A COLLECTION
OF
THEOLOGICAL TRACTS,
IN SIX VOLUMES.

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The argument for the truth of Christianity which is taken from the history of the destruction of Jerusalem as related by Josephus, compared with our Saviour's predictions of that event recorded by the Evangelists Matthew, Mark, and Luke, has always been confidere as one of the strongest which can be urged, either against the Jew in particular, or against unbelievers in general. In modern times, this argument has been illustrated by Jackson in the first volume of his works, 1673; by Tillotson in the 12th vol. (8vo ed.) of his Sermons; by Kiadé in his Demonstration of the Messiah; by Whitby in his Commentary on St. Matthew, and in his General Preface by Sharpe in a discourse intituled, The Rise and Fall of the Holy City and Temple of Jerusalem, preached at the Temple Church 1764; and, to mention no others, by Jortin in the first vol. of his Remarks on Ecclesiastical History. This author has also proved, not only that the Gospels, in which the predictions of Christ relative to the destruction of Jerusalem are delivered, were written before that event; but that the predictions themselves could not have been inferred into the Gospels, as interpolations after the event: the reader will not find in this to have been an unnecessary labour, who recollects the confidence with which Voltaire with a view probably of evading the force of the argument in question, declares that the Gospels were written after Jerusalem was destroyed—fans doute après la destruction de Jerusalem.—Man an unbeliever is apt to think and say, that he would have felt in the Gospel, if he could see a man raised from the dead, or at one notable miracle performed in attestation of its truth. Now the completion of an ancient prophecy is, to us who see the complection a miracle; and I would sincerely recommend it to every one, who is not steadfast in the faith, to examine carefully, and liberall whether the prophecies—concerning Jerusalem being trodden under foot of the Gentiles—concerning the iterility of Palestine—the flight of the Jewish people—the introduction of the Gentiles into the Church of God—the apostasy of the latter times—the independence of the Arabs—the servitude of Ham's posterity, &c. have not be literally fulfilled. These things are facts which fall within our observation; and if we search the Scriptures, we shall find that these facts were predicted long before either we or our fathers were born.
DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM.

JOSEPHUS, with his testimony at large to the fulfilment of our Saviour's predictions concerning the destruction of the temple, and the city of Jerusalem, and the miseries coming upon the Jewish people.

HIS TIME, WORKS, AND CHARACTER.

I. JOSEPHUS, son of Matthias, of the race of the Jewish Priests, and of the first course of the four and twenty, by his mother descended from the Amonian family, which for a considerable time had the supreme government of the Jewish nation, was born in the first year of the reign of Caligula, of our Lord 37.*

He was educated together† with Matthias, who was his own brother by father and mother, and made such proficience in knowledge, that when‡ he was about fourteen years of age, the high-priests and some of the principal men of the city came frequently to him to consult him about the right interpretation of things in the law. In the sixteenth year of his age, he retired into the wilderness, where he lived three years an abstemious course of life in the company of Banus. Having fully acquainted himself with the principles of the three sects, the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Essens, he determined to follow the rule of the Pharisees. And being now nineteen years of age, he began to act in public life.

Felix, when procurator of Judea, sent some priests of his acquaintance for a trifling offence to Rome, to be tried before Caesar. Josephus, hearing that they behaved well, resolved to go to Rome, to plead their cause. But he had a bad voyage; the ship was wrecked; and out of 600 persons, not more than eighty were saved. Soon after his arrival at Rome, he became acquainted with Alituria, a Jew by birth, but a stage-player, in favour with Nero. By him he was introduced to Poppaea, the emperor's wife, by whose interest he procured that the priests should be set at liberty. Josephus, who never omits what may be to his own honour, adds, that‡§ he befide that favour, he also received from Poppaea many valuable presents. And then he returned home. This voyage was made, as he says, in the 26th year of his age, which must have been in the 62d or 63d year of Christ.

Upon his return to Judea he found things in great confusion, many †† being elevated with hopes of advantage by a revolt from the Romans.

* Joseph, in vita sua, cap. 1. † Cap. 2.
†‡ En tit nis em, sti taoqememaidicn eis ... solum mil ad tiv aoviem de tiv tis plakas purwot us ad tiv paret iem na tiv trodiam sevirizato ti ginaiu. Cap. 2.
§§ Paukelde de mevex pleis tis isomovn tamous tivos para koinias. Cap. 3.
†† Men iacs ne Felix invadot eis Rovam mea stonwew eswvem. ib.
* * Felix must have been removed from his government some while before that; which may be thought to create a difficulty in this account. But it may be observed, that Josephus had heard of the good behaviour of those priests at Rome before he left Judea; consequently, they had been some while at Rome before he set out on his journey.
†† § Paalot enu tiv Paukaid evfisasi mega pragiada. Vit. c. 4.
mans. He says he did what lay in his power to prevent it, though in vain.

Soon after the beginning of the war, in the year of Christ 66 (when he must have been himself about thirty years of age), he was sent from Jerusalem, to command in Galilee; where, having ordered matters as well as he could, and made the best preparations for war by fortifying the cities, in case of an attack from the Romans, he was at length flut up in the city of Jotapata; which, after a vigorous defence, and a siege of seven and forty days, was taken by Vespasian, on the first day of July, in the 23rd year of Nero, and the 67th of our Lord.

When that city was taken, by Vespasian's order, strict search was made for Josephus. For, if that general was once taken, he reckoned that the greatest part of the war would be over. However, he had hid himself in a deep cavern, the opening of which was not easily discerned above ground. Here he met with forty persons of eminence, who had concealed themselves, and had with them provisions enough for several days. On the third day the Roman soldiers feigned a woman, that had been with them. She made a discovery of the place where they were. Whereupon Vespasian sent two tribunes, inviting him to come up, with assurances that his life should be preferred. Josephus, however, refused. Vespasian therefore sent a third tribune, named Nicanor, well known to Josephus, with the like assurances. Josephus, after some hesitation, was then willing to surrender himself: but the men who were with him, exclaimed against it, and were for killing him and themselves, rather than come alive into the hands of the Romans. Hereupon he made a long speech to them, shewing, that it was not lawful for men to kill themselves, and that it was rather a proof of puellanimity than courage; but all without effect. He then proposed an expedient, which was, that they should cast lots, two by two, who should die first. He who had the second lot should kill the first; and the next, him; and so on; and the last should kill himself. It happened that Josephus and another were preferred to the last lot. When all the rest were killed, he without much difficulty persuaded that other person to yield up himself to the Romans. So they two escaped with their lives.

This has been judged to be a remarkable providence, by which Josephus was preferred to write the history of which we are now able to make so good use.

When Josephus had surrendered, Vespasian gave strict orders that he should be kept carefully, as if he had intended to send him to Nero. Josephus then presented a request, that he might speak to Vespasian in private; which was granted. When all were diffused,
milled, except Titus, and two friends, he spoke to Vespasian after this manner: "You * think, Vespasian, that you have in Jove-
phus a mere prisoner. But I am come to you as a messenger of
great tidings. Had I not been sent to you by God, I † know
what the law of the Jews is, and how it becomes a general to die.
Do you intend to send me to Nero? Are they, who are to succeed
Nero before you, to continue? You, Vespasian, will be Cæsar:
you will be emperor. So will likewise this your son. Bind me
therefore still faster, and refer me for yourself. For you are
Lord 'not of me only,' but of the earth, and the sea, and all man-
kind. And I for punishment deliver a clofer confinement, if I
speak falsehood to you in the name of ‡ God." Vespasian, as
he says, at first paid little regard to all this. But afterwards his
expectations of empire were raised. "Befides," as he goes on to say,
he found Josephus to have spoken truth upon other occasions. For
when one of his friends, who were permitted to be present at that
interview, said, it appeared strange to him, that Josephus should
not have foretold to the people of Jotapata, the event of the
siege, nor have foreseen his own captivity, if all he now said was
not invention to fave his own life; Josephus answered, that he
had foretold to the people of Jotapata, that the place would be
taken upon the forty-seventh day of the siege, and that himself
should be taken alive by the Romans. Vespasian having privately
inquired of the prisoners concerning these predictions, found the
truth of § them."

All these things I have inserted here, for shewing the character of
this writer; though the proximity of my narration be thereby in-
creased.

It is very likely that he † often thought of Joseph in Egypt, and
of Daniel at Babylon; and was in hopes of making a like figure at
the court of Rome. But I suppose, it may be no disparagement to
Josephus, to say, that he was not equal to them in wisdom, or in
virtue and integrity. And the circumstances of things were much
altered. The promised Messiah was come; and the Jewish people
were no longer entitled to such special regard as had been shewn
them in times past. Nor was it then a day of favour and mercy
for them, but the day of the Lord's vengeance against them, as Jo-

* De B. J. 1, 3. c. 8. § 9.
† That is, that a Jewish general should make away with himself, rather than be taken
prisoner alive by heathen people. We know not of any such law in the books of the Old
Testament. And it seems to be a manifest contradiction to what he says in the speech before
referred to.
‡ Josephus's address to Vespasian is very precise and formal, precluding things then further.
Publicly, this speech was improved afterwards, and at the time of writing this history made
more clear and express, and more agreeable to the event, than when first spoken.
† Among other prefaces of Vespasian's empire, Sutonius has mentioned this of Josephus:
Et unus ex nobilibus captivis Josephus, cum conjiceretur in vincula, conscientissime
sclerocritus, fortis, ut ab eodem brevi solvetur, verum jam imperatore." Suton. Vesp. 
CAP. 5.
§ Josephus has several times spoken of his having had prophetic dreams, and of his abili-
ty to interpret dreams that were ambiguous. Vid. De B. J. 1, 3. vii. 3. et 9. et de Vit. 
§ 42.
Josephus himself saw. And they were entering into a long captivity of which they have not yet seen the end, after a period of all seventeen hundred years, though they are still wonderfully served.

Josephus was still a prisoner. But when Vespasian had been claimed emperor, he ordered his iron chain to be cut off. When Vespasian went to Rome, Josephus continued to be with him and was present at the siege of Jerusalem, and saw the ruin of the city and country.

After the war was over, when Titus went to Rome, he went home. And Vespasian allotted him an apartment in the same house in which he himself had lived before he came to the empire. He made him a citizen of Rome, and gave him an annual pension, continued to shew him great respect as long as he lived. His Titus, who succeeded him, shewed him the like regard. And afterwards Domitian, and his wife Domitia, did him many kind offices.

