and scanty, just fitted to their bodies, without any thing handsome or becoming, any thing in the least to adorn or set them off. They seem to have had no manner of notion of habits, like the *Paludamentum*, the *Toga*, or the other truly noble and graceful dresses of the Greeks and Romans. And yet in these monuments, there are frequent representations of Osiris, Isis, and the rest of even their principal deities, of the priests, who were of the royal family, or at least persons of the first

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rank

rank and note among them ; which, without question, were all attired in the best manner and fashion of the country.

It will, I know, be thought by some, that I do not do the Egyptians justice, unless I make some acknowledgement of their art in preserving their dead bodies so sound and intire, as we see they are, thorough so many ages. This, therefore, I shall not neglect saying something to, and much will not be needful. And first, it will not be improper to look a little into the reason that induced them to take all this care and pains about the dead. They were of opinion, that, upon the death of any person, the soul, quitting the body, transmigrated into some other. That, upon the decease of this likewise, it betook itself still to another ; and so on, till it had passed all creatures, belonging both to the air, the sea, and land [g] ; when, after a revolution of three thousand years. it returned to the body that it first abandoned, entering and habiting it afresh. This doctrine will, I believe, hardly be insisted upon as an instance of the Wisdom of the Egyptians, any more than the practice of that nation in pursuit of it. For they only took care to preserve the hulk and outer parts of the body, whilst they drew out the brains, the bowels, and intrails, all except the heart and kidney, and cast them away to perish and rot [h]. So that the soul, at its return, must be forced either to take up a body that was destitute of brains, and the greater part of the bowels ; which surely would have afforded it but a very indifferent habitation, or else it must have these reframed to its use and furnished forth anew ; and then nobody will be well able to imagine why the

[g] Herodot. l. ii. c. 123.

[h] Diodor. l. i. p. 82. Herodot. l. ii. c. 86. Porphy. de Abst. l. iv. § 10. Sextus Empir. *πυρρόν*. l. iii. c. 24. p. 156. e.

rest of the body might not as well have been framed by the same means, without all this trouble of preserving it, and, in truth, but in a very sorry manner after all. If it be confined to the use of such limbs and members as it will meet with under the Egyptian shrouds, it will have very miserable instruments to work with, and such, indeed, that will be so little serviceable to the ends of life, motion, and action, that it were as well to have none; and all the labour of the embalming is just to no purpose at all. But to wave all this, and consider a little the manner of it, we have some of these mummies before us, and may see in what sort they are preserved. Besides, Herodotus [i], Diodorus [k], and others of the Antients, that had been there, and made their observations upon the Egyptian conditure, have given us an account of all the drugs made use of, and the whole process of the ordering the body. In which, bating the ceremony and solemnity that was peculiar to this nation upon all occasions, there was nothing that was considerable or extraordinary. Nor indeed is it so much owing to their skill, or method of conditure, that these bodies endure sound and entire through so many ages, as to the warmth, the dryness, and goodness of the air in that country. When once they are removed thence, and transported to other parts, they are apt enough to decay, unless great care be taken of them. And I myself saw here a mummy, brought formerly out of Egypt, that, after it had been for some time in our more humid air, began to corrupt and grow mouldy, emitted a foetid and cadaverous scent, and in conclusion putrified and fell to pieces.

It is now high time that I put an end to this article, relating to the Egyptian arts, which I shall do, after I have added only

[i] L. ii. c. 86.

[k] L. i. p. 81. et seqq.

a few lines concerning their Musick. The Egyptians were a people very luxurious, and addicted to pleasure above all other nations[*l*]. And that good musick affords an entertainment extremely pleasing and agreeable, is what has been allowed by men of the better sense and taste in all ages. If the Egyptians were such, and apprized of the excellency of this art, we may reasonably expect instruments of all the better kinds, in perfection among them. But so far were they from this, that the sistrum, their most celebrated instrument, was much more likely to fright or offend a man of sense, than please or gratify him. This is plain, from the descriptions that Plutarch [*m*], and Apuleius [*n*], have given of it. Besides, there are several of these sistrums still extant, preserved in the cabinets [*o*] of men of learning and curiosity, as also figures and representations of a great many more upon ancient marbles and medals [*p*]. The construction of it is such, that it is not possible to play any thing like a tune upon it. Most certainly the noise of it is so hideously jarring, so harsh, and untunable, that I have not heard of any thing so rude among any the most savage and uncivilized people in being. And yet it was in great vogue and request there, being in very frequent use upon all occasions in their wars [*q*], at their funerals [*r*], in the feasts and pomps.

[*l*] Josephus *Ἀρχαιολ.* l. ii. c. 5. sub initio.

[*m*] De Iside et Osir.

[*n*] Metamorph. l. xi.

[*o*] In Museo. Fr. Gualdi Romae, v. J. Oisellii Thesaur. Numismat. p. 566. Tab. ii. 7. Dans le Cabinet de Ste. Genevieve. Cl. du Moulinet, p. 7.

[*p*] Confer Bacchini; l. de Sistris, 4to.

[*q*] Patrio vocat agmina Sistro. Aeneid. viii.

[*r*] Sistra jubentia luctus. Lucan. l. viii. p. 210. a.

of Isis [s], and at their sacrifices and highest solemnities. The Mythologists generally assert that the *Harp* was invented in this country. They tell us that Mercury, finding the shell of a dead Tortoise, upon the shores of the Nile, fitted strings to it, and so composed that instrument. Such a one would make something better musick than the Sistrum, though truly not very much. Besides the *Harp*, Strabo [t] mentions *Pipes* as used in their sacrifices, which Herodotus [u] does also, and *Castinets* [x] upon another occasion, which probably were all the musick they had, and these last far from good, as may be inferred from their so much preferring the Sistrum. Yet there were infinitely better in use in those times. It appears from the Book of Psalms, that they had all the while in Judea, several of even the best sorts of musical instruments, very antiently. But it is certain that country had made great progress in science, and in the arts of use in life, of ornament, and of pleasure, long before any other in the universe, and whilst even the nations all round were much in ignorance, distress, and darkness.

I PASS on now to enquire into the state of science among the Egyptians, to see whether they were more successful in the prosecution of that. In order to which, I shall consider their laws, their history, their philosophy, their physick, their geometry, and their astronomy.

[s] Per tua Sistra precor— *Atque mox—*

Et comes in pompa corniger Apis eat.

Ovid. Amorum, l. ii. El. 13. ad Isidem.

—Quum pompa pependit

Atque ipsa Isiaco certarunt fulmina Sistro. *Manilius*, l. i. in fine p. 29. a.

“Sistrum sacerdotes Isidis portant.” Vet. Scholiast. in Juvenal, Sat. v. 136.

[t] L. xvii. p. 814, c.

[u] L. ii. c. 48.

[x] Κρόταλα. ib. c. 60.

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By the way, I shall say something of their religion, a thing that was ever judged of that high importance that all wise nations have been of opinion they could not possibly bestow too much care in the settlement of it. If the Egyptians did so likewise, we shall have little reason to entertain any mighty thoughts of their judgement and understanding. Since their religion was undoubtedly the wildest and most fantastic that the sun ever saw; and, in setting it forth, I shall be obliged to lay open a scene that cannot but be very surprizing. They were, above all other nations, so sunk in idolatry, that they seem to have known little, if any thing, of God, to whom they owed their being, and all the good and happiness they enjoyed. It is most certain there was no where less acknowledgement or regard paid him in their religion by the most savage people all round the globe. And that precept [y], *to have no other Gods before the true and only God*, was very necessary to the Israelites, who were then newly *brought out of the Land of Egypt*, where they had seen such numerous instances of the worship of so many false and imaginary ones. Nor need we now much wonder why this comes first, and stands in the very front of the decalogue.

THE Egyptians paid a mighty worship all over the country [z] to their ancient princes [a], the first founders of the kingdom: to Osiris [b], who was the same with Hammon, and with Ham, the son of Noah, who immediately after the transaction at Babel, came down in person and settled here: to Isis his wife, and Horus their son. They were, from all antiquity, extremely fond of the notion of the transmigration of souls, and would

[y] Exod. xx. 2, 3.

[a] Ibid. c. 144.

[z] Herodot. l. ii. c. 42.

[b] Diodor. l. i. p. 49.

have it, that Osiris, after his death, transmigrated [c] into an Ox. Upon this account it was that all Egypt ever worshiped this creature [d] with the highest pageantry and solemnity. To this purpose, to pass by that of Heliopolis, they kept a living ox at Memphis, which they called Apis. They dedicated temples to his service; indeed the most considerable in all the country. In these he lived, and was fed, and hither the people resorted to receive oracles [e] from him. He had great numbers of priests continually present, being set apart wholly for his service, and they too of the highest rank and quality in the kingdom, some even of the royal family. Besides which there were great numbers of boys singing hymns to the honour of him [f], as also lictors, and other officers, in continual attendance. Whenever he came forth, and shewed himself openly to the people [g], there was an universal joy, every body appeared in the greatest splendour, and a festival was solemnized thorough the whole country. The time of his birth was yearly celebrated with no less solemnity, for seven whole days together [h]; and, when he happened to dye, all Egypt went into mourning [i], his body was embalmed, interred in the most solemn manner they could devise, and they were under the highest consternation and anxiety till they had found

[c] Diodor. l. i. p. 76. e.

[d] Bos in Aegypto etiam Numinis vice colitur, Apim vocant. Plin. l. viii. c. 46. p. 557. e.

[e] Plin. l. viii. c. 46. p. 558. b. Pausan. l. vii. p. 579. d.

[f] Plin. l. viii. c. 46.

[g] ἐπιφάνεος. Herodot. l. iii. c. 27.

[h] Ammian. Marcellin. l. xxii. c. 15. p. 260. e. Conf. Plin. l. viii. c. 48. p. 558. e. Pomp. Mela, l. i. c. 9. p. 13. d.

[i] Plin. l. viii. c. 46. p. 558. a.

out another like creature of the same colour, and with the same marks that the former had. In fine, an ox was their principal deity, and this the highest worship in all the country.

THIS ox was adored thorough all Egypt [*k*], as were also dogs and cats, the ibis, hawk, lepidotus, and Oxyrrhineus [*l*]. Indeed all the animals that were produced throughout the whole country, were reputed *sacred* [*m*], and all of them worshiped [*n*] in some place or other. Even those that were enemies to human nature [*o*], and of all others the most noxious and injurious to the people. Lions [*p*], bears [*q*], wolves [*r*], crocodiles [*r*], and serpents [*s*], were all *adored* here, fed, and treated with great observance. Of this last species of divinities surely they had no want, since *Egypt produced serpents without number*, which were *extremely venomous and fierce*. The advocates of the Egyptian theology, who are wont to put this practice of the worship of animals upon a principle of gratitude, and say the inhabitants paid them that regard because of the good and benefit they received from them, will hardly find that the worship of these last-mentioned comports well with that notion. But yet

[*k*] Apis populorum omnium numen est. Pomp. Mela, l. i. c. 9. 13. d.

[*l*] Strabo, l. xvii. p. 812. c.

[*m*] Herodot. l. ii. c. 65.

[*n*] πάντα τὰ ζῷα σέβουσιν. Porphy. de Abst. l. iv. 155. b.

[*o*] Bestias adversantes naturae colitis, multa diligentia nutrientes. Rufinus Josephi interpre. l. ii. c. Ap. p. 10. 65. b.

[*p*] Porph. ibid. p. 154. e.

[*q*] Herodotus, l. ii. c. 67.

[*r*] Diodor. l. i. p. 74. b. κροκοδείλων ἀποθέωσις. ibid. 80. a.

[*s*] Herodotus, l. ii. c. 74. Minutius Fel. Oct. p. 267. Philo Bibl. ex Sanchon. ap. Euseb. Pr. l. i. c. x. Serpentes—Aegyptus alit innumeras, ultra omnem perniciem faevientes. Ammian. Marcell. l. xxii. c. 15. p. 262. c.

so high was their devotion to these creatures, though thus mischievous and pernicious, that they thought *those* persons *who were bit by asps*, the most poisonous of all serpents, or *seized and devoured by crocodiles*, *very happy and acceptable to the deity* [t]. Besides those animals already recited, there were others that were likewise adored there, as eagles [u], cows [x], monkies [y], goats [z], and sheep [a]. And since these last were worshiped in that country, it can never be thought strange that every *shepherd* should be an *abomination to the Egyptians* [b]. It is the proper employ of shepherds to propagate sheep, and fat them for slaughter : a thing that must needs be detestable to a people who allowed them priests for their attendance, who adored them, and were so very far from being brought to kill them, that they would not so much as taste of mutton or of kid ; at the same time that man's flesh was an allowed dish among them, and what nobody there had any need to scruple.

— Lanatis animalibus abstinet omnis
Menfa. Nefas illic foetum jugulare capellae
Carnibus humanis vesci licet [c].

It was for the same reason, that *the Egyptians might not eat with the Hebrews*, that being *an abomination to the Egyptians* [d].

[t] Eos, qui Aspidibus mordentur, et a Crocodilis rapiuntur, felices et deo dignos arbitrantur. Rufinus Interpres Josephi, l. ii. c. Apion. p. 1065.

[u] Diodor. l. i. p. 78. d.

[x] Diodor. ib. p. 77. e.

[y] Juvenal, xv. 4.

[z] Diod. ib. 78. e. Strabo, l. xvii. 802. b. Herod. l. ii. c. 46.

[a] Diod. ib. p. 77. e.

[b] Gen. xlv. 34. Conf. I. M. Dilherri Disp. Philolog. tom i. p. 110. I. C. Dieterici Antiquit. Bibl. to. i. p. 23. 136. et seqq. et Bochart. Hierozoie, l. ii. c. 53. p. 644.

[c] Juvenal, Sat. xv. 11.

[d] Gen. xliii. 32.

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For as an ancient writer observes, *the Hebrews eat those very animals to which the Egyptians paid a religious reverence* [e]. But to proceed. At *Anubis* they adored a *living man*; where were *altars* erected, and *sacrifices* offered to him [f]. That one man should fall down and worship another, deport himself to him as a god, and consult him as an *oracle*, which Minutius Felix [g] assures us was done there, would be surely very extravagant any where but in *Egypt*; where a *great part* of the country, among their other remarkable *deities*, *worshipped* also *beetles* [h], one of the vilest and meanest of all insects: and where beans, vetches, leeks, onions, and even cheese [i], were revered as so many gods.

THOUGH the Egyptians were all agreed as to the divinity of some animals, such as dogs, cats, bulls, and the rest recounted above, yet this was not the case with regard to the worship of the rest; particularly of the crocodile, the eagle, the goat, and several others: some of the towns making choice of one kind of animal, and some of another. Nay, so greatly did they differ, that the animal that was adored in one place, was killed and offered in sacrifice to that which was worshiped in another. This laid a foundation of mighty heats and feuds, and even of civil wars, among them [k]. Implacable squabbles, wranglings, and disputes, there were perpetually betwixt one town and an-

[e] Pecus, quod Aegyptii colunt Ebraei comedunt. Onkelos ap. Dieter. ib. p. 138. Conf. etiam Bochart. l. ii.

[f] Porph. *περὶ ἀποχ.* l. iv. p. 155. Conf. Theodoret. Orat. c. Graec. 3.

[g] Octavius, p. 281.

[h] Aegyptii magna pars Scarabaeos inter numina colit. Plin. l. xxx. c. 11. p. 322. e. Conf. Porph. l. c.

[i] Minutius Fel. Oct. p. 278. Diodor. l. i. p. 80. d. Plin. l. xix. c. 6. Sex. Empir. *πυρρὸν*, l. iii. p. 156. e. Plutarch. de Iside, p. 353.