Josephus, however, does not deny, that the had many enemies. But the emperors in whose time he lived, protected him. And it is very likely that the Jews should have little regard for a who was with the Romans in their camp during the siege of the city. He particularly says, that upon the first tidings of the fall of Jotapata, the people of Jerusalem made great and public lamentations for him, supposing that he had been killed in the siege; when they heard that he had escaped, and was with the Romans, was well used by them, they loaded him with all manner of reproach not excepting treachery itself. Nor do we find, that the Jewish people ever had any great respect for his writings: though they been much esteemed, and often quoted by Christian and **o writers in early and later times.

Of them we are now to take some notice.

The first is "the History of the Jewish War," and the taking of Jerusalem, in seven books. In which work he goes back to the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, and the Maccabees. In the preface he says that he first wrote it in the language of his own country, for of such as lived in Parthia, Babylonia, Arabia, and other parts, and afterwards published it in Greek for the benefit of others; which is what we have. It is generally supposed to have been published him in the 75th year of Christ, and the 38th year of his age, professedly to have writ with great fidelity, and for the truth of the

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* De B. J. l. 4. cap. x. § 7. † Vit. cap. 76. ‡ Ibid.
§ De B. J. l. 3. cap. ix. § 7.
¶ Quinque enim eius scripta apud Judaeos in nullo pretio fuerint... Gentiles tamen error et Christiani Josephum, licet Judaeum, ejusque opera, magni aestimabant. Ittig. Pr. pag. 88. ap. Hauercamp.
** Josephus is quoted by Porphyry, not in his books against the Christian, but else.
See the testimonies prefixed to the works of Josephus.
†† Particular accounts of them are to be seen in Cave, Hist. Lit. Fabric. Bib. Gr. l. 4. et
Tom. 3. p. 228. &c. Tillemont, La Raisin des Juifs, art. 79. &c. Hist. des Emp. Tom
‡‡ De B. J. L. i. in Pud. § 2. §§ in Fr. § 5. &c. et l. 7. cap. ult. fin.  
History appeals to Vespasian, and Titus, and King Agrippa, * then living. He † presented it to Vespasian and Titus; which left ‡ not only deferred the publication of it, but with his own hand signed the book that should be reckoned authentic.

2. "The Jewish Antiquities," in twenty books, or the history of the Jews from the creation of the world to the twelfth year of Nero, in which the war began. This work was finished by him § in the 39th year of his own life, in the third year of the reign of Domitian, and the year of Christ 93.

3. To this work is subjoined, as a part of it, or an appendix to it, "His Life," written by himself some while afterwards.

4. After the several above-mentioned works, he published another work in two books, entitled "Of the Antiquity of the Jews, against Apion:" being a vindication of the Jewish people against the calumnies of that Egyptian author.

5. To Josephus likewise is generally ascribed a book, entitled, "A Discourse of the Maccabees." But, as || Cave says, there is good reason to doubt of its genuineness. And ** Mr. Whiston, who made an English translation of all the above-named works of this writer, declined to translate this, and would not publish it among the rest.

The works of Josephus, notwithstanding many things in them liable to exception, which may be observed by careful and impartial readers, are very valuable. In his larger work, the "Jewish Antiquities," he confirms the truth of the history of the Old Testament. And, as in several of the last books of that work he has brought down the Jewish history from the ceasing of prophecy among them to the twelfth of Nero, he has let us know the state of affairs in Judea during the time of the evangelical history. And he had before done the like in the first two books of the "Jewish War." What he has therein said of Herod, and his sons, of the Roman governors in Judea, the Jewish sects, and their principles, the manners of the Jewish people, and likewise concerning the Samaritans, greatly confirms and illustrates the history of our Evangelists: as was formerly shewn in the first part of this work, the "Credibility of the Gospel-history;" the design of which was to confirm the facts occasionally mentioned in the New Testament by palliages of ancient †† authors.

We are now to consider, whether there is any thing in the works of this Jewish author more directly confirming the principal facts of the New Testament: particularly, whether he affords any evidences of

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‡ ἐκ χειρας για άγιος χειρι τα βιβλια δημοσίωσεν περιτύλιον. Vit. § 65.
§ Ant. l. 20. cap. ult. fin.
** See his note at the end of his translation of Josephus.
of the fulfilment of our Lord's predictions concerning the destruction of the temple and city of Jerusalem, and the great calamities upon the Jewish people; and whether he has said any thing of John the Baptist, our Lord's fore-runner, or of our Lord himself, or of any of his Apostles.

I shall begin with the first article. For it is very likely, that in his "History of the Jewish War," we should find many things giving credit to the fulfilment of our Lord's predictions concerning the Jewish people.

II. STATE OF JUDEA IN OUR SAVIOUR'S TIME, AND BEFORE.

Judea was first brought into subjection to the Romans by Pompey, who, after a siege of three months, took Jerusalem in the year 63, before the Christian era, about the time of our * Midsummer. Josephus always dates † the loss of their liberty at that time. The same is said by ‡ Tacitus.

But though the Jewish people then became subject to the Romans, and it may be said, that from that time forward the rod of Heaven hung over them; they enjoyed many privileges, and the freedom of their worship, under the mild government of those masters: as appears both from Josephus, and from the historical books of the New Testament.

When Pompey became master of Jerusalem, he § and some of his officers entered into the temple, and the most holy places of it; but he took nothing away. There were then in it the table, the candlestick, with its lamps, the pouring vessels, and the centers, all of gold, and great quantities of spices, and two thousand talents in money; all which he left untouched. And the day after he gave orders, that they who had the charge of the temple should cleanse it, and perform the accustomed sacrifices. And he restored the priesthood to Hyrcanus.

And that after this the Jewish people were, sometimes at least, in a flourishing condition, appears from many confirmations. It was during this period, that || Herod repaired the temple. Excepting the cloud of glory with which the first temple had been favoured, that erected by Herod may be reckoned to have been equal to it in the splendor and magnificence of the building, and in rich and costly presents, and other ornaments.

When the Jewish people, after their return from the Babylonish captivity, laid the foundation of the new house, "many of the Priests, the Levites, and chief of the fathers, who were ancient men, wept with a loud voice." Ezr. iii. 12. But God encouraged them by

† Tert. de Pass. p. 114. (see Gershom,)). Antiq. x. 15. 5. and see Joseph. Antiq. p. 439. And see Josephus, Antiq. l. 14. cap. vii. 5. but his name Pompeius Julius.
‡ Tacit. Hist. i. 6 cap. xxii. ct l. 1. 5 cap. vi.
§ Vid. Antiq. l. 15. cap. xvi. De B. J. l. 1. cap. xxi. ct l. 1. 5. cap. vi.
The State of Judea.

In the prophet Haggai, in this manner; ch. ii. 3. "Who is left among you, that faw this house in its first glory? and how do ye see it now? is it not in your eyes, in comparison of it, as nothing? Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, faith the Lord . . . and be strong, all ye people of the land, and work: for I am with you, faith the Lord of Hosts. . . . For thus shall the Lord of Hosts . . . I will shake all nations. And the desire of all nations shall come. And I will fill this house with glory, faith the Lord of Hosts. The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, faith the Lord of Hosts. The glory of this latter house shall be greater than that of the former, faith the Lord of Hosts. And in this place will I give peace, faith the Lord of Hosts."

Here is, undoubtedly, a renewal of the great promise concerning the coming of the Messiah, the true Shechinah, whose presence would make this second temple more glorious than the first. But here is also a gracious assurance of external grandeur and splendor. "Silver and gold, and all the riches of the world, says God, are mine, to heftow on whom I please. And notwithstanding the present mean and desplicable appearance of the building before your eyes, I will fill it with glory, and will cause it to equal, or even surpass, the former in splendor and magnificence. . . . For in this place will I give peace. My purpose is to bless you abundantly, and to give you great prosperity." Which gracious declaration was fulfilled.

That they were in flourishing circumstances at the time of our Lord's preaching among them, is apparent: though they were unjustly under subjection to the Romans. Josephus continually speaks of the temple, as very grand and magnificent. And it appears to be, from his large and particular description of it in the fifth chapter of the fifth book of the Jewish War, just before its final ruin. And when Titus, upon the fite having feized the temple, entered it, with some of his officers, he says, "that Titus saw it to be far superior to the report of strangers, and not inferior to our boastings concerning it." And, having related how it was burnt, he says, it might be justly lamented: "since it was the most admirable of all the works which we have seen, or heard of, for its curious structure and magnitude, and for all the wealth bestowed upon it, as well as for the reputation of its sanctity." And he expressly calls it the temple that was built, or begun to be built, in the second year of Cyrus, under the direction of the prophet Haggai. And our Lord's disciples bear witness to the fame in some passages that will come before us in reciting his predictions, of which we are now to take notice, and then observe the fulfilment of them.

III. Our
III. Our Lord's predictions concerning the calamities coming upon the Jewish nation.

We find our Lord's disciples speaking of the magnificence of the temple with admiration. So in Mark xiii. 1-10. "And as he went out of the temple, one of his disciples said unto him: Master, see what manner of stones, and what buildings are here! And Jesus answering said unto him: Seeest thou these great buildings? There shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down. And as he sat upon the Mount of Olives over against the temple, Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, asked him privately: Tell us when these things shall be; and what shall be the sign, when all these things shall be fulfilled? And Jesus answering them began to say: Take heed, lest any man deceive you: for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. And when ye shall hear of wars, and rumours of wars, be ye not troubled; for such things must needs be. But the end shall not be yet: for nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there shall be earthquakes in divers places; and there shall be famines and troubles. These are the beginnings of sorrows. And the Gospel must first be published among all nations." And ver. 14-20. "But when ye shall see the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the Prophet, standing where it ought not, (let him that readeth understand;) then let them that be in Judea flee to the mountains. And let them that are on the house-top, not go down into the house, neither enter therein, or take anything out of his house. And let them that are in the field not turn back again, for to take up his garment. But woe to them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days. And pray ye, that your flight be not in the winter; for in those days shall be affliction, such as was not from the beginning of the creation, which God created, unto this time, neither shall be." The like things are in St. Matthew xxiv. 1-35. "And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple. And his disciples came to him, for to shew him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said unto them: See ye not all these things? Verily I say unto you, there shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down. And as he sat upon the Mount of Olives, his disciples came unto him privately, saying: Tell us when these things shall be, and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world? And Jesus answered, and said unto them: Take heed, that no man deceive you: for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. And ye shall hear of wars and reports of wars. See that ye be not troubled. For all these things must come to pass. But the end is not yet: for nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there shall be famines and pestilences, and earthquakes in divers places. All these are the beginnings of sorrows. Then shall they..."
Our Lord's Predictions.

they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you. And ye will be hated of all nations for my name sake. And then will many be offended, and will betray one another, and will hate one another; and many false prophets will arise, and will deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many will wax cold. But he that shall endure to the end, shall be saved. And this Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations. And then shall the end come.