[k] Plutarch. de Iside. 380. b. Rufinus Interpres Josephi c. Apion. l. ii. p. 1065. d.

other,

other, whose was the better god, and which the truer religion: each would have their own to be the proper object of adoration: despising and hating that of their neighbours. And such was their zeal in this important affair, whether a wolf or a bear, a monkey or a goat, a serpent, or a crocodile, was the most preferable deity, that the rabble on each side were frequently engaged in fights, for the decision of that controversy. Especially the inhabitants of *Ombi*, who worshiped crocodiles: and they of *Tentyra*, who did all they could to destroy and extirpate them, as the most troublesome and dangerous creatures in all the country [*k*].

Inter finitimos vetus, atque antiqua simultas,
Immortale odium, & nunquam sanabile vulnus
Ardet adhuc, Ombos & Tentyra. summus utrinque
Inde furor vulgo, quod numina vicinorum
Odit uterque locus, cum solos credat habendos
Esse Deos, quos ipse colit [*l*].—

PLUTARCH tells us, that in his time the people of Cynopolis, who worshiped a dog, having made bold with a fish of the kind they called *Oxyrynchus*, killed and eaten it, the inhabitants of *Oxyrynchos*, who adored that fish, in revenge caught all the dogs they could find, killed, sacrificed, and eat them in like manner. This gave rise to a war betwixt those two towns; in which great damage and loss was sustained on both sides. Nor could they be brought to any peace and agreement, till the Romans, who were then masters of the country, came upon them, chastized, and beat both into better sense and manners [*m*]. These enmities and differences about religion were ever great,

[*k*] v. Salmastii Exerc. Plin. ad. Solin.

[*l*] Juvenal, Sat. xv. 33.

[*m*] Plutarch. de Iside, p. 380. b.

and observed in all ages by those who traveled into the country [n]. There was scarce a general agreement in any thing; and, as Sextus Empiricus well observes, what passed in some of their temples for most profound *sanctity*, was reputed in others the highest impiety [o]. Which, as the same author there justly remarks, was because their notion of what was *pious*, and what not, was wholly imaginary, and not by any means real; nor had it any the least foundation in nature or things. The dispute should not have been whether a goat or a crocodile was the more proper object of worship; but whether any of them had any title to it. And indeed when the Greeks, and other strangers, began to enquire of them into the reasons of this sort of religion, they were ever greatly at a loss for any tolerable reply. Nor need we much wonder that no two of them could agree in the reasons they assigned, when in truth none of them could have any at all for so very foolish and absurd a practice. Diödorus [p] has, with a great deal of care and pains, set forth the reasons they gave, to the best advantage, and in the best light they were capable of; and among them all there is not one that will abide any scrutiny. All that by my own enquiries I could ever make of this matter was, that the opinion of the transmigration of the soul antiently obtained among the Egyptians; and that they, fancying that the souls of the first founders of their nation, their progenitors, and benefactors, passed into the several creatures in that country, worshiped them upon that account. This first gave rise to the thing, and posterity continued the practice even after the tradition of the cause.

[n] Strabo, l. xvii. p. 812, 813. Clem. Alexand. *πρωτρεπλ.* p. 25.

[o] "Α γὰρ ἐν τίσιν ἱεροῖς ὅσια, ταῦτα ἐν ἑτέροις ἀνόσια. Sextus Emp. *Πυρρών.* l. iii. p. 155. d.

[p] L. i. p. 17. et seqq.

of it was worn out; and without knowing really for what end they did it. Which indeed Diodorus [q] himself gives some intimation of, even though he and his countrymen were great admirers of the Egyptians; and were wont to put the best and most favourable construction they could upon all their transactions.

NOR did they thus, *beyond all measure*, worship *only the animals that were living, but even the dead too* [r]. Nay they had every where *images* of them for their adoration. Strabo tells us the *image* in their several temples, was no where *in shape of a man, but of some sort of animal* or other; and this probably it was that drew upon them that rebuke of the satyrist,

Oppida tota canem venerantur, nemo Dianam [s].

AMONGST the rest they worshiped the figure of an ox, in imitation of which doubtless the *molten calf* [t] in the wilderness was made by the Israelites; who had seen so many instances of like sort in Egypt, out of which they were so lately retreated. It was assuredly in opposition to that unreasonable custom that the second precept of the decalogue was framed; *not* to make any graven image, or likeness of any thing in hea-

[q] Ibid. p. 81. b.

[r] Σέβονται γὰρ ἔνια τῶν ζώων Αἰγύπτιοι καθ' ὑπερβολὴν, ἢ ζῶντα μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ τελευτήσαντα Diodor. l. i. p. 74. b. Natio Aegyptiorum turpissimas bestiarum & pecudum figuras colunt. Lactan. Div. Inffit. l. v. c. 20. Ἑόανον οὐκ ἀνθρωπόμορφον, ἀλλὰ τῶν ἀλόγων ζώων τινός, l. 17. p. 805. e.

[s] Juvenal, xv. 8. Per Canem Anubin intelligit, quem canino capite effingebant, vel quemvis. alium. Lubin. in loc. De Fele Plinius, Oppidum Rhodata, in quo felis aurea pro Deo colebatur. l. vi. c. 29. p. 375.

[t] Exod. xxxii. 4. Conf. Philon. de Vita Moſis, p. 677. c. et Selden de Diſ. Syris, Synt. i. c. 4.

ven, the earth, or the water, to bow down and serve [*u*]; and that the Jews were forbidden to make gods of silver and of gold [*x*].

THEIR address to the sacred animals, and the treatment of them, was very extraordinary. They had *priests* in great numbers, attending their service [*y*]; and these likewise of the highest rank and quality in all the country. They put up *prayers* [*z*] and made *vows* to them for the preservation or recovery of their healths, as there happened to be occasion; and also during great heats, pestilence, or other public calamities [*a*]. These creatures were possessed of the most stately *temples* of Egypt; which were likewise set off with gold, with silver, and the noblest furniture that could be invented. Their bodies were attired and adorned with the finest and richest cloths. They were wont to have *hot baths* provided for them; to be anointed with the sweetest ointments; and censed with the most fragrant *incenses* and perfumes [*b*]. The people *adored* and *worshipped* [*c*] them wherever they found them; and this in the most public manner, as a thing very glorious and honourable; many of them when they went abroad, in a sort of ostentation, carrying with them *marks* and *insignia* of the animals they revered, or were under their *care* and *administration* [*d*]. And the creatures they thus worshipped being males, they took great care

[*u*] Exod. xx. 4, 5.

[*x*] ib. v. 23. Conf. etiam Philon, de Decalogo, p. 756.

[*y*] Diodor. l. i. p. 75. e.

[*z*] *Ευχας*, Diodor. 74. c.

[*a*] Plutarch. de Iside, p. 380. c.

[*b*] Diodor. ib. p. 76.

[*c*] *προσκυνῆσαι καὶ τιμῶναι*. Diod. ib. p. 74. e. Conf. Herodot. l. ii. c. 65.

[*d*] Ibid.

to procure them the finest and *handsomeſt* females [*d*] they could, of the ſame kind, to ſerve them as *concubines* [*e*]. The whole country, all except Thebais, was under a perpetual and ſtanding tax, for the maintenance of the ſacred animals [*f*]. They made plentiful proviſion of all ſorts of *meats*, for *cakes*, *sweet-meats*, *fleſh*, *raw*, *boiled*, *roaſted* [*g*], for the entertainment of the dogs, cats, and the reſt that would eat ſuch meats. For others, as the bulls, ſheep, and the like, they had *grain*, *hay*, *grafs*, and *paſture*, provided for them. Each of thoſe that were worſhiped had a field dedicated peculiarly to them, and ſet apart for their repaſt [*h*]. It was, by the laws of Egypt, *death* for any man to kill one of theſe creatures wilfully [*i*]. Nay, if a *cat*, or *Ibis* [*k*], happened to be killed, though accidentally and without deſign, the perſon that did it was ſure to be murdered immediately by the rabble, in the moſt cruel manner, without ever ſtaying for any legal proceſs for his condemnation [*l*]. To avoid which, and out of mere fear of ſuch a fate, whenever any man happened to find either of theſe creatures dead, he was wont, before he came near it, to cry out with great *lamentation*, and proteſt he found it *dead* [*m*]. Nay, ſo deeply implanted in their minds was this ſuperſtition, and ſo obſtinate were they in it, that Diodorus avers he was an eye-witneſs of a tumult about a Roman ſoldier's killing of a cat by mere acci-

[*d*] Ἐναιδεſτάτας. ib. p. 76. b.

[*e*] Παλλάκιδας. ib.

[*f*] Plutarch. de Iſide, p. 359. d.

[*g*] Diodor. ib. 76. a. Conf. Herodot. l. ii. c. 65.

[*h*] Diodor. l. i. p. 74. c.

[*i*] Ibid. 74. e. et Herodot. l. ii. c. 65.

[*k*] An hawk, or Ibis. Herodot. ib.

[*l*] Diodor. ibid. 75. a. Conf. Pomp. Melas, l. i. c. 9. p. 13. c.

[*m*] Diodor. ibid.

dent, which the king himself could hardly appease; though all were sensible that this might exasperate the Romans to the destruction and subversion of the government, and that they at that very instant were seeking an occasion of a breach and quarrel, in order to the subduing and reducing it under the power of Rome [n]. And during the time of a famine in Egypt, which was so extreme that the inhabitants killed and eat up one another, not a man would be brought to touch one of the sacred animals [o]. Nor is that the only instance, that they were more tender of these brutes than they were of mankind: No, they were wont to kill men, and offer them in sacrifice. This the ancient Greek writers assure us they did; though a thing the most barbarous and inhuman that could be thought of. I know Herodotus [p], who is an apologist for this nation, and is forward to believe the best of it, is not willing to admit this; but he was no judge, the custom being abolished by Amasis long before his days. This we learn from Manetho [q], a writer of their own nation, who assures us, that this cruel custom was in use there till the reign of that prince. That they did really offer human sacrifices anciently is likewise confirmed by Diodorus [r], Plutarch [s], Minutius Felix [t], and others. This great superstition of the Egyptians, and their mighty regard to the sacred animals, afford a reason why Moses, when the king commanded him to *sacrifice to God in the land*

[n] Diodor. *ibid.*[o] *Ibid.*

[p] L. ii. c. 45.

[q] Ap. Porphy. *περὶ ἀποχρῆς*. l. iv. p. 94. a.

[r] L. i. p. 79. c.

[s] De Iside, p. 380. c.

[t] Octavius, p. 293.

of

of Egypt, replied—*It is not meet so to do, for—shall we sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians, before their eyes, and will they not stone us [u]?* He was to kill and offer oxen [x], sheep, and other creatures that the Egyptians worshiped, and could never propose to do it there without hazard of life, and falling under the fury of the Egyptian rabble. That this worship of brutes had obtained there in those times is very certain, and what Manetho [y] himself allows, even though he was an Egyptian, and a professed advocate of that nation. Nay, Josephus carries it much higher, and asserts it was the *common custom of the country from the very beginning [z]*. Indeed it prevails to this day in some parts of Africa, and particularly among the savages of Guinea, where they defend it with no less zeal than the Egyptians of old. This the English found to their misfortune at their first settlement at Fida on those coasts, where a serpent being got accidentally into their house, and they killing it without thinking any farther harm, the natives were so much provoked and enraged at an action they thought so highly sacrilegious and impious, that they fell upon them, murdered them all, and burnt their house with all the merchandize in it [a]. Nay, so lately as in the year 1697, an hog happening to kill a serpent, the whole country was immediately in an uproar, and the priests got an edict of the king for extirpating the whole breed of hogs out of the country, which was so effectually put in execution by many thousands of the Negroes,

[u] Exod. viii. 25, 26.

[x] Bos quoque immolatur quem Egyptii Apim colunt. Tacitus, de Judaeis, Hist. l. v. c. 4. Conf. Bochart. Hierozoic. l. ii. c. 53. p. 644. c.

[y] Ap. Josephi. i. c. Apion. p. 1053. a. g.

[z] κοινὸν μὲν γὰρ αὐτοῖς ἐστὶ πατριὸν καὶ ἐξ ἀρχῆς. ibid. p. 1051. f.

[a] G. Bosman, Voy. de Guinée, Let. xix. p. 402.

that very few of them escaped [*b*]. But to return to the Egyptians—When any of the sacred animals chanced to dye, their mourning and lamentations were excessive [*c*]. Upon the death of a *cat*, all those that dwelt in the house where that happened, shaved their *eye-brows*, as they did their *head* and *whole body* upon the death of a dog [*d*]. They bewailed the loss of them as greatly as that of their nearest relations, with shrieks and beating of their breasts, and were usually at a vast expence upon the funerals, sometimes much beyond their abilities [*e*]. In fine, they embalmed them with their richest and most fragrant drugs, wrapt them up in fine linen, and finally deposited them in the sacred sepulchral vaults [*f*].

THERE was a practice that had obtained in Egypt, which must needs be very surprizing, if any one thing can be thought so among people where every thing was so preposterous and astonishing. In time of any great *drought* caused by extreme heat of the weather, which in that climate is sometimes such as to be hardly supportable, or when the country laboured under any *raging distemper* or other public *calamity*, they took some of the *animals* they *worshipped* aside in the *dark*, and there first *menaced* and terrified them, in order to oblige them to remove the *calamity*. But, if that did not cease in a little time, they fairly knocked them on the head and *slew them* [*g*]. This was very plain dealing with them indeed; but men less bigoted and superstitious would have been apt to infer that

[*b*] G. Bosman, p. 408.

[*c*] Herodot. l. ii. c. 66. Pomp. Mela; l. i. c. 9; p. 13; c.

[*d*] Ibid.

[*e*] Diodor. l. i. p. 74. e. 76. b. Conf. Herodot. l. ii. c. 66.

[*f*] Diodor. l. i. p. 17. e. Conf. Herodot. l. ii. c. 66.

[*g*] Plutarch, de Iside, p. 380. c.

those creatures that could not secure themselves against such menaces and insults, were not over-likely to secure their votaries against those calamities they were pressed with, which were assuredly more remote and more out of their power. But indeed a little thought and reflection would soon have spoiled all, by discarding and putting an end to all the parts of so very foolish a worship [b]. Nor was this the only absurdity committed by the Egyptians in the performance of their worship. At Papremis many of those that came to the temple were wont to bring with them clubs of wood, and there were usually present above 1000 persons. As soon as the sacrifices were performed, and the offices at an end, they fell upon each other with such fury and violence, that Herodotus, who happened to be present, and a spectator of one of these religious frays, avers, he was not able to imagine but that many of them must dye of the bruises and wounds they received. When he came to enquire into the meaning of this riot, the account they gave him was, that the mother of Mars formerly dwelt in that temple; and he, when grown to man's state, coming hither to lie with her,

[b] It may not be wholly foreign to take notice that in China they have to this day a custom not very unlike that set forth above. When they are to enter upon any undertaking of importance, they first apply to their idols, and make them promises of great oblations if they succeed, and entreat them to favour and to be auspicious to the enterprize. To find out the disposition of the idol, they cast lots before it. In case the lot proves right, all is well; but otherwise they fall foul upon the idol, traduce it, call it *dog*, *villain*, and all the ill names they can muster up. Then they cast lots again; and, if in conclusion they fall not right, they fling the idol down, whip it, beat, roast it at a fire, and use all the indignities to it that they can invent, till the lot becomes affirmative, when they speak the idol fair again, and make a feast with great offerings to it, singing, and musick. Gonçalez de Mendoça, Hist. del gran Reyno de la China, l. ii. c. 4.

her, her attendants, not knowing him, refused to let him enter: upon that, he got several persons from the next town to his assistance, beat the attendants, and so made his way to his mother by force. In memory of which this fight was performed there yearly upon the day dedicated to the honour of Mars [i]. A procedure very becoming those devotées, and fitly suited to such an original. And the same historian was likewise present at a festival of Isis, in the city of Bufiris; at which was a concourse of several thousand men and women: where, after the sacrifice was over, they were all whipt; but *in what manner*, out of meer modesty, *he thought not fit to declare* [k]. There past indeed very frequent and some very strange obscenities in their worship [l]. Amongst other trinkets they were wont to carry *φάλλοι* and *αἰδοῖα* in the pomps of Bacchus [m], and of Osiris [n], as worthy of *divine worship* [o]. So that it was not without just cause that several of the ancients declared the Egyptians *adored some things as Gods* that they might well have *blushed to name* [p]. But as this is a subject upon which I care not how short I am, so I shall dismiss it after I have given only one instance more; which is, that when, after the decease of Apis, they had found out another ox with the like marks, and brought him with wondrous rejoicings and mighty pomps to Memphis, he was there attended for forty

[i] Herodot. l. ii. c. 63, 64.

[k] τῷ δὲ τύπῳ ἰσχυροὶ ὅσιόν ἐστι λέγειν. Ib. c. 61.

[l] v. Diodor. l. i. p. 78. e.

[m] Herodot. l. ii. c. 48, 49.

[n] Plutarch. de Iside, p. 355. e. 358. b. 365. b.

[o] δείας τιμῆς. Theodoret. Ser. iii. c. Graec. p. 51.

[p] Quaedam etiam pudenda dictu tanquam Deos adorant. Lactant. de Justitia, l. v. p. 485. Ita quoque et Theodoret. l. c.

days only by *women*, who were wont to present themselves before him; and, to give the rest in the words of the author, *δεικνύσιν ἀνασυράμεναι τὰ ἑαυτῶν γεννήτικα μόρια* [q]. Other transactions of like sort were observed by Herodotus, which were so immoral, that, partly out of modesty, partly out of a peculiar partiality and favour to that nation, he designedly concealed them, as he intimates upon several occasions [r].

It will not be very much besides the present subject, to take notice how universally fond the Egyptians were and addicted in all ages to charms, magic, forcery, divination, and other like vain arts [s]. Then for their *Περίεργα*, amulets, and other superstitious toys of that sort, they had them without end. There are great numbers of them extant in the cabinets all over Europe to this day [t]; and I myself have a considerable variety of them by me. The Scarabaei cut in onyxes, cornelians, emeralds, and other like stones, are of all the most common. Pliny tells us, they fancied these, if *hanged about the necks of children*, to be a mighty *preservative* to them [u], and that they had likewise a power *to keep off hail, and locusts, by means of a prayer that is added, which they shew* actually graved upon them [w]. The hieroglyphic delineations that are upon several of

[q] Diodor. l. ii. p. 76. e.

[r] L. ii. c. 47, 48, 132, &c.

[s] Vid. Gen. xli. 8. Exod. vii. 11. Isai. xix. 3. Herodot. l. ii. c. 49. Diodor. l. i. p. 66. d. Plutarch. de Iside, p. 366. e. Porphy. *περὶ τῆς ἐκλογίων φιλοσοφίας*, ap. Theodoret. Ser. iii. c. Graecos.

[t] Conf. Kircheri Oedip. Aegypt. To. iii. Synt. 19. L. Pignorium, Cuperum, & reliquos supra allegatos.

[u] Infantum etiam remediis ex cervice suspenduntur. Plin. l. ii. c. 28. de Scarabaeis. Conf. Salmasii Exercit. in Solin.

[w] Grandinem quoque avertere, et Locustas precatione addita quam demonstrant. Plin. l. xxxvii. c. 9. p. 734. c.

the Scarabaei are very probably what Pliny takes to be the *prayers* that they *exhibit*. F. Kircher, who has given figures of several of these, has fixed a very different interpretation upon them [x]; but indeed, neither he, nor Pliny, seem rightly to have understood any thing of them.

SUCH was the religion of Egypt; such the practice there in things sacred and divine. What judgement a man of sense will pass upon it, it is not difficult presently to determine; nor will it be unreasonable to look a little into the sentiments of the ancients, and what opinion those who had been spectators and present, *e. gr.* the Persians of old, the Greeks, Romans, and others, had of this matter. For the Persians, they thought as meanly, and with as much scorn, of the Egyptian religion as could well be. So did the king himself, Cambyfes, who, in his descent into that country, stabbed the ox, Apis, with his own hands, and very justly *derided* the folly and stupidity of the *priests* [y] that attended him, in making choice of what he shewed them to be *flesh* and *blood*, nay a meer brute, for their principal deity. He greatly *ridiculed* and *exposed* their *idols* [z] as truly silly and despicable, beating several of them down, burning and destroying them. This was a thing reputed extremely flagitious by the priests there, and a very high profanation and sacrilege. Nor had they any other way to revenge themselves of him, but by giving out, after he had quitted the country and was gone, that he was distracted and struck with a sort of divine infatuation [a]. Which yet one of

[x] Oedip. Aegypt.

[y] Γέλασας τὰς ἱερέας, &c. Herodot. l. iii. c. 29.

[z] πολλὰ τῷ γάλματι κατεγέλασε. ib. c. 37. & infra πολλὰ κατασκήψας.

[a] Herodot. l. iii.

his successors, Artaxerxes Ochus, so little regarded, that he did not stick, in like manner, to kill their brute idol, Apis: nay he offered him in sacrifice, and finally with his friends and followers eat him up [b].

THE Greeks were ever forward to entertain a favourable opinion of the Egyptians. Indeed Egypt, being a very rich and plentiful country [c], was settled into a method of government and discipline, and some appearance there was of art there, some time before any considerable advance was made towards either in Greece. This Thales, Solon, Melampus, Homer, and others who first travelled thither, well observed, and returned back very full of the praises of the Egyptians, which was an encouragement to others to visit that country, and it was thought a mighty accomplishment in a Grecian to have made the tour of Egypt. To give them their due, the Egyptians were never wanting in setting their own affairs forth to advantage; and the Greeks were disposed to credit all that was offered, and to make the best constructions of every thing they observed. So much, indeed, that in after-times, when the Greeks were become infinitely superior to the Egyptians in knowledge, the former studied to put a good cover and varnish upon all deformities that occurred among the latter; and, whatever they found otherwise than was fit and reasonable, they ever took care to set it in another light, to put some handsome gloss upon it, and to represent it as it ought to be. This is so very evident throughout the whole narratives of Herodotus, Diodorus, and Plutarch, that no man can peruse them without observing instances of it every where. A man of sense will

[b] Plut. de Iside, p. 355. c. 365. c. Aelian. var. Hist. l. iv. c. 8.

[c] Vide supra.

hardly have patience to read the tales and stories which the Egyptians told Plutarch [*d*] of their religion and their gods, Osiris and Isis, of Typhon and the rest: they were so very wild, ridiculous, and absurd, and withal so contradictory, that there could hardly possibly be one word of truth or probability in any of them. They apparently carry more of the air of dreams, or the rhapsodies of men under a frenzy or distraction, than of sense or reality. This Plutarch saw well enough; but he casts about to mend the matter, by supposing them to be, I know not what, disguises and covers, of somewhat that was of different import and consideration underneath. He interprets all these, as several later writers have done, mystically and symbolically, and turns all they told him to a *natural* and *moral* meaning, supposing that the *natural history* of the *elements* and the formation of all sorts of *bodies* were couched under that jargon. Whereas it is manifest from his own account that the Egyptians were serious, and their relations simple, nor did they intend any thing other than they plainly and openly declared. This he could not but see demonstration of on every hand. What he observed in the next temple, at the next sacrifice, the next procession or religious solemnity, would give him proof enough of it; indeed their whole religion was founded intirely upon it. Nay he is not able to deny but that, by their worshiping *animals* as *gods*, they *not* only exposed religion to scoffs and derision [*e*], but likewise laid a foundation for the most wretched sort of *superstition* among the more simple and weak people, and of *Atheism* among those that were hardy and bold. Nor can any

[*d*] Lib. de Iside et Osir.

[*e*] ὁ γέλωτος μόνον, ὃ δὲ χλευσμῷ καταπεπλήκασιν τὰς ἱερουργίας. De Iside, p. 379. c.

man well wonder that Diodorus, when he is relating the particulars of their religion, should freely confess it was *difficult for those who had not seen them to believe one who should set them forth* [f]; so very absurd they appear through his whole account to be, and so different from what was then practised among the Greeks and other the most sensible and civilized nations.

AMONG the Romans the Egyptian religion was the common subject of mirth and raillery [g], and it was every where spoken and wrote of with the greatest slight and contempt that could well be expressed [h]. They thought it throughout very strange and *portentous*; and the professors of it nothing better than madmen [i]. They were here reproached for having made gods of all the *monsters* in the universe, and for allowing temples to brutes, that stables and kennels would have befitted much better [k]. To rank such deities in the same class with those of Rome was reputed there the highest effrontery and indignity [l]. In fine this of Egypt passed among the much more refined Romans for no other than a very *vain superstition* [m];

[f] Ἀπαγγείλαντα δὲ πειτευθῆναι παρὰ τοῖς τεθεαμένοις δύσκολον. Diodor. l. i. p. 65. e.

[g] Aegyptiorum ridetis aenigmata, quod mutorum animantium formas divinis inseruerint causis, easdemque, quod species multo ture accipiant, et reliquo coere moniarum paratu. Arnob. adv. Gentes, l. iii. p. 109.

[h] — Accepimus Isin,—

Semideosque Canes.—Lucan. viii. 831.

[i] —Qualia demens

Aegyptus portenta colat.—Juven. Sat. xv.

[k] Omnigenumque Deum monstra, et latrator Anubis.

Aeneid. l. viii. 698.

[l] Ausa Jovi nostro latrantem opponere Anubin.—Propertius, L. iii. Eleg. xi, 41.

[m] Inter sacrificulos vanae superstitionis. Suetonius in Domit. l. i. c. 1. p. 664. a.

and when, during his descent upon that country, a propofal was made to Auguftus of feeing their mighty deity, Apis, he abfolutely refufed it, *faying, that he was wont to adore the gods, and not bulls* [n]. And a perfon of great knowledge in thofe times has delivered it as his *opinion* concerning their doctrines of *amulets*, that it could not but meet with *fcorn* and laughter from all mankind [o].

BUT the ancient Chriftians, and facred writers in particular, fhew every where ftill higher refentments of *this* worship. They reprefent it under a character very hateful, and the people, upon account of it, as utterly relinquifhed, and given up to the worft of immoralities, though very highly opinionated of themfelves all the while, and, in their wonted manner, full of their own *wifdom*. *They became vain in their imaginations, and their foolifh heart was darkened. Profefling themfelves to be wife they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible god into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beafts, and creeping things. Wherefore God gave them up to uncleanness* [p], to which this nation was very greatly and unhappily addi&ed. It had fpread quite beyond private converfe, and fhewed itfelf in a very infamous manner, even in their religious and moft public folemnities. In truth, it was not ftange it fhould extend to them, fince the people was abandoned to it as a punifhment for the ftupid idolatry that was carried on in thofe folemnities. And this was feverely cenfured by the fathers, and other ancient ecclefiaftical writers. But more efpecially by the apologifts for chriftianity. For thefe

[n] λέγων. Θεὸς ἀλλ' ἔχ' βῆς προσκυνεῖν εἰθεῖσαι. Dio Caff. l. li. p. 520. e.

[o] Quae quidem eos fcripfiſſe non fine contemptu et irriſu generis humani arbitror. Plin. l. xxxvii. c. 9, p. 734. d.

[p] Rom. i. 21, 22, 23.

were obliged particularly to examine and look into the errors and corruptions of paganism. And they every where represent the Egyptian theology as the most senseless and enormous of any in the universe. For this reason it was that Athenagoras [q], Tatian [r], Theophilus Antiochenus [s], Origen [t], Theodoret [u], Minutius Felix [x], Tertullian [y], and the rest, insist so frequently, and lay so much stress upon it. They pitch upon this as [notoriously absurd: and by much the most liable to be exposed of any in all the whole Pagan world. Nor were Julian, Celsus, and the other advocates of paganism, on any occasion so put to it, as to defend the Egyptian religion. Clemens Alexandrinus's satyr upon it is excellent. He sets forth the grandeur of their *temples*, the stateliness of the *porticoes*, the beauty of the *groves* about them, the walls of the temples *painted* and adorned with *gold, silver*, and great variety of *precious stones*, and the *adyta* hung with *gold brocades*. But when, in expectation of something answerably great and extraordinary within, any one comes to look in the *penetralia*, the priest, with much gravity, and a great deal of preface and ceremony first past, drawing back the *curtain*, shews a *cat*, or perhaps a *crocodile*, or a *serpent* lying upon a *purple carpet*, an object much more likely to excite laughter [z] than devotion. In like

[q] Apologia.

[r] Orat. ad Graecos.

[s] Ad Autolicum.

[t] Contra Celsum, l. i. p. 16.

[u] Ἑλλην. παθ. Serm. iv. p. 51.

[x] Octavius.

[y] Apolog. c. 6.

[z] Δείξων τὸν θεὸν πλάττειν ἡμῶν, ἐνδίδωσι γελωτατὴ σεβασματος. Clem. Alexandr. παῖδαγ. l. iii. c. 2. p. 216.

manner Arnobius [a] expostulates with the Pagans for their charging every *public calamity* upon the *Christians* as inflicted by the gods out of indignation to their religion, at the same time that there were among themselves the most *lofty* and *magnificent temples* in Egypt dedicated to *cats, beetles, and bullocks*, whilst the deities they ridiculed were perfectly silent in that case, and not at all offended that they beheld the divinities of the vilest animals ranked with theirs.

NOR had the prophetic, and the other writers among the Jews better thoughts of this matter. No, they pronounce these ways of worship *wicked abominations*; and particularly that of paying a regard to any image or *form of creeping things, and abominable beasts* or any idols [b]. And afterwards; *Thus saith the Lord God, I will destroy the idols, and I will cause their images to cease out of Noph, in the land of Egypt* [c]. Much to the same purpose likewise elsewhere; *I will kindle a fire in the houses or temples of the Gods of Egypt, and break also the images of Egypt* [d]. Nay, the makers and adorers of the *Molten Calf* in the wilderness are said to have sunk themselves into a state beneath that of the rest of mankind, even the level of brutes; *to have changed their glory into the similitude of an ox that eateth grass, and forgot God* [e]. The historical and secular writers among the Jews had likewise the very same sentiments of the Egyptian theology, and every where speak

[a] *Templa felibus, scarabaeis, et buculis, sublimibus sunt elata fastigiis; silent irrisae numinum potestates, nec livore afficiuntur ullo quod sibi comparatas animantium vilium conspiciunt sanctitates.* Adv. Gent. l. i. p. 15. e.

[b] Ezech. viii. 9, 10.

[c] Ibid. xxx. 13.

[d] Jerem. xliii. 12, 13.

[e] Psalm cvi. 19, 20, 21.

with as much flight and resentment of it. Particularly Josephus, who reproaches the Egyptians for making *bulls, goats, crocodiles, and cynocephali, their chief Gods* [f], and for ascribing so great *honour and power*, even to creatures the most noxious and venomous, such as crocodiles and asps [g]. In like manner Philo exposes their stupidity and impiety. He declares that *no one who had himself any soul, could ever be brought to adore brutes* that assuredly had none [h], as was daily practised all over *Egypt*. But their worshiping of the worst and most useless of animals, nay those too that are the most offensive and injurious to mankind, as the *lion* the *fiercest* of all the creatures at *land*, and the *crocodile* the most *cruel* of any that are produced in the *water*, nay *dogs, cats, and wolves*, as so many *gods*, cannot, he thinks, ever be mentioned to a man of sense without exciting scorn and laughter [i]. He avers that *strangers*, when they first came into Egypt, were ever greatly shocked and surprized at the follies they could not but see wherever they went. And men of better *education* were wont to stand *amazed* to see the *honours* that were paid to the vilest of all creatures, nor could they forbear *pitying* and despising such devotees, thinking them more senseless than the brutes they adored, and nothing better than *beasts* in shape of men [k].