When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand) then let them which are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let him which is on the housetop, not come down to take anything out of his house. Neither let him that is in the field return back, to take his coat. And wo unto them which are with child, and to them that give suck in those days. But pray ye, that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath-day. For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not from the beginning of the world to this time: no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved. But for the elect those days shall be shortened. Then, if any say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there will arise false Christs, and false Prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders, insomuch that (if it were possible) they should deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before. Wherefore, if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert, go not forth: Behold, he is in the secret chambers, believe it not. For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together. Verily, I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away; but my words shall not pass away.

Those inquiries of the disciples, and our Lord's answers to them, are made in private. But they plainly refer to things said by our Lord publicly in the courts of the temple. We may do well, therefore, to look back to what precedes, as related in St. Matthew's Gospel especially; where are recorded the many woes pronounced by our Lord upon the Scribes and Pharisees, and the people in general, who were under their influence and direction. Matt. xxiii. 29-39.

Wo unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; because ye build the tombs of the Prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous. And ye say, if we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the Prophets. Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them that killed the Prophets. Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell! Wherefore, behold I

"send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes. And some
"them ye will kill and crucify: and some of them ye will scour
"in your synagogues, and persecute from city to city: that upon
"may come all the righteous blood, shed upon the earth, from
"blood of righteous Abel, unto the blood of Zacharias, for
"Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. Ve
"I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this genera
"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the Prophets, and sl
"them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered
"children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under
"wings! and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto
"defoliate. For I say unto you, ye shall not see me hencef
"till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of
"Lord."

The like things are recorded by St. Luke, ch. xxi. 5—28. a
of which I shall also transcribe here. "And as some spake of
"temple, how it was adorned with goodly stones, and gifts, he f
"As for these things, which ye behold, the days will come, in
"which shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall no
"thrown down. And they asked him, saying, Master, but w
"shall these things be? and what signs will there be when t
"things shall come to pass? And he said: Take heed, that ye be
"deceived. For many will come in my name, saying, I am Ch
"and the time draws near. Go ye not therefore after them.
"when ye shall hear of wars and commotions, be not terrified;
"these things must come to pass. But the end is not by and
"Then said he unto them: Nation shall rise against nation, and k
"dom against kingdom; and great earthquakes shall be in di
"places; and famines, and pestilences, and fearful sights, and g
"signs shall there be from heaven. But before all these things
"shall lay their hands upon you, and persecute you, delivering
"up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought be
"kings and rulers for my name sake. And it shall turn to
"for a testimony, and ye shall be betrayed both by parents, b
"brethren, and kinsfolk, and friends. And some of you shall
"cause to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for
"name sake. But there shall not an hair of your head perish.
"your patience shall be ye souls. And when ye shall see Je
"lem compassed with armies; then know, that the desolation the
"is nigh. Then let them which are in Judea flee to the mounta
"and let them which are in the midst of it, depart out. And n
"not them which are in the country, enter therein. For t
"are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written m
"fulfilled. But wo unto them that are with child, and to th
"that give suck in those days. For there will be great disf
"the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by
"edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all na
"And Jerufalem shall be trampled down of the Gentiles, until
"times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."
Our Lord's Predictions.

And before this, when he was making his public entrance into Jerusalem, says St. Luke, xix. 41—44. "And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, saying: If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong to thy peace! But now they are 'd from thy eyes; for the days will come upon thee, that thy enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and will lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee. And they will not leave in thee one stone upon another, because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.'"

And afterwards, when they were leading him away to be crucified, Luke xxiii. 25—31. "And there followed him a great company of people, and of women; which also bewailed, and lamented him. But Jesus turning unto them said: Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children. For behold the days are coming, in which they will say: Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us, and to the hills, Cover us. For if they do such things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?"

Our Lord delivers these predictions, of which he had the foresight, with marks of great and undissembled compassion and tenderness. If all these deflations and calamities had been now present, and before his eyes, and if they had been the calamities of his best friends, he could not have been more affected. He is particularly touched with the foresight of the difficulties of such as are most helpless, the distresses of women with child, or who have infants at their breasts. This is true compassion, the effect of the sensibility of the human nature; which he is not ashamed of, and does not dissemble. And that the apprehension of these calamities impending on the Jewish people lay much upon his mind, is manifest from his often speaking of them.


In what has been transcribed from the Evangelists, are observable these several things.
1. Our Lord foretells the destruction of the temple and city of Jerusalem.
2. He speaks of great and extraordinary afflictions and distresses, which the Jewish people would suffer at that time.
3. He says, that the doctrine of the Gospel should be preached in all the world, or all over the Roman empire, before the final ruin and overthrow of the Jewish nation.
4. He
4. He foretells, that his disciples and followers would be brought before Kings and Governors for his name fake, and would suffer many hardships, and that some of them would be put to death.

5. He intimates, that among his followers there would be great declensions, and that they would betray each other.

6. He foretells, that there would be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes in divers places.

7. He speaks of wars and tumults in many places, preceding the final ruin of the Jewish nation, and as preludes of it.

8. He likewise says, that at that time, and before it, would appear many false prophets and impostors, by whom many would be deceived; and he warns men against hearkening to them.

9. He declares, that all these things would come to pass, before the end of that age, or generation of men.

10. He forewarns and advises those who regarded their own welfare, to flee out of Judea and Jerusalem, when they perceived the near approach of the calamities which had been spoken of by him. Which they might know, when they should see the Roman armies, with their idolatrous ensigns, standing where they ought not, that is, near Jerusalem, or in the land of Judea.

Of all these several things I propose to shew the fulfilment: though not exactly in the order in which they have been just now mentioned.


Before I enter upon the history of the fulfilment of these predictions, it may be of use to observe, in general, the dates of some events.

The war began, as Josephus says, in the second year of the government of Gessius Florus, who succeeded Albinus, successor of Porcius Festus, mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles, in the month of May, in the twelfth year of the Emperor Nero, and the seventeenth year of the reign of Agrippa, mentioned Acts xxv and xxvii. that is, in the month of May, in the year of our Lord 66.

“ The Temple was burnt on the tenth day of the month of “ August [in the year of Christ 70], the same day and month on “ which it had been burnt by the King of Babylon.” Which Josephus repeats again afterwards. The
The Time of the Siege.

The City was taken on the eighth day of September, in the second year of the reign of Vespasian, or the year of Christ 70.

That was the end of the siege of Jerusalem, which began, as the same author observes several times, about the fourteenth day of the month Nisan, or our April.

The war therefore lasted four years and four months, computing from May 66, to September in the year 70. And the siege lasted about five months, computing from the 14th day of April to the eighth of September, in the year 70. If we carry on our computation to the taking of the castle of Masada, which happened in the year 73 (as we shall see hereafter), the war lasted seven years.

V. The Abomination of Desolation Standing in the Holy Place.

I think it proper here also to take notice of our Lord's expressions concerning the sign, whereby the approach of these calamities might be discerned. Matt. xxiv. 15, 16. "When ye shall see the abomination of desolation, . . . stand in the holy place; then let them which be in Judea flee to the mountains." Mark xiii. 14. "When ye shall see the abomination of desolation standing where it ought not . . . then let them which are in Judea flee to the mountains." Luke xxi. 20. "And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know, that the desolation thereof is nigh."

By "the abomination of desolation, or the abomination that maketh desolate," therefore, is intended the Roman armies, with their ensigns. As the Roman ensigns, especially the eagle, which was carried at the head of every legion, were objects of worship; they are, according to the usual style of Scripture, called "an abomination."

By "standing in the holy place, or where it ought not," needs not to be understood the temple only, but Jerusalem also, and any part of the land of Israel.

There are several things in Josephus, which will confirm this interpretation. "Pilate," he says, "the Prefect of Judea, sending his army from Cæfaræ, and putting them into winter-quarters at Jerusalem, brought the carved images of Cæfar, which are in the ensigns, into the city, in violation of the Jewish laws; since our law forbids the making of images. For which reason the former governors were wont to come into the city with ensigns deftstitute of these ornaments. Pilate was the first who set up images in Jerusalem. And he did it privately, the army making their entrance in the night time. But as soon as the people knew it, they went in a large body to Cæfaræ, making earnest supplications, that the images might be removed . . . . And at length I 2 "Pilate"
Josephus

"Pilate gave orders for bringing back the images from Jerusalem to Cesarea."

And not long after that, Vitellius, President of Syria, received orders from Tiberius to attack Aretas, king of Petra. Whereupon he was going to march through Judea. "But some of their chief men waited on him, and entreated him, not to lead his army through their country, because it was contrary to their laws, that any images should be brought into it, whereas there were a great many in his army. And he hearkened to them, altered his intention, and marched his troops another way."

Our Lord's disciples and followers therefore might well be alarmed as soon as they saw Roman armies, with their idolatrous ensigns, appear in an hostile manner in any part of the land of Israel; but as they approached to Jerusalem, the danger would be more imminent and pressing.

And as men unwillingly leave their native country, and their accustomed habitations, and removals are always attended with dangers and difficulties, our Lord recommends flight in very urgent terms, left any of those who loved him, and respected his doctrine, should partake in the dreadful calamities of the siege.

VI. How the several events, foretold to precede the destruction of Jerusalem, came to pass. The Gospel preached all over the world.

We now observe some events spoken of by our Lord, which would precede the great calamity coming upon the Jewish nation.

1. One is, that "the doctrine of the Gospel" should be preached throughout the Roman Empire, and in other places adjoining to it.

"And this gospel of the kingdom," says he, "shall be preached in all the world, for a witness to all nations. And then shall the end come." Matt. xxiv. 14. "And the Gospel must first be published to all nations." Mark xiii. 10.