BUT the present question is concerning Moses; and what his opinion was of the Egyptian religion. For the rest of the

[f] Contra Apion. l. i. p. 1054. c.

[g] Honorem, Potestatem, Crocodilis et Aspidibus. Rufinus Josephi interpres, c. Apion. l. ii. p. 1065. i.

[h] ἀψύχων. De Decalogo. p. 755.

[i] Ibid.

[k] Ἀνθρωποειδῆ Σηρία. Ibid.

Jewish writers, both the sacred and secular, we have seen how severely they censured it; and how vain, impious, and flagitious, they and the christians of old thought it. Nay, the very Pagans themselves speak generally of it with full as much slight and contempt as either. They every where expose it as ridiculous and absurd in all its parts; and declare that the professors of it act rather like people in a frenzy, or distraction, than as rational and intelligent men; so that the voice of all mankind besides has gone clearly and unanimously against them. As to Moses, no man was ever a better judge of men; or had a truer taste of things. For proof of this, we need look no further than to the moral characters extant in his works: these are drawn with a spirit and mastery very extraordinary and uncommon. Every thing in them is truly fine, touching, and natural, beyond any thing I ever met with elsewhere. His historical relations are as exact; every where clear, strong, and simple. It is apparent he was thoroughly skilled in all the knowledge of those ages and nations. He was also born in this very country, bred there, and *educated* [a] from his infancy *in all the wisdom of the Egyptians*. Indeed he much surpassed his tutors, and improved vastly upon their learning; as will presently be evident to any one that shall compare the body of morals, of laws, and of policy, he has left us, with those of that nation. His having lived so long there, and in the court too, gave all the opportunities that could be wished of understanding their worship thoroughly, and informing himself fully of all particulars of it: in fine, he was abundantly capacitated every way to make a right estimate and judgement of it. He could not avoid observing on every side what was the most fantastic, extravagant, and even prophane, going on under a

[a] Ἐπαίδευθη. Act. vii. 22.

notion of religion. He must needs see them, in all places, with the greatest ostentation and ceremony, paying the highest adorations to things that were rather to be despised, feared, and hated. He beheld them worshiping almost all objects of their senses: the sun, the moon, and other bodies, in the *heavens above*; brutes, serpents, insects, leeks, onions, and other vegetables, *on the earth beneath*; crocodiles, and fishes, in the *waters*: as also images and representations of all of them. In fine, they paid a worship to every thing that a wise and good man would avoid worshiping; but none at all to that great and wise Being from whom all those things, and even they themselves proceeded, to whom they owed all the good and happiness they enjoyed, and was indeed the true and proper object of their worship: him they seem to have little known or regarded. *They worshiped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever [b]*; being under an universal *blindness* and ignorance *of the true God, by reason of their bestowing so great a veneration upon created beings [c]*, that were equally *blind*; and without any capacity or power of answering their petitions. After which, nobody can think strange, that even Pharaoh their king himself, being told of the *Lord God*, should enquire *who is the Lord [d]*? Nay, it was a long time after this, that it was prophesied, *there shall be an altar to the Lord in the midst of the land of Egypt [e]*, where were raised many thousands to brutes, to beings both animate and inanimate, but not one to God the

[b] Rom. i. 25. Conf. ver. 22. and 23.

[c] Ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ—τυφλωτρίσεως περὶ τὸν ἀληθῆ Θεόν, ἕνεκα τῆς γενεᾶς καὶ τυφλὰ Θεοπλασεῖν. Philo. L. de Josepho, p. 562. d.

[d] Exod. v. 12.

[e] Isaiah xix. 19.

author of all ; and then *the Egyptians shall know the Lord* [f]. In consequence of this ignorance of God, and that senseless devotion to the most absurd idols that ever appeared, they were possessed with a turn of mind the most stupid and depraved ; and were the most corrupt and dissolute in their manners that could well be. Nay, and all the while they were the most positive in their ways, had the highest persuasion of their own wisdom, and were the farthest from a temper capable of being wrought upon and taught better, of any people upon earth. So that Moses's drift and business was to call and rescue the Israelites out from among them ; and draw them wholly off from the customs of Egypt, and what they had seen transacted there. In order to this, he enjoins them the worship of *only God* [g], the source and origin of all things, who was totally neglected in Egypt ; and forbids the worship of *images of things* in *heaven, the earth, and the waters* [h], which was solemnly practised there. He suffers them not to *enquire how the nations serve their gods*, nor to *do so unto the Lord ; for every abomination to the Lord which he hateth, have they done unto their gods* [i]. He totally disapproves of the Pagan worship ; and of all the

[f] Isai. xix. 21.

[g] Decalogue Praecept. i. Exod. xx. Conf. Manethon. ap. Joseph. i. c. Apion, p. 1053. a.

[h] Ib. Praecept. ii. The Jewish nation had been so exact in their observance of *this precept*, and so much avoided the use of images, that none among them seem to have had any skill in imagery ; nor so much as understood any thing of the art of casting of metals. Infomuch, that Solomon was obliged to send abroad for one that lived in Phoenicia, a country where imagery was as much in use as in Egypt. For the figures employed for the adorning of the temple, and the molten sea, were all cast and wrought by Hiram, the son of a Jewish widow, bred in Tyre, if not born there. 1 Kings, c. vii.

[i] Deuteron. xii. 30, 31.

rites, customs, and ceremonies, of it. In the wilderness he charges them, *Walk ye not in the statutes and practices of your fathers in Egypt; neither observe their judgements, nor defile yourselves with their idols* [k]. Idolatry was, indeed, the great, general, and leading error and unhappiness of Egypt. This, therefore, Moses precautions the Israelites of, and arms them against it in the first place; which was no more than was needful, since they had been so habituated to it in Egypt [l]. And, indeed, they retained a very strong bent and disposition to it even afterwards; as, to pass by others, we see by the instance of the *molten calf*; in the worshiping of which they are said to have *forgot God* [m], and *turned out of the way that he commanded them* [n], for which they were severely punished [o]. In like manner, the law that enjoins the *sacrificing of a red heifer* [p], and that which forbids the *planting of any trees near unto the altar of the Lord* [q], that against the *use of enchantments* [r], and that relating to the *cutting off the hair of the priests* [s], are all apparently levelled against the contrary customs of the Egyptians in those respects. Moses having thus settled the constitution as to things sacred, descends next to those that concern human and civil affairs, and particularly gives directions for mutual society, and for the securing of private

[k] Ezek. xx. 18.

[l] Ibid. ver. 7. 18. Conf. Euseb. Prep. Evang. l. vii. c. 8.

[m] Psalm cvi. 21. Conf. Philon. de Vita Mos. p. 677. c.

[n] Exod. xxxii. 8.

[o] Ibid. ver. 32.

[p] Numb. xix. 5. Spencer. de Legg. l. ii. c. 15. sect. 2.

[q] Deut. xvi. 21. Vid. Spen. ib. c. 16.

[r] Levit. xix. 26, 31.

[s] Ezek. xliv. 20. V. Spen. ib. c. 25. sect. 2. et Philon. Jud. de Circumcis. p. 810. e.

right. He forbids *adultery* and *theft*, both which were in too frequent practice among the Egyptians. And whereas it was a law and settled custom there, *contrary to the common method of the rest of mankind, to marry with their own sisters* [t], Moses, in direct opposition to it [u], enjoins the Israelites, *None of you shall approach to any that is near akin to him to uncover their nakedness*; and in particular, *the nakedness of thy sister thou shalt not uncover* [x]. So likewise he forbids the *promiscuous* use of the same garments to *men* and *women* indifferently [y]; because that, among many other things that were very indecent and unfit, was practised in Egypt. In a word, that he might effectually intercept all intercourse and communication with Egypt, and distance his Israelites as far from the manners of that country as was possible, he peremptorily commands them not to imitate that nation in any thing whatever, but relinquish all the religious observances they had ever seen in use there. And that they should have no pretext for adhering to any of them, because he might not have given an express detail of each, he leaves with them this general charge, *After the doings of the land of Egypt, wherein ye dwelt, shall ye not do; neither shall ye walk in their ordinances. Ye shall do my judgements and keep my ordinances, to walk therein, I am the Lord your God* [z]; where there is a considerable difference also implied, and a plain mark

[t] Νομοθέησαι δὲ φασὶ τοῖς Αἰγυπτίοις παρὰ τὸ κοινὸν ἔθος τῶν ἄλλων ἀνθρώπων, γαμεῖν ἀδελφάς. Diodor. l. i. p. 23. c. Conf. Sext. Empir. Πυρρόν. ἱπποτ. l. iii. c. 24. p. 158. b.

[u] Uti Philo Jud. de Legil. p. 779. b. 780. a.

[x] Levit. xviii. 6. 9. Conf. 2 Sam. xiii. 12.

[y] Deuter. xxii. 5. Conf. Witsii Aegypt. l. iii. c. 14. sect. 7. et Spencer, l. ii. c. 17.

[z] Levit. xviii. 3, 4.

of distinction offered betwixt those ordinances, and these now promulgated by this great legislator.

It is therefore most apparent, that Moses was utterly averse to the Egyptian constitution, and very far from deriving any thing thence to be added to the Jewish. But yet some there have been, who, not duly attending to this, and observing an agreement betwixt them in some particulars, have thought all these were originally of Egyptian extract. St. Jerom, taking notice of the instance of Melchisedec, and that there were priests among the Pagans before the time of the Mosaic establishment, imagines that the *Jews had their priesthood from the Gentiles* [a]: which yet is expressly contrary to the tenor of holy writ; where a mighty difference is put betwixt *the priests of the Lord, and the priests after the manner of the nations*; the latter being not rightly ordained and *consecrated*, and therefore no priests; as their gods are pronounced no gods [b]. S. Chrysostom will have it, that all the Jewish rites, their sacrifices, purifications, festivals at the new moons, the ark, and even the temple itself, had their original from Greece [c]; an assertion the most precipitate and ill-grounded that could ever have fallen from any man; the Greeks being, at the time that these rites were instituted among the Jews, in a state of barbarity, and no ways considerable: nor was there any manner of intercourse betwixt them and the Jews till many ages afterwards. Polidore Vergil thinks it *probable*, that the *tonsure* of the *Nazarenes* [d], and several of the *ornaments of the priests* among the *Jews*,

[a] Judaei à gentibus Sacerdotium acceperint. Epist. ad. Evagr.

[b] 2 Chron. xiii. 9.

[c] Ἰσθαῖναι πάντα καὶ τὰς Οὐσίας, καὶ καθαρμᾶς, &c. ἐξ ἑλληνικῆς ταῦτα παχύτης ἐλάβε τὴν ἀρχὴν. Hom. 6. in Math.

[d] De Invent. rerum, l. iv. c. 8.

particularly the *linen vestments* [e], might be *derived* from *Egypt*. Nay, the learned Grotius himself, is not averse to believe the same of some of the *rites* used about *sacrifices*, and the prohibition of certain *animals* and *meats* in the Hebrew law [f]. Of late a very great man of our own nation [g] has made a collation of several Jewish and Egyptian observances; and he is inclinable to believe they had their first rise in Egypt. Though, since that cannot be made out with any certainty, he offers his thoughts, in his usual manner, as with abundance of good sense, so with great modesty; and leaves the determination of the affair much to the judgement of his reader.

BUT Doctor Spencer hath, since, carried the matter a great deal further. For, though he allows that the Mosaic law *was given as a guard and barrier against idolatry* [h]; and that several parts of it were framed in *opposition* to some *customs* that had obtained among the *Zabii* [i], the *Phoenicians*, and other people bordering upon Judea; yea, and some few in *opposition* to certain practices of the Egyptians [k]; yet he asserts, that *God tolerated and transferred not a few of the rites that were in use among the Pagans, into his own law and worship, after he had corrected and reformed them* [l]. But, in regard the *Israelites* had

[e] De Invent. rerum, l. iv. c. 7.

[f] Not. ad. Levit. i. 9. et xii. 3.

[g] Sir John Marsham. Mansisse aliquas disciplinae Aegyptiacae reliquias non immerito suspicari possumus. Chronicus-Canon, ad Sec. 9. p. 149. et seqq. agens de Ebraeis.

[h] Legem praecipue in remedium Idololatriae traditam. De Legibus Hebraeorum, l. i. c. 1. sect. 2.

[i] Ib. l. ii. c. 2. et alibi.

[k] Ib. l. ii. c. 15. sect. 2. et l. ii. c. 25.

[l] Deum ritus non paucos, inter Gentes usitatos, emandas, tolerasse, et in Legem cultumque suum transtulisse. Praef. vol. ii. p. 5. Dissert. 1.

lived many years in Egypt, had been long accustomed to the manners of that country, were very fond of them, and withal rude, ignorant, obstinate, and very superstitious [m], it was almost necessary that God should indulge them the use of some of the ancient rites, and accommodate his sanctions to their taste and capacity [n]; God therefore allowed them, and reserved for their law very many of the Egyptian usages; especially those, that by their pompous appearance and shew, were like to please and take with the populace [o]. And this Doctor Spencer thinks the more likely, because, says he, it is most certain that the Egyptians, long before the time of Moses, had a great reputation abroad both for religion and science [p]; and were a people endowed with admirable manners, and a very fine genius and capacity [q]. Whereas the Hebrews, he avers, were a people rude, barbarous [r], and destitute of almost all manner of learning, ignorant of all the genteeler arts, and hardly knowing any thing beyond the bricks they were trained to the making of, and the garlick of Egypt [s]. For which reason, he tells us, they were reputed, among not only the Egyptians but likewise the other nations in their neighbourhood, the vilest and most despicable of any thing that ever went upon two legs [t].

[m] L. iii. c. 11. p. 107, 108.

[n] Deo penè necesse esset—rituum aliquorum veterum usum iis indulgere, et illius instituta ad eorum normam et modulum accommodare, l. iii. c. 11. p. 107. a.

[o] Deus itaque ritus Aegypti plurimos splendore praesertim aliquo plebem fascinantes, Israelitis concessit et conservavit, l. iii. c. 2. sect. 2. p. 16. d.

[p] Clare patet, Aegyptios durante Mosi tempore, Religionis aequae ac Scientiae fama claruisse, l. iii. c. 2. sect. 2. p. 16. e.

[q] Aegyptii, moribus et ingenio eleganti populus, l. iii. c. 4. sect. 2. p. 392. c.

[r] Populo, barbaro, rudi, &c. l. iii. c. 11. p. 108. e.

[s] Hebraei, omni pene Literatura destituti: artium humaniorum rudes, et vix quicquam supra lateres et allium Aegypti sapuisse, l. iii. c. 11. p. 108. e.

[t] Israelitae non apud Aegyptios tantum, sed et alias e vicinia gentes, bipedum vilissimi et despicatissimi habebantur, l. iii. c. 2. sect. 2. p. 17. b.

Nay,

Nay, they were hardly ever mentioned by any of them, without contempt ; as if *they had thought the Jews, like so many monkies, born only to make the world mirth and diversion* [u] : of so coarse a mould *was the whole nation of the Hebrews made, and removed so very small a degree from the disposition of brutes* [x]. What title the Egyptians had to this splendid character, appears pretty sufficiently from what has been shewn above. As little ground was there for treating the Jews with all this scorn and reproach ; and casting so many indignities upon them. But there was here an hypothesis to be maintained ; and every thing must be made to suit and comply with it. The Egyptians were to pass for the authors and inventors of all the opinions and customs that obtained in common betwixt the two nations : and the Jews as mere imitators and copiers after them. That this might appear the more probable, the former must be represented as a learned and wise people ; but the other as illiterate, stupid, and very little superior to brutes. It is true, the Jews, during the last years of their abode in Egypt, met with but ill treatment there ; and the meaner part of the nation were held to very hard labour and mean employments by the Egyptians, under whose government they were [y] : which they were so far from wanting due sense and resentment of, that upon it the whole body of the people quitted and withdrew themselves out of the country. Having thus asserted, and regained their liberty, in a few years they began to discover all the marks of the original genius and spirit of their ancestors. They attained

[u] Quasi Judaeos, simiarum ad instar, ad risum solummodo movendum natos existimarent. ib.