And however unlikely that might seem when those words were spoken by our Lord, they were verified. The Epistles of the New Testament, still extant, and written to Christians in divers cities and countries, are a standing monument of it. For they are sent to believers at Rome, Corinth, Galatia, Ephesus, Philippi, Colossae, Thessalonica, and the Hebrews; all written by St. Paul. And the Epistles of the Apostle Peter are directed to Christians residing in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. And the four Gospels, and the Acts of the Apostles, afford evidence, that there were numerous converts to the faith of Jesus. For they were written for the use of such. St. Paul says, Rom. xv. 19. that "from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, he had fully preached the Gospel of Christ." He reminds the Romans, i. 18. "that their faith was spoken of throughout the whole world." To the Colossians he observes, that the Gospel had been preached to every creature.

Antiq. i. 18. cap. v. 9.
"creature under heaven," ch. i. 23. and see ver. 6. "The prediction therefore of that great event had been accomplished within the limits of the time assigned for it.

And Tacitus bears witness, that the Christian religion, which had its rise in Judea, had spread into many parts, and had reached Rome itself, where the professors of it were numerous, and many of them underwent grievous torments in the reign of Nero, about the year of our Lord and afterwards.

2. CHRIST'S DISCIPLES PERSECUTED IN MANY PLACES.

Our Lord also says to his disciples, in his prophetical discourses concerning the coming calamities upon Judea: "Before all these things they will lay their hands upon you, and persecute you, delivering you to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name sake. And some of you shall they cause to be put to death. And ye will be hated of all men for my name sake." Luke xxi. 12. and 16, 17. And to the like purpose in the other Evangelists.

The full accomplishment of these things is well known to Christians from the book of the Acts, and the Epistles of the New Testament. The Apostles of Jesus met with great difficulties in preaching the Gospel. And the converts made by them were exposed to many sufferings. Peter and John, and all the Apostles, were brought before the Jewish Council, and were imprisoned, and beaten, and farther threatened; Acts iv. Stephen, an eminent disciple, and Evangelist, suffered death by stoning, ch. vii. James, the brother of John, was beheaded by king Agrippa; who also shut up Peter in prison, with intention to put him to death also. But he was miraculously delivered, ch. xii. Paul was kept in prison two years in Judea, and afterwards as long at Rome. He pleaded before Felix and Festus, Roman governors in Judea, and king Agrippa the younger, as well as before the Jewish Council at Jerusalem; xxii.—xxviii. And there is good reason to believe, that he was brought before Nero himself. Many of his sufferings and dangers are enumerated in 2 Cor. xi. 23—33.

They who received the doctrine taught by the Apostles had also their share of afflictions and trials. Paul, whilst he was their enemy, made havoc of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed to prison. And when they were put to death, he gave his voice against them: . . . he punished them in every synagogue, and perverted them even into strange cities.

Acts viii. 3. and xxvi. 10, 11. And in his Epistle to the Hebrews he observes to them, "that they had endured a great fight of afflictions, partly whilist they were made a gazing-stock both by reproofs and afflictions; and partly whilist they became companions of "

* Ann. L 15. cap. 44.
† See that fully proved in the second volume of the Supplement to the "Credibility," &c. p. 250, &c.
of those who were so used: and that they had joyfully taken
spoil of their goods;" ch. x. 32—34. And Agrippa be
mentioned began with "laying his hands upon certain of the church
Acts xii. 1. And that the believers suffered afflictions in other pl
beside Judea, is manifest from 2 Thess. i. 3—6. James ii, 5—
2 Pet. iv. 12—19. And the Jews at Rome, whom Paul sent
to come to him, say: "As concerning this sect, we know that ev
where it is spoken against."
Tacitus confirms the truth of these predictions of our Lord.
has given a particular account of the sufferings of many Christi
at Rome, before the defolations of Judea. In the tenth year
Nero, the 64th of our Lord, there happened a great fire at Ro
Nero was suspected to have let it on fire himself. "For suppo
ing that common rumour, Nero procured others to be accu
and inflicted exquisite punishments upon those people, who w
in abhorrence for their crimes, and were commonly known by
name of Christians." And he says, "that they were condemned
not so much for the crime of burning the city, as for their enm
to mankind." Thus Tacitus bears witness, not only to th
undeserved sufferings, but also to the reproaches they underwe
agreeably to what our blessed Lord had said, "that they would
hated of all men for his name sake." However, these innoc
sufferers had their supports. For their unerring Maimer, all th
words were true, has said: "Blessed are ye, when men shall re
you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil aga
you falsely for my sake."

3. DECLENSIONS AMONG HIS FOLLOWERS.
Farther, our Lord intimates, that before the full accomplishm
of his predictions concerning the miseries coming upon the Jew
nation, there would be declensions of zeal among his own profes
disciples and followers.

"And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one anoth
and because iniquity will abound, the love of many will w
cold;" Matt. xxiv. 10, 12. And see Mark xiii. 12, 13. 
Luke xxi. 16.

What is said of this matter in the Gospels may be verified in
the Epistles of the New Testament. The whole Epistle to the I
brews is an argument to steadfastness, implying the great danger
apostasy from the faith, or of abatements of zeal for it: "Let u
says he, "hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering
And let us consider one another, to provoke unto love and g
works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as
manner of some is." Heb. x. 23, 25. and onwards to ver:
And ch. xii. 12. "Wherefore lift up the hands which hang doa
and the feeble knees." In ch. vi. 4—9. he shews the great gu

"Ergo abolendo rumori Nero subditis reos, et exquisiti
tissimis poenis audent que pas per
giea invitos, vulgus Christianos appellabat. Iguitur primo corrupit qui ferebantur, ut
indicto eorum multitudine ingens, haud perinde criminem incidendi, quum odio humani

and the deplorable condition of such as apostatize. In his second Epistle to Timothy, ch. i. 15, "This thou knowest," says he, "that all they which are of Asia (probably meaning such as were then at Rome) are turned away from me: of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes." And afterwards, ch. iv. 16, he complains of other Christians at Rome, who deserted him, when he made his appearance there before Nero. "At my first answer," or apology, "no man stood with me, but all men forsook me." And again, in the same Epistle, ch. ii. 17, he speaks of Hymenaeus and Philetus: "Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past, and overthrow the faith of some." And see 1 Tim. i. 19, 20. I allege nothing more from the books of the New Testament.

Tertullian, in his account of Nero's persecution of the Christians, already quoted more than once, does also confirm the truth of this prediction of our Lord; who says, "that at first they only were apprehended, who confessed themselves to be of that sect. Afterwards, many more were taken up, whom they discovered to be of their number."

Nor ought this to be thought exceeding strange, notwithstanding the perfection of the Christian doctrine, and the evidences of its truth. For in a great number of men it is very likely that some should be overcome by the difficulties and dangers attending the profession of it. So says the chief fower of his heavenly doctrine. "Some feed fell in stony places. The same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it. Yet hath he not root in himself, but endureth for a while. For when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended."

4. Famines in divers places.

Our blesse Lord said, that before the great calamity predicted by him, there would be "famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes in divers places."

We know from the history in the Acts of the Apostles, that there was a famine in Judea in the time of the Emperor Claudius, ch. xi. 25, 30. It was not an accidential scarcity at Jerusalem only, but it was a famine all over that country. It began in the fourth year of that Emperor, and lasted several years. We have a particular account of it in Josephus. He also says, it was a very severe famine. And in another place he mentions the high price of corn at that season: and says, that this famine happened in the reign of Claudius, not long before the war.

That famine is also taken notice of by Eusebius in his Chronicle, and in his history, and by Origen.

There
Josephus.

There was also a famine at Rome, and in Italy, mentioned by Dion Cassius, which began in the first year of Claudius, and continued in the next year.

There was another famine in the same reign, mentioned by Tacitus, and by Eusebius; which seems to have been chiefly in the tenth or eleventh year of that Emperor.

To all these Suétionius seems to refer, though he does not mention the years in which they happened.

Pestilences.

Concerning the famines in the reign of the Emperor Claudius, some modern historians and chronologers might be consulted.

Our Lord speaks also of pestilences. By Josephus we are informed, that about the year of Christ 40, there was a pestilence at Babylon, in which the Jews suffered.

In the 45th year of the Christian era there was a great mortality at Rome. At the same time there were other calamities in various parts of the Roman empire, as we learn from Tacitus, and Suétionius §§, as well as from Orosius §§, who might transcribe from them.

Earthquakes.

Tacitus speaks of an earthquake at Rome in the time of Claudius, and of another at Apamea in the same reign.

* Dio. i. l. 60. p. 671. al. 949.
† ‡ ‡ Fames fede in Grecia. Modius sex drachmis venundatus est... Magna famis Romae. ‡ Chr. p. 160. infr. m.
† Vid. et cap. 19. et 20.
*** . . . . . χελω ου βασιλείας ἐνεργεῖν. * Ant. l. 18. x. 8.
†† Vid. Pagi. A. D. 67. n. iii.
† ‡ Tot facinoribus sedum annum etiam Diis temporaibus et morbis infliguntur. Valer.
[] Campania turbinem ventorum, qui villas, arboris, fruges paulam dedit, pertulitique vires
tiam ad vicinas Urbis. In qua omne mortalium genus vis pestilentialis depopulabatur, nulli
cali intempesti, que occurreret oculis. Sed domus corporibus examinis, istitera funerum
complebantur. Non fœsus, non zetas periculo vacus. Servitia perinde ac ingenia plebe
reptim exiliatur, inter conjugum et liberorum lamenta; qui dum affistant, dum defunt,
ipse cedens rogo cremabatur. Equum, Senatoremque interitus, quasvis prömnia,
minius fiebiles erant, tanquam communis mortalitate favimeat prius prœvenirent, * Tacit.
‡§ Acceperunt tantis ex principe mals, probrifque, quodam et fortuita: pestilens
unius autaruni, que tringita fumerum miliis in rationem Lubinge venerat: ciades bistanica,
qua duo præcipius oppida, magna civium furiorequem cede directa sunt: ignes
minia ad Orientem, legionibus in Armenia sub jugum missis; egregius Syria restet. * Suét.
Neron. cap. 39.
+++ Orac. l. 7. cap. vii.
***** Multa eo anno prodigia evenere. Infestum diris avibus Capitolium: crebris terr
††† Tributumque Apamienisibus terrae motu convulsus, in quinquevniunium remissum
[Id. l. 12. cap. 38.
Earthquakes and Wars.