[x] E luto tam crasso ficta erat Hebraeorum Natio, et a brutorum indole tam exiguo remota intervallo. l. iii. c. i. sect. 1. p. 321. a.

[y] Exod. c. i. et seqq.

to a mighty mastery in all the arts of peace and war, and became a very great and powerful people. By the time of the reign of Solomon, they had extended their empire over a considerable part of the east, and were much superior to any nation then upon earth, as well in knowledge, learning, and humanity, as riches, grandeur, and empire. But as little reason as there was for the framing such an idea of this nation as Dr. Spencer has done, no sooner did his work come abroad but it pleased and took mightily with some, insomuch that it became a fashion to ridicule the Jews, slight the Mosaic oeconomy, and represent it as only copied and moulded after the pattern of the Gentiles.

In particular a person of great abilities and distinction unhappily suggested, that the Mosaic account of the creation was drawn up only to oblige the Jews with a *cosmogonia*, in imitation of those of their neighbours the *Egyptians*, *Phoenicians*, and *Chaldaeans* [z], all whom the Jews were wont greatly to admire, of which he offers not the least proof; nor indeed does it any where appear, that there was so much as one single scheme of that sort in being among any of those nations for very many ages after that was set forth. Indeed he mentions *astronomical observations among the Chaldees before ever Moses was born* [a]; and that he was only a student in *the Egyptian wisdom* and learning of which their *Thoyth* was the author [b]. It is pity he had not given some proofs of those early observations, or that *Thoyth* lived before Moses. This I am sure, the accounts of *Thoyth's* writings are so fabulous and inconsistent, that it may justly be doubted whether ever he wrote any thing at all; and it is certain that

[z] Burnet, Archaeolog. Philosoph. p. 313. a. Conf. p. 323. c.

[a] Ib. p. 195. c.

[b] Ib. p. 78. e. 193. d.

some that have passed under his name, were forged, and could not be his. As to this wisdom of the Egyptians, of which he speaks so often, if it were such as either their own works of all sorts, or the accounts of the Greeks, set forth, we may be very positive Moses would be far from copying any thing of it. And for the Gentil-Cosmogonias, it is much more probable that, if not remains of the old tradition, they were only framed out of some scattered and imperfect particles, of the Mosaic relation ill put together, that were handed out of Judea to the countries round it, and at length through Phoenicia into Greece. Nor is this very learned Archaeologist more singular in his notion of the design and occasion of compiling the history of the creation, than of the execution and performance of it. He is very positive that the author acted more the part of a politician in the composition, than of a philosopher, and chose rather to suit it to the capacity of the people than to nature, and the true state of things, from which he would persuade us Moses has in several respects receded, in order to the accommodating of it to their notions [c]. And what his judgement of their capacity was he has indeed not been wanting to set forth very fully. He says they passed among the Gentiles *for a people very vile and of no manner of reckoning* [d] or worth. It would indeed not be strange they should, if it were certain, as he avers, that the *Israelitish nation* was *ignorant and stupid* [e], that their genius was *sluggish and rude, their disposition gross and dull, and such as was neither fitted for the contemplation of natural things, nor the perception of those*

[c] L. ii. c. 8.

[d] Pro inquilinis, vilibus, & nullius numeri, p. 43. c.

[e] Ignarum, hebetemque, p. 121. d.

that

that were divine [f]. He will have the condition of this people to be half barbarous, unpolished above all the rest of mankind [g]. For he is of opinion, that all the antient nations besides were possessed of some sort of wisdom that was peculiar to them and kept private [h] among them; but he will not allow any thing of the like sort to the Jews. And, of all those nations, none stand so fair in his esteem as the Egyptians. He extolls them much, both as a people very ancient and likewise much renowned for their wisdom [i]: and thinks their knowledge of things, both divine and natural, very great [k]. He gives us to understand, that the Greeks of old were wont to have recourse to this country as a school of philosophers, and a fountain of the more divine sort of literature [l]. Nothing could ever be possibly higher than this, nothing more to the commendation of the Egyptians; whilst he declares of the poor Hebrew nation, that their servitude in Egypt had stript them not only of their manners and discipline, but of almost common humanity itself. They were, he says, a meer rabble of people, a company of slaves, lately brought out of Egyptian work-houses, who were possessed of no arts, besides the making of bricks, of no manner of learning, of no culture of mind [m]. In

[f] Tardum et rude ingenium, crassam hebetemque fuisse populi istius indolem; neque rebus naturalibus contemplandis aut divinis percipiendis idoneam, p. 332. d. Conf. p. 330. a.

[g] Prae caeteris, hujusce populi inculta & semibarbara erat conditio, p. 333. e.

[h] Omnes antiquae gentes, saltem ex sententia nostra, sapientiae cujusdam reconditae custodes essent, p. 43.

[i] Populus enim Aegyptius et perantiquus est, et percelebris sapientia, p. 71.

[k] Tanta rerum divinarum et naturalium cognitio, p. 99.

[l] Philosophorum scholam et diviniore literaturae fontem, p. 72.

[m] Servitus non solum mores et disciplinam, sed tantum non ipsam humanitatem exuerat. Erat colluvies quaedam hominum: coetus mancipiorum ex Ergastulis Aegyptiacis nudius tertius educorum. Qui nullas artes praeter latericiam: nullas literas, nullum animi cultum, possidebant, p. 333.

fine he thinks still as meanly of them afterwards when they came to be settled in Palestine, and formed into a government. *The schools and academies that were of old among them, were not he says like ours at this day, so much framed and disposed for the studies of human learning, that are assuredly of the highest importance in life, in rightly forming the mind, and laying a foundation of good-manners, as for the imbibing and acquiring the institutes of religion, and the gift of prophecy.* For, he adds, *no nation throughout the whole world ever abounded so much with prophets and persons inspired with an heavenly spirit, as the Jews; insomuch that there seemed to have been some kind of divine power inherent in their soil and climate* [n]. That men, so much strangers to good literature and good sense, and so little fit to promote any thing of worth or use, should be so exactly well fitted to make *prophets*; and that a *divine power* should be the production of some certain particular *soils* and *climates*, are notions that I am unwilling to meddle with. But I think upon the whole, it is pretty plain how heartily this learned writer is entered into the measures lately mentioned, of applauding the Egyptians and decrying the Jews; with what justice, on either side, appears sufficiently from what has been offered above. It were indeed to have been wished, that they who have been thus free of their declamations against the Jewish nation, had with no less freedom laid before the world the reasons upon which they were founded. I know very well the chronicles and annals of that

[n] Quae autem apud ipsos erant scholae et academiae pristinae non tam ad Encyclopaediae studia, ut solent hodiè, formatae & compositae erant, quam ad religionis instituta, & dona prophetica imbibenda. Nulla enim gens per terrarum orbem, nullus populus, tantum abundabat Prophetis, ac viris caelesti spiritus tactis, quantum Judaei: ut ipsi solo & climati vis aliqua divina inhaesisse videretur, p. 44. a.

nation,

nation, amongst several of their princes who were really great and illustrious patterns of wisdom and virtue, have transmitted down accounts of others who had indeed too much of blemish and folly in their character. But this was not the case of Judea alone; so far from it, that the histories of the kings of the neighbouring countries all round shew too many of like if not worse character. Nay the very vilest of them have been vastly out-done by some of the emperors, and those that were at the head of affairs among the Romans, who yet were allowed of all hands to have been a truly brave, wise, and great people. Nor were the kings the only persons in Judea that were to blame. No; the prophetic and other writers of that nation, addressing themselves to the people there, frequently expostulate with them likewise, as obstinate and perverse, as violators of their laws, and regardless of their religion, as guilty of many crimes, vices, and immoralities: for which accusations, in truth, there was but too great cause. This, with what is pointed forth above relating to their princes, and some reproaches of the Pagans, of which more in due place, is all I can possibly guess those gentlemen could have to offer in favour of these invectives. But their notices and views of mankind are very short, if they did not know that the charge, which is thus brought against the Jews, is applicable, with equal truth, to all ages and all nations in the world. Such is the unhappy state of human nature, that there never was any time, nor any country, where was not like occasion of complaint of great degeneracy and corruption, against some, and perhaps great numbers; but it would be very hard and injurious to think all that lived in those ages, or the whole body of those nations, were implied, or alike involved and concerned in that charge. Should any reader extend the satire he meets with in some of the antient poets, or

the invectives of the histories of the founders of the several religious orders, to every individual man then living, or imagine the characters extant in some Spanish, French, and English sermons, suited to the whole body of the people of those three kingdoms; all mankind would pronounce him utterly in the wrong, and the judgement thus passed very preposterous. And it is but fit we give the Jews the same quarter, and allow them the same claim of right, we do to all other nations under Heaven. As to Dr. Burnet's idea of the Mosaic history of the creation, it is incontestable, that an account of things that was framed on purpose to suit understandings that were so very mean and clumsy as he represents those of the Jews, must be in itself as mean and clumsy. And such accordingly, with a great deal of wit, art, and pains, that learned writer has gone about to persuade the world this of Moses is. He has left no stone unturned, nor any thing unattempted, that might conduce to that purpose. Nay, he has once more called forth the baffled sarcasms of even the avowed enemies of Moses, Julian, Celsus, and Simplicius [o], upon this occasion, and brought them upon the stage anew. But here likewise, as in Dr. Spencer's case, was an hypothesis to be maintained; which the Mosaic account comporting very ill with, the authority and certainty of that was to be shaken, to make way for the establishment of this. All means were to be used that might conduce to that purpose, and every thing struck down that did not rightly square and comport with it.

HE had before taken the liberty to recede from what Moses had delivered concerning the form and structure, the situation, the constitution, and the productions of the primitive earth; and

[o] P. 280. 296. 325. 349.

represented such a deluge as that described by the same historian, as really impossible. Now in truth, had things been so, and Moses found erroneous in his phyfiology, we could with no reason or security ever have relied upon him in matters historical, moral, and religious; of which, at this distance, we have not the like means of information. And all know how great a superstructure is raised upon his foundation, which would assuredly have been in a very shaken and tottering condition, had his accounts of nature proved erroneous, and such as this learned theorist has represented them. We are now able to examine and pass judgement of those accounts, by bringing them to the test of nature, which indeed has been fairly done [p], and they have every where stood trial, as constantly as that theory where it differs from them have failed. It has been shewn that the deluge was in every particular such as Moses has set forth, and that there are at this day evidences in nature which make out the truth and certainty of every individual article of his narration, so as to put the whole quite out of doubt [q]; as also that the condition of the earth before was in all respects apparently the same that Moses hath described, and that wherever this learned Theorist has differed from him, he hath as apparently departed from nature and the true state of things [r].

WHAT was thus advanced being founded entirely upon observation and fact, all sober and intelligent men consider this affair as fixed and settled; and even some who were no great friends to the Mosaic history, very ingenuously admitted those proofs, quitted their exceptions, and acquiesced. So that all might well wonder to see a gentleman [s] at this time of day, in a

[p] Natural History of the Earth, Pt. 3 and 6.

[q] Ibid. Pt. 2, 3.

[r] Pt. 3. and 6.

[s] Whiston's new Theory of the Earth, 8vo.

full gale of his own fancy, acting the very same part over again, and treating the Mosaic account in like or in still worse manner, and this too merely to make way for a *new Theory* that was inconsistent with that account, and had not really any more credentials than the former from nature or holy writ, though both are endeavoured to be pressed into its service, and made to truckle to it. This is founded entirely upon supposition of a comet, that is so wholly precarious and imaginary, that the author has not been able to produce so much as one single observation, or one instance of fact, to vouch for it. Nor has he ever made the least offer towards a proof of the existence of the comet, upon which he erects his whole Theory, or indeed that there ever was in nature a comet of such a constitution as that he describes. But this is not, by many, the only objection that lies against that work, were this a proper occasion to propose them.

It is a reflection one has but too often occasion to make, that no persons fall into so many and enormous solecisms as men of learning and much reading. There are, in the numerous and almost endless shoals of books at this day extant, so many things that are obscure, perplexed, and inconsistent, so many that are dubious and uncertain, and so many finally that are not true, that few readers have capacity, attention, and strength of mind, sufficient to make a fit choice of things, and rightly to digest and dispose of them. And, besides, though their attention and abilities be never so great, they that bestow the most considerable share of their time in reading, will have little to spare for reflection and a due exercise of their own thoughts, in order to the framing a right judgement and making a fit use of what they read. Nor is this so great an obstacle in the way to the search after truth, as the passions and prejudices that are
in

in the world. There are few men but have their darling and favourite opinions. Some perhaps that they fell into inadvertently and by chance, others that suit their relish, their humour, and inclinations. Now these, to be sure, must be gratified and abided by; for which reason they, who are possessed of them, have a perpetual bias upon their mind, and pass over every thing, except what may be brought to make for those opinions, which perhaps may be the only thing that ought to be neglected and passed by as precarious and not to be relied upon. And when once men have wrought such opinions firmly into their minds, so as to have appropriated them, and made them their own, they become ever after so fond of them as to suffer nothing to stand that can vie with them; nor is it easy to be imagined how far they will then go, or what they will venture in defence of them. Of this there are but too many instances; and indeed, without looking further, the very gentlemen last mentioned [t] have sacrificed every thing, of however great importance, and though never so sacred, to their own fancies and theories, which after all are found to be far from true, and to have no real foundation in fact or things; nor, which ought also to come under consideration, are of any manner of use or service to mankind, but on the contrary apparently detrimental, serving only to the unsettling and disturbing the minds of men. Had things really been transacted in such manner as it is set forth in either of those theories, the knowledge of that would have been of no advantage to the world. But then they are both perfectly inconsistent with the Mosaic system, so that that consequently must have been false. Accordingly Dr. Burnet endeavours to represent it not as agreeable to the true state of things, but only such as best suited the humour and notions of the people; and Mr. Whiston treats it

[t] Burnet and Whiston.

under

under the stile of the *vulgar hypothesis*, as *unreasonable, incongruous, wild, absurd, and false*. Now this can hardly fail to be very disadvantageous and injurious to the world; nor can these authors well wonder to find that those who are no friends to laws, to government, to morals, and religion, readily close in with them, and frankly admit their positions. If Moses had been found tardy and failing in his account of things, all that is founded upon them would fall of course to the ground: and so the Jewish religion of old, and the Christian, at present, be left without support. Had that point been once made out, a great part of mankind must have allowed they had been for many ages wrong in their thoughts of religion: and it would be high time to look out for something that was more certain, reasonable, and steady. So likewise for Dr. Spencer's undertaking; to be informed that Moses chose his rites from among the Egyptians, or elsewhere, as would best please the people, might perhaps be some gratification of curiosity: but it would be of no farther use. And then they, who before thought all those of divine original, and the author inspired, must have given up those sentiments, and owned themselves in the wrong.

Dr. Spencer discovers a great deal of wit upon all occasions, and his reading and learning was much above what is common. The very work before us, *De Legibus Hebraeorum*, gives an incontestable proof of that; in which he has with infinite industry made a most accurate collation of the Jewish and Pagan constitutions. But then this is the main, if not the only, use that can be made of his book. For when he comes to apply the collation he has made with all that pains and exactness, he falls into the greatest and most erroneous paradox that a man well could, and runs it quite through his whole undertaking.

Because

Because of this *consent* and *affinity* [u], he infers that the Jews had those parts of their laws and rites, in which the two nations agree, from the Egyptians: whereas it is evident, at first view, the Egyptians might as well have derived theirs from the Jews. Nay, both might have taken them from some third original; and each have been induced to admit them without regard to the other; or, indeed, to any other consideration than merely the reasons, motives, and circumstances of things; which are the same in common, and much alike all the world over.