In the reign of Nero there was an earthquake at Laodicea, mentioned by Tacitus: and likewise by Eusebius in his Chronicle; who says, that in Asia three cities, namely Laodicea, Hierapolis, and Colisse, were overturned by an earthquake. And in like manner Orofous. Possibly, the earthquake, which was most violent at Laodicea, was felt in the other cities likewise.

In the same reign there was an earthquake in Campania, mentioned by Tacitus and Seneca. By the former it seems to be placed in the year of Christ 62; by the latter, in the year 63.

And there may have been other earthquakes in the time of the just-mentioned Emperors.

WARS AND RUMOURS OF WARS.


Josephus * has a long story of a disturbance in Mesopotamia, occasioned by the ambition and indiscretion of two Jews, who were brothers. It seems to have happened § about the year of Christ 40. Josephus says, it was not inferior to any calamity which the Jews had suffered hitherto, and that § it occasioned the death of more than fifty thousand people.

When Cæsius Fadus came Procurator into Judea, in the reign of Claudius, in the year of Christ 44 or 45, as Josephus says, "he found the Jews in Peræa in a riot, fighting with the Philadelphians about the limits of the village Mia. And, indeed, the people of Peræa had taken up arms without the consent of their chief men, and had killed a good number of the Philadelphians. When Fadus heard of it, he was much displeased, that they had taken up arms, and had not left the decision of the dispute to him, if they thought the Philadelphians had done them any injury."

* "Eodem anno ex illiustribus Asiæ urbibus Laodicea, tremore prolapso, nullo a nobis re-medio, propriis viribus revoluti." lb. l. 14. c. 27.

† "In Asia tres urbes terræ motu contaminat; Laodicea, Hierapolis, Colisse." Enl. Chr. p. 181.

‡ "Odor. l. 7. cap. vii.

§ "Ibidemque Consallibus gymnasio ida fulmini confugiavit, effugieque in eo Neronis sae informe ætique ætacita. Et motu terræ celebre Campaniae oppidum Pompeii magna ex parte proculit." Ann. l. 15. c. 22.


* Antiq. l. 18. cap. ix.


** Pintia: H. p. 3. c. 9. n. 9. Domitianus ex inania inicia a duarum seditionum invidia consumptus est, non enim ætate, ætateve brevissime, quæ 4. tivas esse eadem, quifque se antiquos obsequiis sibi intra 88. lb. l. 9.

†† lb. l. 20. cap. l. i.
Jewish.

"Three of the principal men who were the causes of this tumult, were apprehended, and put in prison; one of whom afterwards put to death, and the two others banished."

Afterwards, in the year of our Lord, 49, whilst Cumanus, Procurator of Judea, there happened a tumult at Jerusalem, the time of the Passover. The number of Jews that perished in it was not less than twenty thousand; as it is in his Antiquities: but Jewish War, the number is more than ten thousand.

Whilst Cumanus was yet in Judea, there happened a disturbance between the Jews and the Samaritans, in which many were killed both sides.

Josephus also says, that under Cumanus the troubles of the Jewish people began, and that in his time they suffered very much. These disturbances went on increasing. At Cesearea there began to be contentions between the Jewish people and the other inhabitants. "And," as § Josephus says, "in one hour's time more than twenty thousand Jews were destroyed, and all Cesearea at once emptied of its Jewish inhabitants. Some fled, others were caught, and sent them bound to the galleys. At the whole nation was enraged. They therefore divided themselves into several parties, and laid waste the villages of the Syrians, and neighbouring cities, Philadelphia, Sebottis, Gerasa, Pella, Scythopolis: and after them Gadara and Hippos. And upon Gaulanitis, some cities they demolished there, others they set on fire. Then they went to Kedasa, belonging to the Syrians, and to Ptolemais, and Gaba, and Cesearea. Nor was Sebaste Ahkalan, able to withstand the violence with which they were attacked. When they had burnt these to the ground, they demolished Antedon and Gaza. Many also of the villages round about cities were plundered; and an immense slaughter was made men found in them."

"The two parties destroyed not a less number of the Jews; for the disorders all over Syria were terrible. For every city was divided into parties, armed against each other; and the safety of the depended upon the destruction of the other. The days were in slaughter, and the nights in terrors, which were the worst two. It was common to see cities filled with dead bodies unburied, those of old men mixed with infants, all dead, and tered about promiscuously, and women without covering for nakedness."

"At Scythopolis the contention was carried so far, that thirteen thousand Jews were killed."

# Antiq. 20. cap. v. 3. De B. J. l. 2. cap. xii. 1.
# Antiq. 20. vi. 1. De B. J. l. 2. cap. xii. 2.
# Τῆς ἤπιου ἅμαρτίας γάρ, ἐπεὶ ἐν δαίμονι σπείρα, ἀνήλθεν οἱ Καίσαρες τῷ σπανίωτά ἐστιν ἀρχαῖον ἀνθρώπου ἀνυψάντωσιν, κατοίκησιν εἰς πάντοτε τοῦ ἱστορικοῦ. De B. J. l. 2. cap. xviii. 1.
# ibid. § 3. — ibid. § 3.
Earthquakes and Wars. 223

"After that, * other cities also rose up against the Jews that were among them. They of Ashkelon flew two thousand, and five hundred, they of Ptolemais two thousand, and put many others into prison. The Tyrians aected in the like manner: as did also Hippos and Gadara, and divers other cities of Syria."

"At + Alexandria fifty thousand lay dead in heaps. Nor would the remainder have been spared, if they had not petitioned for mercy."

Not long after that, the † men of Damascus having got the Jewish inhabitants into the place of exercise,  in γυμνόσβολοι, they came upon them unarmed, and slew ten thousand in an hour's time. These are what our Lord calls "the beginning of sorrows." When there were "wars and rumours of wars, one people and nation rising up against another. The end was not yet." Jerusalem was not yet besieged, nor the people in it shut up, for universal destruction. But that period was nigh. See Matt. xxiv. 6, 8. Mark xiii. 7, 8. Luke xxi. 9, 10.

The Occasion of the Jewish War, from Josephus.

VII. And now, I think, it may not be improper for us to take notice of Josephus's accounts of the occasion of the war. Giving an account of the contentions between the Jews and Greeks, or Syrians, at Cesarea, where the latter obtained a decree from Nero, that the government of the city belonged to them, he says: "And § this occasioned the war, which began in the twelfth "year of Nero." Soon after which, the Jews at Cesarea were treated very contemptuously and injuriously, till they were all destroyed, as he there proceeds to relate; and we have already, in part, transcribed from him.

In the last chapter of the Jewish Antiquities, he complains much of Albinus, and still more of Florus, who succeeded him, and exceeded him in avarice and cruelty: infomuch, that the Jews were ready to confide Albinus as a benefactor. "Finally," †† says he, "without adding anything more, it was Florus who compelled us to take up arms against the Romans, thinking it better to be destroyed all at once, than by little and little."

In his own Life he says, "I ** have mentioned all these things to show that the Jews war with the Romans were not their own choice, but rather that they were compelled by necessity."

In another place he says, "And ‡‡ at the temple of Eleazar, for

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* Ibid. § 5.
† Ibid. § 7, 8.
‡ De B. J. 1. 9. cap. 20. § 2.
§ Ev ποταμος η Καισαρειον Ελληνες, μπάνωντες περι Νεαρον της περας ἀρχής, τη τῆς πρώτης Ενδημογραμμάτα. Και προστάσιμα την ἀρχή αυτος λαμος καθάρισε μετ' αυτο της περας των Εγγενών. De B. J. 1. 2. c. xiv. 4.
‖ Και τη παλιν Μερινον, της γαρ πολυτροπιας περας η κατοικισθαι μεν ου τις ἄρες, Θελεις τον Ελληναν μεταθανατο, και της πλακήν συμπεριλαμβανει. Αντι. l. 20. x. 1.
# ης αυτων ἀρχής λεγετα της περας των Ερωμένων Ναουσών, έλλα τη πλακήν ανελαμβανει. Vid. § 6.
‡‡ ἀπολείπεται, μεθένεις ἁλεποιι θεών ου προσπηρεχομεναι. Τοῦτο ἢ τω τρεις Ερωμένων Ενδημογραμμάτα. Την γαρ οπις τότες διέλευσα καίσαρας ἀντιφημίας. De B. 1. 2. xvi. 2.
son of Ananias the High-priest, a young man of a daring
per, and then governor, persuaded those who officiated in the
vine service, not to accept of the gift or sacrifice of a foreign
That was the origin of the war with the Romans. For
they rejected the sacrifice of Caesar for them. (That is, as I
prehend, they refused to offer prayers and sacrifices, as sub
ought to do, for the Emperor, and for the prosperity of the
man empire.) And though many of the high-priests, and of
principal men of the nation, earnestly entreated them, no
omit the customary respect for their governors, they could
prevail.

Afterwards, near the conclusion of his History of the Jewish
when the city was actually taken, he says: "But that which p
epically encouraged them to the war, was an ambiguous on
found also in their sacred writings, that about this time some
from their country should obtain the empire of the world.
they understood to belong to themselves. And many of the wife
were mistaken in their judgement about it. For the Oracle
tended the government of Vespasian, who was proclaimed emp
in Judea."

That is a very remarkable passage. Some farther notice shall
taken of it by and by.

That the Jewish people were uneasy under subjection to the
mans, even in our Saviour's time, long before the war broke out,
pears from many things recorded in the Gospels: as their great a
lion to the Publicans, though Jews, who were employed in collec
the Roman tribute: from the question brought to our Saviour, "w
"ther it was lawful to give tribute to Caesar or not."

some, who followed our Lord for a time, to make him a K
John vi. 15. from their frequent and importunate demands, that
would "show them a sign from Heaven," meaning some token:
he intended to work out for them a temporal deliverance, "that t
might believe in him, and have full assurance of his being
"Chief." Matt. xii. 38. xvi. 4. and elsewhere: and from ver
other things, which must be obvious to all who have read
Gospels with attention.