I DENY not but that Doctor Spencer hath offered some arguments in behalf of his opinion; but they are such as will not abide the test. There are among them none of any moment but come under one of these two heads: 1. That the Israelites were *rude* and *ignorant*, as well as *stubborn* and *obstinate*; and had a mighty *propensity* to the *manners* of the *Egyptians*, whom he will have to be a much more polite and refined people: so that Moses admitted some of the *Egyptian rites* into his *law*, in *compliance* with their *weakness* and their *inclinations* [v]. 2. The Egyptians had a very *high opinion* of *themselves*, and of the *customs* of *their own nation*. Then they *bated* and *despised* the *Israelites*, as a *mean* and *servile people*; and it is not likely they would ever *imitate* such, or *practise* after them in *any thing*. Or, indeed, if they would, the *king* he thinks would never have *connived* at it; since it might tend to the *disturbance* of the *peace*, and *dissettlement* of the *government* [w].

THIS is the substance of what he offers: and, though the fact upon which it is grounded was certain, yet the conclusions he draws do not follow from it. Whatever might be the bent

[u] L. iii. c. 2. sect. 2.

[v] L. iii. c. 11. p. 107, 108.

[w] L. iii. c. 2. sect. 2. p. 16, 17.

and dispositions of the Israelites, it was Moses's proper business to rectify them. He was not to indulge them in their fancies, but inform them of their duties ; and direct them to what was fit, reasonable, and consistent with good morals and piety ; though that happened to be never so much against their gusts and inclinations ; which accordingly he every where did : and there are numerous instances of it through all his government of them. His doing otherwise might indeed have shewn a great deal of *policy* ; but not near so much probity and goodness as are discoverable through his whole conduct of this great people. I can very easily allow Doctor Spencer, that this was the method that Mahomet [*x*], Apollonius Tyanaeus [*y*], and some *Politicians* [*z*], have taken : nor will I enter into any contest with him, whether the *devil* [*a*] makes use of the same in order to seduce *mankind* from the *worship* of *God* ; all which he gives, I think, surely, with a little too much looseness, as parallel instances in confirmation of his notion ; but this I am mighty sure, Moses was on all occasions very far from it. The standard by which apparently he governed himself in his religious sanctions, was a due consideration of what was worthy of God, and suitable to the circumstances of the Jews, both with regard to themselves and to the nations all around. Nor was the Pagan world ever in a state so foolish and abandoned, as not to have had several fit modes of acknowledging their dependance upon God : so many, indeed, that it was not practicable for Moses to compile a form of religion without taking in some of them. He was far indeed from rejecting any, merely because

[*x*] L. iii. c. 12. p. 113.

[*y*] L. iii. c. 11. p. 107.

[*z*] Ibid. p. 107.

[*a*] L. iii. c. 11. p. 106. e.

they

they had before prevailed among the Pagans ; but because they were unfit, or unreasonable. Not but that he was very cautious and shy of all those that were particular to Egypt, be they what they would. For, though some of them might be in themselves tolerable and indifferent, yet even these had been so often seen there in company of others that were not so, but of a very ill strain, that it is the less strange Moses should take care to place so very strong a fence and barrier against them, as it is most evident he did ; however contrary sentiments Doctor Spencer may have entertained. But whatever this learned gentleman imagines, it does not follow, though the Egyptians had never so mean an opinion of the Israelites, that they might not observe several customs among them that they might judge very considerable, and well worth their imitation. And for what he urges as to the king's power of restraining it, that was neither practicable in Egypt, where the people were assuredly full as positive, perverse, and stubborn, as Doctor Spencer represents the Jews ; nor would it at all have endangered the government. He himself has given an instance of this in the Greeks, that travelled into Egypt, adopted many of their *sacred rites* [b], and brought them into practice at home, without any hazard or inconvenience to the government there. So likewise the Romans had many from Greece, Phrygia, and elsewhere : and other examples there are of the same kind in other nations.

BUT, after all, the fact upon which he founds his notion is far from true and incontestable. It has been sufficiently shewn already, that, however well opiated the Egyptians might be of themselves, they were very far from being possessed of so

[b] L. iii. c. 2. sect. 2.

much good and useful learning as he would persuade us, if indeed of any at all. Nor were the Israelites so mean, so stupid, and illiterate, as he sets forth : on the contrary, were the characters changed, that which he affixes to the Egyptians transferred to the Israelites, and that which he has bestowed upon them to the Egyptians, it would be much more just and conformable to the true state of things ; of which more in its place.

THIS is certain ; Joseph [c], who was an Israelite, had so great reputation and esteem in the court of Pharaoh, the then king of Egypt, that the administration of the government was put into his hands. In which government he acquitted himself with great *wisdom* and assiduity ; shewing himself to be a common *benefactor* and instrument of good to both prince and people. Infomuch, that the *king commanded* that his *father Jacob*, and all the *whole family*, should be sent for down into *Egypt*, with a promise of *giving them the good of the land*, and that they should *eat the fat of the land* ; withall ordering very *rich* and *noble presents* to be sent them. Accordingly, when they were come, *it pleased Pharaoh well* [d] ; and he gave direction to Joseph, *The land of Egypt is before thee, in the best of the land make thy father and brethren to dwell* [e]. So that here was a time in which the Israelites were not thought in Egypt so *rude* and *senseless*, so *mean*, *ridiculous*, and *hateful*, as is represented by Doctor Spencer. So far from it, that they had high marks

[c] The king having first caused him to be arrayed in royal vestures, put his own ring upon his hand, and a gold chain about his neck, made him ruler over all the land of Egypt ; declaring to him, *According unto thy word shall all my people be ruled ; only on the throne will I be greater than thou. And he made him to ride in the second chariot ; and they cried before him, and made proclamation as was usual to their princes, as they passed along, Bow the knee.* Gen. xli. ver. 40 to 44.

[d] Gen. xlv. 16 to 23.

[e] Gen. xlvii. 6.

of honour, and great riches, conferred upon them by the Egyptians, merely in consideration of their *merits* and *wisdom*. Now, when Joseph was in his high station and repute; when he did so many good offices among them; when he had secured them in the greatest distress, preserved them even from *famine*, so that they thankfully acknowledged that, by a careful and prudent administration of affairs, he had *saved* all their *lives* [f]; when he had it in his power to give *laws* to the whole land of *Egypt* [g]; when the inhabitants were expressly commanded by the king himself, to *go in to Joseph, and do what he said* [h] and directed, having before openly declared, that in all that country *there was none so discreet and wise as he* [i]; and likewise that he was *a man in whom the spirit of God was* [k]: I say, during this time, Joseph and his relations had it perfectly in their power to give the Egyptians any laws, doctrines, or rites, they pleased, relating to religion, manners, government, or the private conduct of life. Nor is it to be thought, that persons of their character would omit so happy an opportunity. It is true, this transaction was long before the time of Moses; but every body knows that legislator took several of the customs used some ages before by Joseph and the other Patriarchs, and inserted them into his constitution. Several of those the Egyptians of old might have learned of Joseph; and it would not be at all strange, that in them, their posterity should agree with the Mosaic establishment. Now this, so remarkable a piece of history, will pass with all sober men as an authority superior to.

[f] Gen. xlvii. 25.

[g] Ibid. ver. 26.

[h] Gen. xli. 55.

[i] Ver. 39.

[k] Ver. 38.

all Doctor Spencer has brought : and, indeed, he has not one of any consequence, or that gives the least proof of what he would advance. He can shew no instance of the Jews ever having so great a fondness and propensity to the Egyptians, as it is very evident they, with very good reason, had for the Jews. And they were then as wise, as polite, and refined, as the Egyptians, even in opinion of these latter.

NOR does what I am about to establish, require that the Egyptians should actually take those customs in which the two nations agreed, from the Jews ; or indeed that either derived any thing from the other. The reason of mankind is uniform, and every where the same ; and different people reflecting in like manner upon the same thing, will all draw much the same conclusions, and fall into the same thoughts, without ever conferring together, or taking any hints from each other. But, we shall be the better able to pass judgement how likely they might be to do that in the present case, if we consider the *instances* that are alledged by Doctor Spencer, as borrowed from the Pagans to be inserted into the body of the Jewish laws. Of these the principal are, the offering of *sacrifices* [l], and particularly of the *first fruits* [m] ; the priests and people communicating, and *eating* part of the *sacrifice* [n], the building of *temples* [o], the *celebration* of *solemn festivals* [p], *lustrations*, and *purifications* [q], the *linen vestments* of the *priests* [r], and *payment*

[l] Dissert. ii.

[m] L. iii. c. 9.

[n] Ibid. c. 7.

[o] Dissert. vi. c. 1. et Dissert. vii. c. 4. sect. 2. p. 390.

[p] L. iii. c. 8.

[q] Dissert. iii.

[r] L. iii. c. 5.

of tithes [s]. Now, if it be admitted that the whole race of mankind depends entirely upon the divine bounty and providence, and that the fruits of the earth, the beasts of the field, the fowls of the air, and all other things that they have the use and benefit of, proceed thence, it is but fit that some acknowledgement and return of gratitude should be paid back to the author and giver of all. This reasoning is very simple and plain, and naturally leads to the *offering* of *first fruits*, and other *sacrifices*. As reasonable is it, that they who were present, and upon whose account the *offerings* were made, should *communi- cate* and partake of them. And since it is requisite there should be some fit *place* for the celebrating of these and other like solemnities in, it is obvious to discover what brought-on the use of *temples*. The persuasion that the government of the world is in the hands of God; and that every happy turn and event to any person or nation proceeds from that, must very naturally point forth the setting apart times for return of thanks, extraordinary and suitable to the occasion; and so make way for *solemn festivals*.

IF mankind are conscious of the weakness of their own nature, their vanity and folly, and that they contract *stains* and *pollutions* in the common course of life; they must be as sensible that *lustrations* and *purifications* are needful: and though those that are external be only typical, yet even they have their use, and serve to remind those that practise them, to look a great deal further. In regard that the order of men that wait at the altar, and are concerned in holy offices, ought to be of all others the most pure and unblemished, as also to carry an appearance of this for the example of others, not only in their lives, but in their converse in the world, their deportment,

[s] L. iii. c. 10.

habits,

habits, and all other things; and since *linen* is very easily rendered pure, clean, and white, nothing can be so becoming and well suited for the making of their vestments as that. In fine, if it be proper that there be such an order of men, set apart and dedicated wholly to those *offices*, which indeed has been unquestionably the practice of mankind from the beginning, they must have a support and maintenance; nor can that be done any way more fitly than by payment of *tithes*. I do not offer these here as the only inducements to those practices; they are far from it, and several others might as easily be assigned; but these are all very simple, plain, and obvious; and such as people of different nations, and at the greatest distance, would fall easily and naturally into, even upon the first reflections upon things. Which shews how little need there was for their conferring together upon the occasion; or for one nation to take and borrow those usages from another; which all would presently fall into upon a very little consideration.

BUT, after all, the much greater part of the customs recounted above, and about which the present dispute is, had obtained among mankind while they were still in one company, conversing together, living in the same manner, and making all use of the same rites, before the division of nations at Babel, or ever there was one soul in Egypt. And this lays open to us the true source of all that *consent* and *affinity* that there was betwixt even the most distant nations, after they had settled each in the country that was allotted them. The colonies all carried these customs along with them to their several abodes; and there were from the very beginning *priests*, *sacrifices*, *temples*, *festivals*, and *lustrations*, as well among the ancient Germans and Gauls, in Peru and Mexico, in Siam, China, and Japan, as in Egypt: and Doctor Spencer might even

as well have brought them to Judea from any of all those countries, if he had pleased; only that they would have been then somewhat further fetched.

THERE is one rite more, which though not of the antiquity with some of those recounted above, nor indeed of near so great extent, or used in so many parts of the world as they were, yet must not be passed over without consideration. I mean *circumcision*; which, besides the posterity of Abraham the Jews[t], Ishmalites[u], and Idumeans[x], had obtained among the *Egyptians*[y], their neighbours the *Ethiopians*[y], particularly the *Troglodytae*[z], and the people of *Colchis*[y], who were a colony of the Egyptians[a]. Herodotus says also, that some of the *Phoenicians* were wont to circumcise[b]. But, unless he intends by them the Idumeans, as Witfius[c], upon the authority of Ammonius, imagines, or the very same people that he means by the *Syrians that inhabit Palestine*[d], that is, the *Jews*, he was mis-informed; it being most certain, that the *Phoenicians* did not use circumcision[e]. There can be no great doubt, but that this custom came from Egypt to Colchis, as also to Ethiopia[f]; whence, probably, it passed on southward, to the very

[t] Gen. xvii.

[u] Gen. xvi. 25.

[x] Ibid. xxv. 25, 30.

[y] Herodot. l. ii. c. 104. Conf. Diodor. l. i.

[z] Diodor. l. iii. 165. d.

[a] Strabo, l. i. Ammian. Marcell. l. xxii. Dionys. περιηγ., v. 689.

[b] Ibid.

[c] Aegyptiaca, l. iii. c. 6. b. 10.

[d] Φοίνικες δὲ οἱ ἐν τῇ Παλαιστίνῃ, ibid.

[e] Jud. xiv. 3. & 1 Sam. xvii. 36. & xxxi. 4. Conf. Joseph. i. c. Apion.

[f] Conf. Herodot. & Diodor. l. c.

utmost borders of that continent, to Guinea [g], and Congo [b]; where the practice is continued down to our times. But the main difficulty is, whether it first prevailed among the Jews or the Egyptians. Doctor Spencer [i] here contents himself with only representing the arguments on both sides, interposing little himself, but leaving the matter undecided. The work set forth by Philo Byblius [k], in the name of Sanchoniathon, intimates it was first put in practice by Saturn. But, besides that the authority of that work is not very great, we can neither tell who is there meant by Saturn, nor where or at what time he lived. Herodotus [l], as also Julian [m] and Celsus [n], the two great and learned advocates of *Paganism*, take that side of the question here, that Doctor Spencer has done in the several foregoing articles; and assert positively, that the *Jews* had this custom from *Egypt*; though it be very evident he could never be rightly satisfied of that, since, as has been shewn above, they had no records of those times: yet Herodotus seems to intimate that it had been in use here from the very *beginning* [o] of the nation; unless his expression ἀπ' ἀρχῆς be applied, not to the *nation*, but to the *child* that was to be circumcised; so as to denote *ab ineunte aetate*, from its *entrance upon life*; or that they were wont to perform this operation upon the infant in a few days after its birth. This is certain, that it was all along

[g] Discr. de Guinée par les Hollandois, Pt. ii. c. 2. p. 8. & G. Bosman Descr. de Guinée, p. 472.

[b] O Lopez, Hist. de Congo, c. 5.

[i] De Legib. Hebr. l. i. c. 4.

[k] Ap. Euseb. Prep. l. i. c. 10.

[l] L. ii. c. 104.

[m] Ap. S. Cyril, c. Julian.

[n] Ap. Origen. l. i. p. 17.

[o] περιτάμνομαι ἀπ' ἀρχῆς τὰ αἰδοῖα, l. ii. c. 104.

the custom among the Israelites [*p*]; and Diodorus is as express, that the Egyptians were wont to circumcise boys in a short time *after they were born* [*q*]: which he tells us they did, after the *ancient tradition* [*r*] and usage of that country.