This uneasiness under the Roman yoke continued and increa
Observable here is the answer which was made by Titus, after
temple was burnt, to the petition of Simon and John, the two g
leaders of the factions in Jerusalem. "You have never ce:
rebelling, since Pompey first made a conquest of your coun
And at length you have declared open war against the Rom:
—Our kindness to you has encouraged your enmity against
who have let you live in your country in peace and quietn
In the first place we gave you your own country to live in:
"et over you kings of your own nation; and farther we prefer

* De B. J. l. 6. cap. v. 4. † De B. J. l. 6. cap. vi. 25.
to you your own laws: and withal we have permitted you to live either by yourselves, or among others, as you liked best. And, which is the greatest favour of all, we have given you leave to gath-er up that tribute which you pay to God, together with all such other gifts as are dedicated to him. Nor have we called those to account who carried such donations, nor given them any obstruc-tion; till at length you became richer than yourselves, even when you were our enemies, and you have made preparations for the war against us with our own money."

There are other things likewise in Josephus, which deserve to be aken notice of in this place. Giving an account of the affliction made in Judea after the removal of Archelaus, he says: "At the persuasion of Joazar the high-priest, the Jews did generally ac- quiesce. However, Judas the Gaulanite, of the town called Ga-mala, associating to himself Sadduc a Pharisee, excited the people to rebellion, telling them that an affliction would bring in downright flattery, and exhorting the whole nation to avert their li-berty. The whole nation heard their discourses with incredible pleasure. And it is impossible to represent the evils the nation has suffered, which were owing to these men; for Judas and Sadduc brought in among us this fourth sect; and there being many who embraced their sentiments, they not only caused disturb-ances in the government at that time, but laid the foundation of those evils that followed; which indeed are owing to this principle, till then unknown among us."

He then delivers the character and principles of the three chief and more ancient sects of the Jews, as he calls them; and after that returns again to the men of whom he had been speaking before. Judas the Galilean was the leader of the fourth sect. In all other points they hold the same sentiments with the Pharisees; but they have an invincible affection for liberty, and acknowledge God alone their Lord and Governor. From that time the nation be-came infected with this principle. And Florus, by abusing his power when he was governor, threw them into despair, and pro-voked them to rebel against the Romans."

Those two passages were cited by me formerly; and divers ob-servations were made upon them, which still appear to me not im-pertinent; but I am unwilling to repeat them here. And I think, that, in the connexion in which they are now cited by me, it must be apparent from them, without farther remarks, that the nation in general was infected with the doctrine of Judas of Galilee. They had an invincible zeal for liberty, scorned subjection to the Romans their masters, and took up arms against them. As Capellus says, "Florus by his exactions forced them against their consent, or rather..."
rather drove them who were already disposed to it, and wanted an incitement to rebel against the Romans."

I would now take farther notice of the passage above cited, where our Jewish historian says, "what principally encouraged them to war was an ambiguous oracle, found in their sacred writings, that about that time some one from their country should obtain the empire of the world."

**FALSE PROPHETS AND FALSE CHRISTS IN JUDEA, AS OUR LORD HAD FORETOLD.**

The truth and importance of that observation, as I apprehend, may be confirmed and illustrated by the accounts which Josephus has given of numerous impostors, or false prophets, which arose among them about this time, agreeably to our Lord's predictions, as I shall now shew.

Whilist Plinius was Procurator of Judea, a certain impostor called theudas, persuaded a very great multitude, taking the effects with them, to follow him to the river Jordan: at his command, that he was a Prophet, and that causing the river to divide, they would go on in their madness; for he sent out a troop of horse, who coming upon them unexpectedly, slew many, and took many prisoners. Theudas himself was among the last mentioned; they cut off his head, and brought it to Jerusalem. These things happened in Judea, whilst Cestius Plinius was Procurator.

Fadus was sent into Judea by the Emperor Claudius, after the death of Herod Agrippa. This affair of Theudas therefore must be rightly placed in the year of Christ 45, or 46.

That is transcribed from the 20th and last book of the Antiquities. In the same book, afterwards, in another chapter, in the history of transactions in the time of Nero, Josephus says, "But this affair in Judea went on continually growing worse and worse. The country was again filled with robbers and impostors, who deceived the people. But Felix, time after time, apprehended, and put to death many of them." A little lower: "And indeed, by means of the crimes committed by the robbers, the city was filled with all sorts of impiety. And impostors and deceivers persuaded the people to follow them into the wilderness; where, as they said, they should see magnificent wonders and signs performed by the providence of God. And many hearkening unto them at length suffered the punishment of their folly; for Felix fetched them back, and punished them. About the same time there came a man out of Egypt to Jerusalem, who..."
who said he was a Prophet: and having persuaded a good number of the meaner sort of people to follow him to the mount of Olives, he told them, that thence they should see the walls of Jerusalem fall down at his command, and promised through them to give them entrance into the city. But Felix, being informed of these things, ordered his soldiers to their arms; and marching out of Jerusalem with a large body of horse and foot, he fell upon the Egyptian, and killed four hundred of them, and took two hundred prisoners. But the Egyptian, getting out of the fight, escaped."

This same story is also in the War, with some differences in the numbers, which were considered formerly.

There the account concludes in this manner. "When they came to engage, the Egyptian fled, followed by a few only. A large part of those who were with him were either slain, or taken prisoners. The rest of the multitude being scattered, shifted for themselves as they could."

This is supposed to have happened in the year of Christ 55.

In the War, in the paragraph preceding his account of the Egyptian impostor, having just before related, how Judea then abounded with robbers, called Sicarii, he says, "Besides them, there was another body of wicked men, whose hands indeed were clearer, but their intentions were as impious, who disturbed the happy state of the city no less than those murderers; for deceivers and impostors, under a pretence of divine inspiration, aiming at changes and innovations, made the people mad, and induced them to follow them into the wilderness, pretending that God would there give them signs and wonders. Felix, judging these proceedings to be no less than the beginning of a revolt, sent out his soldiers, both horse and foot, and destroyed great numbers of them."

In the forecited chapter of the 20th book of the Antiquities, speaking of the robbers in the time of Porcius Festus, about the year of Christ 60, he says, "that he also sent out both horse and foot to fall upon those who had been seduced by a certain impostor, who had promised them deliverance, and freedom from the miseries under which they laboured, if they would but follow him into the wilderness. The forces destroyed both him that had deceived them, and those that followed him."

Josephus speaks of six thousand who perished in the outer courts of the temple, after it had been set on fire. "The soldiers say, he set fire to the portico; whereupon some threw themselves headlong down the precipice, others perished in the flames; and not one out of so great a number escaped. A false prophet was the occasion of the ruin of those people, who on that very day had made proclamation in the city, affrrming that God commanded them to go up to the temple, where they would receive signs of deliverance. And indeed there were then many prophets, "

* Credib. Part I. B. 2. ch. viii. 1 De B. J. l. 2. c. xii. § 5. 1 Ibid. § 4.
† Ant. l. 20. cap. viii. § 10. ‡ De B. J. l. 6. cap. v. § 2.
prophets, suborned by the tyrants, to impose upon the people, and
telling them, that they ought to wait for help from God. 20
And, presently after, proceeding to relate the omens and prodigies
foresignifying the calamities coming upon the Jewish people, and the
city of Jerusalem, which shall be recited by and by, he says, "Im-
portors," who spake lies in the name of God, deceived this mis-
rable people. They neither attended to, nor believed the manifest
signs, foresignifying the coming desolation. But, like infatuated
men, who have neither eyes to see, nor minds to perceive, they
neglected the divine denunciations."
So truly did our Lord say, "I am come in my Father's name,
and ye receive me not. If another shall come in his own name,
him ye will receive." John v. 43.
Our blessed Lord says, Matt. xxiv. 24. "For there will arise false
Christ's, and false prophets, and will shew great signs and wonders,
infomuch that (if it were possible) they will deceive the very elect."
But our Lord does not intend to say, that any of those false prophets
would exhibit or perform great wonders. The original word is

cωτρως, they will give:" the same word that is in the Septuagint
version of Deut. xiii. 1. "If there arise among you a prophet, or a
dreamer of dreams, and he giveth thee a sign, or a wonder," καὶ ἐκ
σουμαυοῦ τήρησε; that is, shall propose, or promise some sign or won-
der, as the sequel shews. Parallel with the text just cited from
St. Matthew is Mark xiii. 22. "For false Christ's, and false prophets,
will arise, and will shew signs and wonders," the same word
again, καὶ δυοναμανοια καὶ τήρησα, "in order to seduce, if it were pos-
ible, even the elect."
The accounts which Josephus has given of the impostors in his
time, shew the exact accomplishment of these predictions of our Lord.
"They persuaded the people to follow them into the wilderness,
where, as they said, they would see manifest signs and wonders
performed by the power of God:" or, affuring them, "that God
would there give them signs and wonders:" or, that "they should
there receive signs of deliverance, and the like."
The passages of Josephus bear witness to the fulfilment of our
Lord's prediction, "that many false prophets would arise, and de-
ceive many," Matt. xxiv. 11.
Our Lord does also say there, at ver. 5. "And many will come
in my name, saying, I am Christ; and will deceive many." And
it is easy to believe, that some of the many false prophets did ex-
dpressly take to themselves that title, though Josephus does not say
it. But whether they did, or not, our Saviour's predictions are veri-
ified in the appearance of those false prophets. "Josephus, says:
"Abp. Tillotson, mentions several of these: of whom, though he
does not expressly say that they called themselves the Messiah,"

* Ibid. § 5.
† See Tillemon, "Ruine des Juifs," art. 36. A.D. 52.
‡ Vol. III. p. 552.
yet he says that which is equivalent, that they undertook to rescue the people from the Roman yoke. Which was the thing which the Jews expected the Messiah would do for them. And therefore we find, that the disciples who were going to Emmaus, and knew not that Christ was risen, and were doubtful what to think of him, say: "We hoped, this had been he that should have redeemed Israel;" that is, they hoped, this had been the Messiah, that being, it seems, a common periphrasis of the Messiah, that he was "he that was to deliver Israel." Which is agreeable to a note of Grotius upon the place. All they, therefore, who pretended that they were inspired, and sent by God to deliver the Jewish people, were indeed false Christis. They took upon themselves the character of the Messiah.

We may now readily admit the truth of what Josephus says in his passage transcribed not long ago: "That what principally excited the Jewish people, the wise men, as he calls them, as well as others, to the war with the Romans, was the expectation of a great deliverer to arise among them, who should obtain the empire of the world." This great deliverer was the Messiah. The numerous false prophets and false Christis, of whom Josephus speaks so frequently, and so distinctly, are full proofs of it.

The expectation of the coming of the Messiah, about the time of the appearance of Jesus, was universal, and had been so for some while. But with the idea of a prophet, or extraordinary teacher of religion, they had joined also that of a worldly king and conqueror, who should deliver the Jewish people from the burdens under which they laboured, raise them to a state of independence, and bring the nations of the earth into subjection to them, to be ruled and tyrannized over by them. And because our Lord did not perform, nor attempt this, they rejected and crucified him. If he would but have assumed the state and character of an earthly prince, Scribes and Pharisees, Priests and People, would all have joined themselves to him, and have put themselves under his banner. Of this we see many proofs in the Gospels. This disposition prevailed to the last. The people, therefore, though they had already met with many disappointments, when our Lord entered into Jerusalem, in no greater state than riding upon an ass, accompanied him with loud acclamations, and other tokens of respect, saying: "Hosanna to the Son of David. Blessed is the King, that cometh in the name of the Lord." And Jesus, our Lord, not assuming then the character of an earthly prince, was a fresh disappointment, and left deep resentment; which rendered them susceptible of the worst impressions from the chief priests, and their other rulers. And at their instigation they desired Pilate, the Roman governor, to set Barabbas at liberty,
and crucify Jesus. With which clamorous and importunate demands he at length complied, still bearing testimony to the innocence of him whom he unwillingly condemned. The account of St. Matthew alone, without any other, will suffice for shewing this amazing transaction. "Pilate said unto them, What shall I do then with Jesus? who is called Christ? They all say unto him, Let him be crucified. The Governor said, Why? what evil has he done? But they cried out the more, saying, Let him be crucified. When Pilate saw that he prevailed nothing, and that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent from the blood of this just person. See ye to it. Then answered all the people: His blood be upon us, and upon our children. Then released he Barabbas unto them. And when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified." Matt. xxvi. 22, 26.

The continued expectation of the Messiah, as a worldy King and Conqueror, as we have just seen in Josephus, and their unbelief under the Roman yoke, were the immediate occasions of their rebelling against the authority to which they were then subject. And the same principles that induced them to reject and crucify Jesus, brought upon them their utter and final ruin.

As the sin of the Jewish people in rejecting and crucifying Jesus after a life of perfect innocence and confuminate virtue, after speaking as no man had done before, and doing works which no other man had done, at Jerusalem, and in every part of the land of Israel, after such preparations as had been made for his reception by the Prophets, and by the testimony of John the Baptist, his forerunner, was "very great and aggravated: and as they rejected the renewed offers of mercy, and repeated and earnest calls to repentance, made by Christ's Apostles, and went on increasing in wickedness; God at length suffered the Romans to come upon them with an armed force, demolished their temple, and made desolate their city, and their whole country, with many circumstances of uncommon and even unparalleled distress. All which having been foreseen, and often foretold, by the Lord Jesus, in his public discourses; the accomplishment of these predictions, in the event, is an argument of great force in favour of his divine mission, and of his being indeed the Messiah, additional to the excellent doctrine, and wonderful works of his ministry.

VIII. The History of the Jewish War, and of the Siege of Jerusalem, from Josephus.

Having shewn the occasion and causes of the war, and having also observed the several things foretold by the Lord Jesus, as preceding

* * * If ye were blind, ye should have no sin. But now ye say, We see: therefore your sin is revelation." John i. 40. "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin. But now they have no cloak for their sin. If I had not spoken to them the words which I spake, they had not had sin. But now have they both sinned, and hated, both me and my Father." John xv. 22--24.
The Occasion of the Wars

Preceding it; I now proceed to the history of the war itself, collecting from Josephus, and making my extracts in his own words.

The disturbances still increasing in Jerusalem, and the animosity against Florus being very great, "Ccecius Gallius, * president of Syria, judged it not proper for him to lie still any longer. He therefore determined to march into Judea. Whereupon he took out of Antioch the twelfth legion entire, and out of the rest two thousand chosen men, with six cohorts of foot, and four troops of horse, besides the auxiliaries, which were sent by the Kings. Of which Antiochus sent two thousand horse, and three thousand foot, all Archers. Agrippa sent a thousand horse, and two thousand foot. Sohemus followed with four thousand. He then marched to Ptolemais. Agrippa accompanied Ccecius as a guide in the journey, and as capable of being useful to him in other respects. After he was come thither, Ccecius took a party of his army, and marched hastily to Zabulon, a strong city of Galilee, which separates the country of Ptolemais from our nation. That he found delineate of its men, the multitude having fled to the mountains, but full of all good things, which he allowed the soldiers to seize as plunder. And he set fire to the city, though its buildings were very beautiful, resembling those of Tyre and Sidon, and Berytus. After that, he over-ran the neighbouring country, seizeing whatever came in his way, and setting fire to the villages. And then returned to Ptolemais." At this very time, as Josephus adds in the same paragraph, the Jews found means to destroy about two thousand Syrians at Berytus, and near it, Ccecius being at a distance.

"Now + Ccecius himself marched from Ptolemais, and came to Cesarea; and then sent part of his army before him to Joppa; who coming suddenly upon that people, who were prepared neither for flight nor for their own defence, flew them all with their families, and then plundered and burnt the city. The number of the slain were eight thousand and four hundred. In like manner he sent a number of horse into the toparchy of Narbata, not far from Cesarea, who slew many of the inhabitants, plundered their goods, and set fire to the villages."

"Now + also Ccecius sent Gallius, commander of the twelfth legion, into Galilee, where he flew more than two thousand."

"Gallius § then returned to Cesarea, and Ccecius moved with his whole army, and came to Antipatris. Thence he set forward to Lydda, where he found the place empty of men, the people being gone up to Jerusalem upon account of the feast of Tabernacles. However, he found there fifty men, whom he flew, and burnt the city; and then marched onward; and going up by Bethoron, he pitched his camp at Gaba, fifty furlongs from Jerusalem."

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* De B. J. l. 2. cap. xvili. § 9.
† § 70.
‡ l. 2. cap. 21. § 1. 
§ l. 2. cap. 21. § 1.
The Jews seeing the war approaching to their metropolis, relying upon their numbers, went out to fight in a haughty and disorderly manner, even in the time of the festival. But the rage which made them forget their religion, did also make them superior to their enemies. Cestius with his whole army was in danger. Five hundred and fifteen of the Romans were slain, whilst the Jews lost only two and twenty. The most valiant of the Jews were Monobazus, and Kenedæus, related to Monobazus, King of the Adiabenes. Next to them were Niger of Peræa, and Silas of Babylon, who had deserted from King Agrippa to the Jews, and Simon, son of Gioras, to be hereafter often mentioned. After that, the Jews retired into the city. Cestius flayed them three days.

At this time Agrippa, with the consent of Cestius, sent to the Jews two ambassadors, Bocæus and Phæbus, men well known to them, with assurances of plenary forgiveness from Cestius, if they would lay down their arms, and submit. But the Jews would not so much as receive the ambassadors. Phæbus they fell upon, and slew him, before he had spoken a word. Bocæus too was wounded, but he retreated and escaped.

Soon after that, Cestius moved forward with his whole army, and encamped upon an elevated spot of ground, called Scopos [signifying the Prospect, or Watch-tower]. Here he rested three days. On the fourth day, which was the thirtieth of October, he brought his army into the city. The sedition, as Josephus calls them, were much terrified, and retired from the suburbs to the inner part of the city, and the temple. Cestius soon set fire to the place called Bezechra, or the new city, and to the wood market. After which he came forward to the upper part of the city, and pitched his camp over against the royal palace. And if at that time he had attempted to make his way within the walls by force, he would have won the city presently, and put an end to the war at once. But Tyrannus Prificus, a general in the army, and many officers of the horse, who had been corrupted by Florus, diverted him from that design; which was the occasion that this war lasted so long, and the Jews were involved in such grievous calamities.

So writes Josephus. And afterwards he says: "If Cestius had continued the siege a little longer, he had certainly taken the city. But God, as I think, for the wickedness of the people abhorring his own solemnities, suffered not the war to come to an end at that time."

Cestius then withdrew from the city. The Jews resumed courage, and went after him, and coming upon his rear, destroyed a good number both of horse and foot. That night Cestius lay at his former camp, Scopus. As he went farther off the next day, he even invited his enemies to pursue him. The Romans

* 1b. § 3. † 1b. § 4. ** § 7.
mans suffered greatly. Among the slain, were Priscus, commander of the sixth legion, Longinus a tribune, and Æmilius Secundus, commander of a troop of horse. It was not without a great deal of difficulty that they got to Gabao, their former camp, and leaving behind their baggage. There Cæsius stayed two days, and was in great perplexity how to proceed. On the third day he judged it expedient to move.

"That he might march on with the greater expedition, he threw away every thing that might retard his march. He killed the mules and the other beasts, excepting only such as carried weapons of war; which the Romans kept for their own use, and that they might not fall into the hands of the Jews, to be afterwards employed against them. In that march they met with such difficulties, that the Jews were near taking the whole army of Cæsius prisoners; and would have effectcd it, if night had not come on.

"In their flight they left behind them many engines for sieges, and for throwing stones, and a great part of their other instruments of war. The Jews pursued them as far as Antipatris, and then returned, taking up the engines, spoiling the dead bodies, and gathering up the prey which the Romans had left behind them. So they came back to their metropolis with great rejoicings. They lost but a few men themselves; but they had slain of the Romans and their auxiliaries five thousand and three hundred foot, and three hundred and eighty horse. These things happened on the eighth day of November, in the twelfth year of the reign of Nero.

"After that calamity had befallen Cæsius," says Josephus, "many of the most considerable of the Jewish people forsook the city, as men do a sinking ship."

And it is very likely, that at this time many of the Christians also withdrew from Jerusalem and Judea. Eusebius says, that § before the war began, the Christians left Jerusalem, and went to a place beyond Jordan, called Pella. Epiphanius § speaks to the like purpose. Eusebius does not quote any ancient author for what he says; but it might be founded upon tradition, and such as could be relied upon. As he refited near the place, he might have satisfactory information of it, and receive the account from the descendants of those Jewish believers.

However, some of them may have gone abroad into the other countries. St. John, as is well known, lived for some time in Asia. When he came thither, we cannot say exactly: but probably, in the year of Christ 66, or sooner. Some of the Jewish believers might
might go with him out of Judea, or come to him into Asea afterwards. St. John, in his Third Epistle, ver. 6, speaks of strangers, who were under difficulties. Some learned men have supposed, that thereby are meant Jewish believers, who had been driven out of Palestine, or had fled from it, induced thereto by the necessity of the times, and their fidelity to Christ, and had left their substance behind them.