BUT, whatever some may have imagined, the circumcision of the Hebrews was of a much earlier date than that of Egypt. Theodoret is very positive, that *it was not of old the custom among the Egyptians to circumcise* [*s*]. And this he collects from that passage of Exod. ii. 5. where *Pharaoh's daughter* causing *Moses*, when yet an *infant* and cast among the *flags by the river*, to be brought to her; as soon as ever she saw him, she declared he *was one of the Hebrews children*. He thinks she presently knew *that* from his being circumcised; the Egyptians having not then admitted that rite: which conjecture does not want its weight; and indeed, that one main end of circumcision was *distinction*, and to discriminate the posterity of Abraham and their allies from all other nations, seem to have been the opinion of Jews [*t*], Gentiles [*u*], and Christians [*x*]. Irenaeus, in particular, will have the very *intention* of this institution to have been as a *sign*; and that the *Hebrews might not be like the Egyptians*. To come to a conclusion, there is in the book of Joshua a passage that gives yet further light to this matter; and indeed puts

[*p*] Gen. xvii. 12.

[*q*] Περιέμνειν τὸς γεννομένους παῖδας, l. i. p. 24. c.

[*r*] Ἐκ παλαιᾶ παραδεδοῖται, ibid.

[*s*] Οὐκ ἦν πάλαι νόμος Αἰγυπτίοις περιέμνειν, Serm. ad Graec. p. 6. c.

[*t*] Joseph. Ἀρχαιολ. l. i. c. 11.

[*u*] Circumcidere genitalia instituere ut diversitate noscantur. Tacitus, de Judaeis, Hist. l. v. c. 5.

[*x*] Deus—circumcisionem, in signo dedit, ut non similes essent Egyptiis. Irenaeus, adv. Haeres. l. iii. c. 12. p. 230. Conf. l. iv. c. 30. p. 318.

it quite out of doubt. *All the people of Israel that came out of Egypt, that were males, were circumcised* [z]. At their arrival in Canaan, the country fixed-upon for their abode and settlement, Joshua received command to renew the institution that had been remitted during their forty years travel, *and circumcise again the children of Israel* [a]. Immediately after that operation, *the Lord said unto Joshua, This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you* [b]. This *reproach* was uncircumcision; so that it is apparent from this *passage*, the Egyptians had not admitted the use of circumcision at the time that the Israelites left their country. Thus *Shechem*, demanding *Dinah* for his wife of her father *Jacob* and her brothers, had for answer, *we cannot give our sister to one that is uncircumcised, for that were a reproach* [c]. It was indeed intended as a mark of the highest infamy and *reproach* by the Jews, to call a man *uncircumcised* [d]. The parents of Samson endeavoured to dissuade him from the marriage of a woman he had set his affections upon, by telling him she was the daughter of *an uncircumcised Philistine*. This was the highest disparagement of her they could pitch upon; and what they judged the most likely to shock him, and prevent his making any further addressees to her. And David calls his fierce and boasting antagonist, in the greatest scorn, an *uncircumcised Philistine* [e]. As to the institution of circumcision among the Hebrews, we have an express account and history of all particulars of it, and its first commencement

[z] Jos. v. 4, 5.

[a] Ibid. ver. 2.

[b] Ibid. ver. 9.

[c] Gen. xxxiv. 14.

[d] Jud. xiv. 3.

[e] 1 Sam. xvii. 36.

in Abraham, the great Patriarch and founder of that nation [f].

Thus we see that the precise time, means, and occasion, of the admission and establishment of this custom among the Hebrews, is ascertained from undoubted records; and that it was admitted by them several ages before it obtained in Egypt; which is all that is needful, or of any use to the present purpose. Upon what motives it was at length introduced into Egypt, as it is a speculation of very little moment, so, in truth, history being perfectly silent, the matter is so much in the dark that nothing can be determined concerning it with any certainty. Several of the ancients, Irenaeus [g], Theodoret [h], and some others, assert, that the Egyptians learned the use of it from the Jews. Artapanus [i] will have it, that they took it up merely out of *regard to Moses*. That great man had indeed distinguished himself among them in a manner very wonderful, extraordinary, and such as might well excite their *regard* and admiration. At the same time that they must be deeply sensible of the miseries and calamities Egypt laboured under, they could not but observe the success that perpetually attended Moses, and the happiness of the Israelites under his conduct [k]. As the Egyptians were a people excessively and beyond measure abandoned to superstition, they might possibly fall into the notion that there was something of a *charm* couched under that rite, which intitled those that were circumcised, as he and the Jews all were, to the like felicity,

[f] Gen. xvii.

[g] Wits. 228. a.

[h] Serm. i. ad. Graecos, p. 6. c.

[i] Ap. Euseb. Praep. l. iv. c. 27. Wits. 226. e.

[k] Exod. v. et seqq.

and

and so took up the practice of it themselves upon that account. But I shall not pretend to determine any thing of a custom whose origin is so very obscure : only it is most certain that it was reputed anciently a kind of *preservative* against injuries and misfortunes [*m*]. I am very well aware, that in after-times the Egyptians used it upon a very different account.

ORIGEN has indeed long ago taken notice that the cause of the circumcision of the Jews was not the same with that of the circumcision of the Egyptians [*n*]. Herodotus lets us know what *that* was ; and that the Egyptians did it in his time merely for the sake of cleanliness [*o*]. Which Clemens Alexandrinus also confirms, he asserting they cut off the praepuce, for the same reason they *shaved* themselves, the more certainly to keep their bodies free from any impurity [*p*]. Every body knows the Jews used it all along from the very beginning, wholly upon a religious account as an *initiation*, and in token of a *covenant* [*q*]. A purpose as remote from that of the Egyptians as well could be ; though this was not, by several, the only thing in which the two nations differed as to this rite, were it of any use to enumerate them. Not that it is to be imagined the Egyptians would enter upon the practice of an operation upon their bodies, so painful and troublesome as this was, upon so very slight a consideration as that assigned by Herodotus. It is much more likely they were at first induced by some higher motive, as the notion of its serving as a *charm*,

[*m*] v. Spencer. de Legib. Hebr. l. i. c 4. p. 22.

[*n*] Τὸ δ' αἴτιον τῆς Ἰσρααλίτων περιτομῆς ἔσ' αὐτόν ἐστὶ τῆ αἰτίας τῆς Αἰγυπτίων.
Orig. c. Celsus, l. v. p. 265.

[*o*] Καθαρότης εἶνεκεν. l. ii. c. 37.

[*p*] De Circumcis. p. 810. c.

[*q*] Gen. xvii. 2.

or carrying with it some *magical* property, with which the Egyptians were intoxicated above all other people, and which would be as powerful an incentive to them as religion to rational and intelligent men. And, if that was the primitive design of the institution there, it was worn out in tract of time; forgot, and the tradition lost; posterity continuing it down only because it had been long a custom there, having dropt the true *reason* [*r*] why it was first brought into use, which indeed is at this day the case of the inhabitants of South Africa. They are circumcised without knowing any other reason for it, but that it was an ancient custom of those countries.

BUT there was nothing in all the Mosaic oeconomy of greater notice, or more extraordinary, than the *Urim and Thummim* [*s*]. And yet Dr. Spencer will have this to be appointed by God in imitation of the *auguries, prophecies, vocal images, oracles, and divinations, of the Chaldaeans, Egyptians, and Canaanites* [*t*]. A position that carries the greater surprize with it, in regard the more intelligent of even the Pagans themselves flighted and had exploded all these. They looked upon them only as illusions, and as superstitious and vain amusements, that had no real foundation in nature or religion [*u*]. Nay, even this very author himself, in a discourse [*x*] he formerly published, represents them as *superstitions, pious frauds, fancies,*

[*r*] Consuetudine quadam, citra rationem. Epiphan. Haeref. xxxvi. 3. Marsh. 168. e.

Ils se font circoncire sans en savoir d'autre raison, si non que c'est une coutume ancienne. M. de la Croix Relat. de l'Afrique, To. ii. Pt. 2. c. 3. § 3.

[*s*] Exod. xxviii. 30.

[*t*] L. iii. c. 1. sect. 1. p. 320. c.

[*u*] v. Tullii, lib. de Divinatione.

[*x*] Conc. Prodigies. [Praef. & p. 162, &c.]

follies;

follies, errors, and weaknesses, too great for laughter. It cannot but be thought very strange, and indeed incredible, that the Urim and Thummim, that was allowed to have a divine sanction, and stood in the very front of the Jewish religion, should ever take rise from practices that were not only Pagan, but deserved so mean characters as this learned writer bestows, indeed very deservedly, upon them. The *Urim* he thinks *was a little image, in human shape, of the sort formerly called Theraphim* [y]. This the high priest wore in the *pectorale*, and by means of it *God*, or some *angel* by his appointment, was wont to give answers by an audible voice, as Dr. Spencer imagines, when this was applied to and consulted [z] upon proper, great, and solemn occasions.

THE *Thummim* he takes to be another like image resembling that which was worn by the Egyptian high priest mentioned by Diodorus and Aelian, in imitation of which this he thinks was made [a]. The *Theraphim* from which he derives the Urim were little *idols* used chiefly in Chaldaea [b], and much like the Penates of the Phrygians, Romans, and other Gentil nations. That the Pagans bestowed an idolatrous worship upon the Theraphim, and made use of them in their magick and divinations, has been already sufficiently made out by Witsius [c]. This learned gentleman has indeed written professedly against Dr. Spencer, but has no where succeeded so

[y] Urim—*simulacrum forte parvulum effigiem humanam referens Theraphim antiquitus appellatum*, l. iii. c. 3. sect. 2. p. 331. e. Voce formata, *ibid.*

[z] Num. xxvii. 21. Conf. 1 Sam. xxviii. 6.

[a] L. iii. c. 4. sect. 2.

[b] Gen. xxxi. 19, 30.

[c] *Aegyptiaca, sive de Aegyptiacorum Sacrorum cum Hebraicis collatione*, 4to. l. ii. c. 10.

happily

happily, nor has that advantage of him, that he hath here in treating of the Urim [*d*] and Thummim [*e*], so that there now remains the less for me to offer on the subject. Thus much must needs be said, that the Theraphims were so far from having that high function which the Urim had, or from being the origin and pattern after which this was modelled, that they are expressly declared odious in holy writ [*f*], abominations, and contrary to the Mosaic law. And full as little reason was there to suppose the Thummim made in imitation of the Egyptian image above-mentioned. The Gentile world had ever their deities without number or end. Among the rest they had consecrated and made Gods of several of the powers of nature, of the accidents of life, and of all the several human virtues. In particular, of fecundity, of hope, of victory, of fortune, of plenty, of peace, of love, of piety, of prudence, of justice, and, in Egypt, among many others, of truth [*g*]. An image of this last, made of precious stones, Diodorus says the chief judge in Egypt wore about his neck in a gold chain [*h*]. So likewise Aelian tells us, that he was wont to have about his neck, an image made of sapphire and called truth. He adds indeed, that the judge there, from all antiquity, had been chosen from among the priests; but the chief management of affairs in Egypt, and most of the great offices in the kingdom were in their hands. And the person here treated of, did not wear this image as a priest, but in a very different capacity, and as a *judge* [*i*].

[*d*] L. ii. c. 10. et seqq.

[*e*] L. iii. c. 12.

[*f*] 2 Kings xxxiii. 24.

[*g*] Ἀληθεία. Aelian. Var. Hist. l. xiv. c. 34.

[*h*] L. i. p. 68. e.

[*i*] Conf. Witium, l. iii. c. 2. sect. 9.

It was meerly a badge of office: nor was there any further mystery in it, but only to signify that in all causes, and with all persons, his proceedings and decrees should be according to truth and equity. Which very design *Aelian* plainly points forth, in telling us, along with the account of this image of truth, which the chief judge wore, that a person in that station ought of all men living to be the most just and impartial [*k*], to pursue the truth, and do exact justice to all people whatever. For which reason doubtless it was that he wore this image, as *Diodorus* intimates, while he was judging causes, and determining actions and controversies [*l*], or suits at law. Whereas the Urim and Thummim were worn only by the high priest, were consulted, and gave answers, as an oracle. So that there was no manner of analogy betwixt them, and their uses and intentions were as different as well could be. Not but that the LXX interpreters being Egyptians, and residing there, not knowing what the Thummim really was, seem to have fancied it something not unlike the image worn by their chief judge [*m*], because they translate ⲧⲏⲙⲙⲓⲙ by the word Ἀλήθεια, the very same by which they called that image. Nor is it strange that those interpreters should make so wrong a guess about a thing that was in their time wholly ceased and in disuse. The Jews themselves then did not perhaps rightly understand what the Urim and Thummim were, nor is it certainly known at this day. They that would see the opinions of the ancients concerning them may do it in Buxtorf's *exercitationes*

[*k*] Ἐδὴ δὲ αὐτὸν εἶναι δικαιοτάτον, ἀνθρώπιον, καὶ ἀφειδέστατον. *Aelian*. l. c.

[*l*] Ἀμφισβητήσεων. *Diodor.* l. c.

[*m*] *Aelian*. hist. var. xiv. 34.

upon that subject [n], for I am not willing to charge these papers with any thing that is foreign to my purpose. Their thus interpreting the word *Thummim*, by Ἀλήθεια, did indeed give some umbrage to this notion of Dr. Spencer, that the thing came originally from Egypt. It is what he insists very much upon [o], nor does any thing he offers, in all the long discourse he has published upon the subject, carry so much the face of an argument as this does. But, after all, that interpretation was quite wrong, which Dr. Spencer likewise knew very well. He acknowledges that *Thummim* denotes perfections [p] and not *Truth* as the LXX, very unfitly, render it. This all the criticks in the Hebrew, he allows, are agreed in, as they are that *Urim* imports Lights [q]; which indeed Philo Judaeus [r], and the LXX, have not unfitly rendered, by Δήλωσις *manifestation*, or revelation. Now, since this was an oracle, and to give answers when consulted, since its proper use was to give *light* to things that were perplext, obscure, and in the dark; and thoroughly to instruct, inform, and *perfect*, the high priest, as often as by means of it he should have recourse to *God* for doctrine or counsel, it could never possibly have a more fit name assigned it than *Urim* and *Thummim*, lights and perfections [s]. So that the LXX were apparently much out in rendering *Thummim* by Ἀλήθεια. But here is

[n] Exerc. de Urim et Thum. ii. De recentioribus, v. I. C. Dieterici Antiq. Bibl. p. 654.

[o] L. iii. c. 4. sect. 1, 2.

[p] L. iii. c. 3. sect. 1. p. 329. c. et c. 5. sect. 1. p. 401. d.

[q] Conf. Buxtorfi exercit. de Urim, c. 2. p. 276. e.

[r] De vita Mosis, p. 670.

[s] *Thummim* dici, quia *perficiunt* sacerdotem magnum, qui per ea quaerit doctrinam a domino. Jonathan. ap. Buxtorf. ib. p. 279.

little need to insist on words, when we see the things were as different as well could be. The one was merely of secular use, the other the most sacred and solemn that could be: the one the badge of a judge, the other an oracle. So that Dr. Spencer was greatly in the wrong in asserting so near an agreement betwixt them, and more in referring the Thummim to the Egyptians as the first authors of it [t], and believing that the Israelites borrowed the use of this gem from them, and that God allowed it as an ornament to the high Priest of the Israelites, in imitation of the Egyptians Ἀλήθεια [u]. As much mistaken was he in thinking the Urim and Thummim, borne by their Jewish high priest, the chief person concerned in that religion, and which were things as sacred as any in the religion, and recourse had to them only on great occasion, and in the most solemn manner, were two images in human shape, caused to be made by Moses, after he had over and over so strictly forbid the making of any graven image, or the likeness of any thing [x] whatever, after he had expressly laid his commands on the whole body of the Jewish nation, *Take ye therefore good heed, lest ye corrupt yourselves, and make you a groven image, or the similitude of any figure* [y], &c. nay he had openly declared the man CURSED that maketh any graven or molten image, pronouncing them an abomination to the Lord, and enjoining all the people to answer and say

[t] Ad Aegyptios tanquam primos authores referamus, l. iii. c. 4. sect. ii. p. 394.

[u] Credamus, Israelitas illam Gemmam ab Aegyptiis mutuatos fuisse, Deumque—Pontifici Israelitico in ornamentum concessisse, &c. ibid.

[x] Exod. xx. 4.

[y] Deut. xv. 15, 16.

Amen

Amen [z] to it. Dr. Spencer takes notice of two very learned men, who, directly contrary to his notion, fancy that the Egyptians took the hint of the *Περίσπλον* worn by their chief judge from the Jewish Thummim. I mean H. Grotius [a], and J. Schefferus [b], to whom I may add a third, Herm. Conringius [c]. who was not inferior to either of them. For my own part, there is so little analogy, as has been shewn above, betwixt that *Περίσπλον* and the Thummim, that I can see no more reason to subscribe to their sentiments, than to his. The things were different; so likewise was the use and design of each, and the persons that wore them under as different characters and circumstances.

UPON this occasion it may be not amiss to remark that there have been some men of great note and figure in the world, and in particular Justin Martyr [d], Clemens Alexandrinus [e], and Eusebius [f], as also Josephus [g], that was himself a Jew, and a person of great learning; who were of opinion that the Gentiles had borrowed all those customs they had in common with the Jews, from the Mosaic law. To go about to enquire into the certainty of this here, would be a digression of no service to my design, and indeed now of no use. I have already not only shewn by what means both might very easily fall into the same rites, without any notice of each other, or

[z] Deut. xxvii. 15.

[a] Not. in lib. de Verit. Christ. Relig. n. m. sect. 16.

[b] De Antiquorum Torquibus, sect. 5. p. 21.

[c] De Hermet. Aegypt. Med. c. xii. p. 142.

[d] Apol. ii.

[e] Strom. l. i. et v.

[f] Praep. l. xiii.

[g] Contra Apion. l. ii. p. m. 1081. a. b.

ever conferring together, but likewise laid open the true cause of their agreement. Only thus much I cannot but observe, that together with Pellicanus, Hackspan, Toftatus, and some others, whose authority will, I fancy, not weigh much with men of thought, unless backed with better arguments than any they have alledged, Dr. Spencer has brought in Theodoret [b], as a voucher for his opinion. He cites two long passages out of him [i], neither of which, in reality, make any thing to his purpose. Whereas, if he would have known the true sentiments of this father, he elsewhere very freely and openly delivers them asserting that *as the Hebrews dwelt a long time in Egypt, so the Egyptians received very considerable advantage, and many useful intimations of customs and things from their conversation* [k]. And in particular he thinks they owed the first use of circumcision to the Hebrews, as has been already noted.

To bring this whole affair to a conclusion, as it has been above [l] made out that the current of history and fact is universally opposite, and runs counter to this notion of Dr. Spencer: So, if we have recourse to the parties concerned on either side, they give their votes as directly against him; nor does it appear that ever any one man living in those times, Jew or Gentile, had any such sense of this matter. For the Jews and even the holy writers themselves, those very sacrifices that Dr. Spencer [m] makes the pattern after which Moses copied, Moses himself

[b] Tom. iv. Serm. 7.

[i] De Legib. Hebr. l. iii. c. i. p. 10.

[k] Τοὶ καὶ Αἰγύπτιοι πλεῖστον ὕσαν τῆς τέτων μετοικίας ἀπόνειλο, συχνὸν γὰρ ὥκησαν χρόνον Ἑβραῖοι τὴν Αἴγυπτον. ad Graec. Serm. i. p. 10.

[l] Vide supra.

[m] L. iii. Differt. ii.

and

and after him S. Paul, who was so great a master of the learning of both the Jews and Gentiles, declares to be abominations highly offensive to the divine majesty, and that those Gentiles sacrificed unto Devils, not to God [n]. And elsewhere the whole heathen worship, and all parts of it are pronounced abominations, and evil in the sight of the Lord [o]. So that it is not strange that the Lord had charged the Israelites that they should not do like the Heathen that were round about them [p]: and particularly like the Egyptians, who are here distinguished by their worshiping images of calves [q], and perhaps also by their using divinations and enchantments, to which they were addicted above all other nations. In fine, the Jews saw so little like what they themselves believed or acted in their worship, among the heathens, that they aver *they have not known God* [r], nor adored him, or *called upon his name* [s]. For which reason they looked upon them as objects of his hatred and *indignation* [t]. In consequence of this the Jews were universally possessed with a very mean and ill opinion of them. They were so far from thinking any part of the Mosaic law derived from this quarter, that they ever censured the Gentil doctrines as false, and their worship as wholly impious and prophane, because they so little agreed with their own. Upon which very account they both shunned their converse, and flighted and despised their persons.

[n] Deut. xxxii. 16, 17. 1 Corinth. x. 20.

[o] 2 Kings, xxi. 2, 3. Conf. 2. Chron. xxxvi. 14.

[p] 2 Kings, xvii. 15.

[q] Ver. 16 et 17.

[r] Psalm lxxix. 6.

[s] Jer. x. 25.

[t] Ibid.

AND

AND this, in truth, it was, that drew so great a load of satire and calumny back from the Pagans upon the Jews, of which there are several instances in Juvenal, Tacitus, and other writers on that side; that some persons who did not know what were the right grounds and causes of them have made a mighty stir about, as if those characters were just, and the Jews deserved what was thus only fixed upon them in mere return for the rough treatment they ever gave the Pagans. Every nation will be forward enough to justify their own manners and usages, be they what they will. And those who will insult others, must, in course, expect like returns, right or wrong, and not be spared themselves; which truly was the whole of the matter in the case before us, and the only reason that the Gentiles flung upon them all that censure and reproach.

BUT what passed then fell, after all, far short of what we have seen in our days. The stiffness of the Jews, and their supercilious carriage to the Gentiles, drew from them abundance of raillery and sarcasm. Then the mighty distance at which they kept them, occasioned a general ignorance among them of the Jewish affairs, and gave birth to several groundless stories and reports concerning their nation. And, when christianity began to spread in the world, and gain ground of the Pagan religion, the partizans of it directed their shafts, with the same animosity, against the Mosaic writings that they did against the Gospel. They saw well how great a support this had from those writings; and therefore attacked both with equal stress and application. But all this hath been much out-done by a humour that has prevailed in the present age. The Jews have been exposed as stupid and illiterate dolts, the vilest of all human creatures; and the Mosaic account of things as only fitted to

to their guft and capacity. This account has, with a great deal of art, ingenuity, and diligence, been represented as *inconsistent* with *nature*, as *false*, *absurd*, and every thing else that is bad: and this chiefly becaufe it could not be brought by any means to favour fome late *theories* and *hypotheses*.

THE scurvy reception the Jews of old ever gave the Gentils, could not certainly but be warning and reason fufficient for the latter to keep aloof, to avoid their converse, and never come near their territories. The carriage of the Jews towards them was perpetually fuch as if they judged them creatures of a much meaner fpecies, and infinitely below themfelves. To fay there that any man was an *Heathen*, was to represent him as wholly unfit for human fociety [t]; and it was reputed a difparagement, if not a fort of pollution, to entertain any correſpondence with him. They thought, with the laſt degree of contempt, of the manners, the knowledge, the underſtanding, and even the perſon of an heathen. This was a continual bar to all civil intercourſe with the neighbouring nations: nor is it ever to be imagined, any man could be over forward to travel among a people who were ſure to flight him, and judge him wholly unworthy of their converſation. But, beſides, Jeruſalem lay quite up in the country, and at conſiderable diſtance from the ſea; whereas Peluſium, Tanais, Canopus, Memphis, and the other cities of Egypt, were all near to the ſea, or the Nile, that ſhips could eaſily come full up to them; which much facilitated the paſſage, and encouraged the travels, of the Greeks and other foreigners into Egypt. And this, as it is very certain, ſo it gives an effectual answer to that queſtion, *What man of all the Graecians did we ever read of as travelling into Judea* for the improve-

[t] *An heathen man and a publican*, Matth. xviii. 17.

ment and culture of his understanding? but who was there that did not travel into Egypt [u] for that purpose?

THE learned writer who propounds this, alledges it as an argument, and no mean one, that the Jewish nation had not in those times any great reputation on account of their learning [x]. Indeed he lays it down as a thing known and granted on all hands, that this nation was never considerable for philosophy or mathematics, for the study of the other arts, or any remarkable production of human wit of that kind [y]. Nay, he calls in Apollonius Molon, pronouncing them the most awkward of all the barbarous nations; and declaring them the only men under heaven that had never made any one single discovery that was of any manner of use in life [z]. It is much that he should not at the same time take notice, that Apollonius was partial and prejudiced, a professed enemy of the Jews, unacquainted with their affairs, and his account of them false, and without any manner of ground; all which Josephus [a] makes out in the very place from which this learned author quotes that passage of Apollonius. But possibly to note that, would not have been so serviceable to the design he is carrying on here, which is to represent the Jews as a people the most unacquainted with any useful sciences, the most stupid, illiterate, and ignorant [b], of all the

[u] Quem unquam Graecorum legimus adiisse Judaeam ad capiendum ingenii cultum: quem non in Egyptum descendisse? D. Tho. Burnet, Archaeol. c. vii. p. 43.

[x] Argumentum non obscurum Gentem istam, tunc temporis literarum nomine non claruisse. ibid.

[y] Notum est vero in disciplinis mathematicis aut philosophicis nunquam praececelluisse hanc gentem, neque in caeterarum artium studiis, aut id genus ullo humani ingenii eximio foetu. Archaeol. p. 43. Conf. p. 195. e.

[z] Ibid. p. 44.

[a] L. ii. contra Apion. p. 1069. e.

[b] Vide supra.

whole race of mankind. Not that I shall here go about to evince, what is already but too well known, that the histories and accounts of those early times are not so perfect and full that we may venture upon them, thus decisively, to determine what a nation did *not* know: nor is there any reason to conclude, that a people were strangers to all *arts*, because history is silent, and does not acquaint us that they were masters of any: for that is not the case here; and, if he had pleased but to have consulted the books of *Kings*, of *Chronicles*, and some *others* [c] in that Canon, he might presently have seen that his representation was very far from just, or agreeable to the true state of things among the Jews. He might have been informed there, that the very *designs* and *descriptions*, and much more the *building* of that wonderfully noble and stately pile the temple of Solomon, to say nothing now of the several royal palaces [d], could never have been *performed* in that manner without a very great, exquisite knowledge and mastery in carpentry, smithery, masonry, architecture, mechanicks, and all the better and more useful arts [e]. But, besides the body of the temple, the apartments and subservient buildings were also very considerable. The whole was, indeed, vastly superior to any thing we meet with in history then in being, either in Egypt, Phoenicia, or any where else. And yet *it was built of stone made ready before it was brought thither*; as likewise the *cedar*, which was the timber made use of in it; *so that there was neither hammer, nor axe, nor any tool of iron heard in the house while it was in building* [f]. The materials of all the various parts, rooms, and divisions, of

[c] Particularly Ezek. xl. et seqq.

[d] 1 Kings vii.

[e] Conf. 2 Kings xxiv. 14. 16.

[f] 1 Kings vi. 7. 9.

this prodigious fabrick, were all designed, cut out, and framed, at a distance from the place where it was finally raised. I easily allow this learned gentleman to be a good judge of all the genteeler and more ingenuous arts; and I *desire him* to consider how this could ever be performed, I will not say without common geometry, mathematicks, architecture, and the several arts subservient to it, but without a very great and extraordinary accomplishment and perfection in them all. Nor is that by many the only instance he might there have met with, to evince the same thing, and put it beyond any cause of doubt. I am very forward to persuade myself those books are not of less authority with him than, I will not say Apollonius Molon, but Herodotus, or Diodorus; and they would assuredly have shewed him, that the arts and learning of Judaea were, in truth, very considerable a long time before ever Thales, Pythagoras, or any of the most early of the Greek sages had ever visited Egypt. And would the Jews have given them permission or encouragement, as the Egyptians did, they might have travelled into Judaea vastly more to their information than into Egypt. That I think appears very clearly from what has been already delivered concerning the state of knowledge in that country, from all the light that has been transmitted to us concerning it.

BUT, as it was not easy on a subject so very extensive and copious, to avoid exceeding the bounds I first set myself, which I am well aware I have done; so I shall be the more brief in the dispatch of what is yet depending; which is, to enquire into the sense of the secular writers among the Jews concerning this controversy about the origin of their law. And they are very far from giving any the least countenance to the opinion, that any part of it was owing to the Gentiles. Instead of that, they every where represent it to be at as great distance from paganism

ganism as possible. One, who was as good a judge as any man, avers, that it was very *apparent* there was a direct repugnancy and *contrariety* of the Jewish *laws*, *not only to those of Greece, but very many others* of the Pagan nations; and, *above all*, to those of the *Egyptians* [g]. In like manner Philo, who, being of Jewish descent, and born in Egypt, had the better opportunity of being thoroughly informed of the state of that country, as well as of Judea, after he had set forth the absurdity and vanity of the Egyptian theology, lays it down as a thing certain and incontestable, that the law was given as a guard and fence against the customs of Egypt; Moses, in pursuit of that great design [h], *keeping all the Egyptian irreligion intirely out of the sacred legislature*; by which means he *reclaimed* the Jews from the *ribbaldry* to which they had been so long habituated in Egypt, *to the worship of the true God*; his *intention* in the whole *being to lead mankind out of the errors of the Egyptians*, for it is of those he is here treating, *into the right way*; to set aside what was in practice amongst them, and prescribe a more reasonable manner of worship.

NOR did ever any of the Pagans go about to fancy the Jewish constitution was obliged to them for any thing. On the contrary, they looked upon it as the reverse of theirs, and diametrically opposite to the Gentile oeconomy. They saw plainly, and acknowledged, that *all things* whatever that were *sacred* amongst them, passed for irreligious and *prophane* [i] amongst

[g] Non enim circa solos Graecos discordia Legum dignoscitur: sed maxime versus Aegyptios, et plurimos alios. Joseph. contra Apion. l. ii. p. 1066. Rufino, Interprete.

[h] Ἀνελὼν ἔν ἐκ τῆς ἱερᾶς νομοθεσίας πᾶσαν τὴν τοιαύτην ἐκθέωσιν, ἐπὶ τὴν τῷ πρὸς ἀλήθειαν ὄντος Θεῷ τιμὴν ἐκάλεσεν.—βεβλόμενος δὲ τὸ γένος τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἀνοδίας πλάκόμενον εἰς ἀπλανεστάτην ἄγειν ὁδόν. De decalogo, p. 756. a.

[i] Profana illic omnia quae apud nos sacra. Tacit. Hist. l. v. c. 4. de Judaeis.
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the *Jews*. Nay, the very Egyptians themselves, for whom Doctor Spencer contends so eagerly, had likewise the same sense of this matter exactly. So far were they from thinking any thing transferred from theirs to the Jewish *laws*, that Manetho, who was, perhaps, as great a master of the history of both nations as any man since Moses, pronounces them perfectly inconsistent; and the Mosaic sanctions *repugnant to the customs* that were peculiar to *Egypt above all* others [k] whatever.

So that, in fine, whether we reflect upon the customs about which the contest here is, and the nature, reasons, or design of them; whether we consult Moses himself, and the rest of the Jewish writers; or those of the Pagan world, the Egyptians, and others; all of them conspire unanimously to establish this proposition, that Moses was so far from inserting any of the Egyptian, or other Gentile rites, into the body of his *laws*, in compliance with I know not what inclinations of the Jews, that he really avoided those rites; and did all that was possible to debar the Jews from them, and implant in them an utter abhorrence and aversion to them. Nor has Doctor Spencer given a proof that Moses really took any single doctrine or practice whatever from the Pagans, after all the pains he has taken for that purpose. And, by this time, I think it is plain, no such proof is ever to be expected: but, on the contrary, what this learned writer contends for, is directly against fact, history, and the true state of things.

[k] Μάλιστα τοῖς Αἰγυπτίοις ἐθισμένοις ἐναντιούμενα. Ap. Josephum. c. Apion. l. i. p. 1053. a.