I think we may reckon it to be certain, or at least highly probable, that none of the faithful disciples of Jesus were shut up in Jerusalem at the siege; and that most of them left it some while before it began in the year of Christ 66, or thereabout, or sooner.

Our blessed Lord, speaking of the difficulties of these times, and of the declensions of some of his followers, encourages faithfulness in strong terms. Mark xiii. 13... "And ye shall be hated of all men for my name sake. But he that shall endure unto the end, shall be saved." And Luke xxi. 17—19. "And ye shall be hated of all men for my name sake. But there shall not an hair of your head perish. In your patience possest ye your souls." And compare Matt. x. 21, 22. These gracious assurances were now fulfilled. The difficulties which the followers of Jesus met with, were very great. And the love of many waxed cold," and some apostatised to Judaism, to avoid sufferings. Nevertheless, they gained nothing by it. They joined themselves to the unbelieving part of the nation, and had part with them in the heavy calamities which befell them. But the faithful followers of Jesus, who were steady to their profession, and attended to his predictions concerning coming calamities, and observed the signs of their near approach, escaped, and obtained safety, with only the lesser difficulties of a flight, which was necessary in the time of a general calamity.

The Jews who had defeated Ceilus, upon their return to Jerusalem, appointed governors and commanders for several places. "Joseph son of Gorian," and Ananus the High-Priest, were chosen to govern the city, and to repair the walls. Josephus, son of Matthias, our historian, was made governor of both the Galilees. Others were sent to other places.

Ceilus sent messengers to Nero in Achaia, to give him an account of what had happened, and of the state of affairs in Judea, and to lay the blame of all the disturbances upon Florus.

Nero, as Josephus says, was not a little moved at these things, though he dissembled his concern. However, he chose for a general a man of known valour, and experience in war, several of whose important services are here mentioned by Josephus, agreeably to the testimony of the Roman authors, who represent Vespasian to have been chosen...
chozen for this service out of regard to his merit, when upon some accounts he was disagreeable to Nero.

Veepasian * sent his own son Titus from Achaia, where he then was, to Alexandria, to fetch thence the fifth and tenth legions. Himself, having crossed the Hellepont, went by land into Syria, where he gathered together the Roman forces, and a good number of auxiliaries from the neighbouring princes.

The Jews, elevated by the advantages which they had gained over Cælius, determined to carry the war to a greater distance. Accordingly they marched to Athkallon, a city always at enmity with them, distant from Jerufalem 550 furlongs [more than 60 miles]. Here the Jewish people were defeated in two attacks, losing more than eighteen thousand men, and two of their generals, John the Eßen, and Silas the Babylonian. Niger the Peræa, the third general, narrowly escaped with his life.

Veepasian 3, when he arrived at Antioch, the metropolis of Syria, reckoned the third city of the Roman empire for magnitude and dignity, found there Agrippa waiting for him. And taking the whole army with him, he soon marched forward to Ptolemais.

Titus §, making greater expedition than could be expected, especially in the winter season, came to his father at Ptolemais's, bringing with him the fifth and tenth legions; to which were added the fifteenth legion, and eighteen cohorts. There were also five cohorts from Cæarea, with one troop of horse, and also five other troops from Syria. There was also a considerable number of auxiliaries from the kings Antiochus [of Comagene] and Agrippa, and Seleucus, and Malchus the Arabian. So that the whole army of Romans and auxiliaries, horse and foot, amounted to about sixty thousand men, besides servants, whom Josephus represents as far from being useless, according to the Roman discipline.

Thus we have pursued the history to the end of the year 66, and into the beginning of the year 67.:

Veepasian || flaid some while at Ptolemais. However Placidus, who was before sent into Galilee, destroyed many, whom he met with

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† lb. cap. ii. §§ 1, 2, 3. * 4 Th. cap. iv. 4. 2.
in the open countries. He also made an attack upon Jotapata, was repulsed.

Vespasian * leaves Ptolemais, and marches with his army in order into Galilee.

The first place taken by Vespasian was Gorada, which at time had in it few men of the military age. But he flew all the people; the Romans, from hatred of the Jews, and resenting the feat of Cestius, having no mercy on any age. He also set fire to city, and burnt all the villages, and smaller towns, round about making some totally defoliate, in others taking some captives.

Josephus † leaves Tiberias, and enters Jotapata on the 21st May.

The next day Vespasian marches to Jotapata, at which he received a slight wound in one of his feet.

* Whilst ** Vespasian lay with his army before Jotapata, he
** Trajan, commander of the tenth legion, to Japha, not far off,
*** place was strong, and surrounded by a double wall. A larger
** number made a sally upon the Romans. Being beaten back,
*** retired within the outer wall. But when they came to the
** wall, their fellow-citizens refused to admit them, lest the Romans
*** should force their way in with them. And now,**
Josephus, " it might be seen, that God had given up the Galileans to the Romans, to be destroyed by their cruel enemies. The number of the slain in the disfights between the two walls was ten thousand. Of this Trajan gave information to Vespasian, desiring him to send his son Titus thither, that he might have the honor of completing the conquest."

** Vespasian, fulfilling there might still be some difficulty,
*** Titus with five hundred horse, and a thousand foot. When
** place was taken, all the people, young and old, were destr
** None were faved, excepting the male infants, and the women,
*** were made slaves. The number of those who were slain,
** and in the former attack, were fifteen thousand ; the prisoners,
*** two thousand a hundred and thirty. This calamity befell
** Galileans on the five and twentieth day of May."

At the same time the Samaritans got together in a riotous mner at mount Garizim. Whereupon Vespasian sent against them realiss, commander of the fifth legion, with six hundred horse, three thousand foot; who flew them all to the number of eleven thousand and five hundred. This happened on the 25th day of the month of June.

Now the final attack was made upon Jotapata, which was after a siege of forty-seven days. All of every age were slain, ex infants and women. The captives were a thousand and two hundred. The number of slain in the last attack, and in the former coun

* Hb. n. 2, 3. † Cap. vii. 1. ‡ Hb. 3.
§ Hb. 4. ** Hb. § 23. *** Hb. § 30.
†† Ibid. p. 31. ‡‡ Ibid. p. 32. §§ Hb. § 33—35.
Transactions in the Year of Christ 66.

Vespasian ordered the city to be demolished, and set fire to all the cattle. Thus Jotapata was taken on the 4th of July, in the thirteenth year of the reign of Nero. It is probable that the Jews and the Romans were not prepared for the assault, as Vespasian did not know the layout of the city. The Jews were taken by surprise, and many of them were killed.

Vespasian's troops then marched on to Joppa, where they established a stronghold. From there, they were able to control the region and prevent the Romans from coming closer. The Romans then turned their attention to the cities of the region, and Vespasian sent troops to destroy them.

In this way, Vespasian was able to expand his territory and establish a foothold in the region. The Jews were forced to surrender and accept the Roman occupation. The region waspacified, and the Jews were subjected to Roman rule.

Hearing* of the revolt of Taricheas, Vespasian sent thither his son Titus. Taricheas was a strong place, and had been fortified by Josephus. The number of people who perished in the several attacks, and in taking the city, was six thousand and five hundred.

After which, Vespasian sat upon his tribunal, to consider what should be done with the people that remained. And at length, by his order, all the old men and other useless people, to the number of twelve hundred, were slain. Out of the young men he chose six thousand of the strongest, whom he sent to Nero to work at the Isthmus. The rest he fold for slaves, who were in number thirty thousand and four hundred. This was done on the eighth day of September.

The place § to which Vespasian went next was Gamala, where he met with great difficulties, and many of the Romans were slain. It was taken at last on the 23d day of October. When there was no way of escaping left, many Jews threw their children, their wives, and themselves, from the hill on which the citadel was built, into the deep valley below. The number of those who thus precipitated themselves was computed to be five thousand. The rest amounted to four thousand. For here the Romans spared none, not even infants. None escaped, except two women.

To || Gischala, Vespasian sent Titus. Here about six thousand were slain. But John, son of Levi, who had commanded in the place, escaped, and got to Jerusalem, with some others; which, as our historian says **, was the work of God, who saved Josephus for the detraction of Jerusalem.

"Thus," says †† Josephus, "was all Galilee subdued, after it had cost the Romans much labour."

The †† next chapter of our author contains an account of the state of things in Jerusalem, after John came into it; where he likewise says: "At §§ the same time there were disturbances, and civil wars in every city. All they who were quiet from the Romans, turned their hands one against another. At this time robbers, and others of the worst characters, came into the city, where it had been long usual to receive all who came. But their numbers consumed those provisions which might have been of use in a siege.

They || now exercised tyranny over the most considerable men. Antipas, a man of royal lineage, the most potent man in the city, to whom the care of the public treasury had been committed, they held of, and sent to prison: and after him Levia, a man of great distinction, and Sophas, son of Raguel, a man of like eminence, and both of royal lineage. And *** not thinking themselves safe whilst they were living, they sent some men of desperate characters, to put them to death in the prison.

Diffusions

* Ib. § 7. † De B. J. 1. 4. cap. 3. ‡ De B. J. 1. 4. cap. 3. †† De B. J. 1. 4. cap. 3. ** Ibid. cap. ii. n. 1. — 5. *** De B. J. 1. 4. cap. 3. §§ Ib. § 5, 5. || § 4. *** § 5.
Dispersions * increasing, there were slain † in one night eight thousand and five hundred, and afterwards ‡ twelve thousand of the better sort, beside many others. Here also are mentioned by name, as put to death by the zealots or others, divers men of great eminence, whose deaths our historian laments in pathetic terms: Ananus §, the most ancient of the High-Priests; Jesus, also High-Priest, inferior to Ananus, but yet a person of great eminence; and Zacharias son of Baruch, different from Zacharias mentioned in Matt. xxiii. 35. and Luke xi. 51. as was shewn in another place.¶

Soon ** after this, was put to death by the zealots Gorion, a man of great eminence for his own virtues, as well as upon account of his family. Nor did Niger the Peraite escape their hands, though he had been so serviceable to them in this war. "When †† they were ‡‡ killing him, he uttered this imprecation upon them, That, beside the war, they might undergo famine and pestilence, and after that come to the mutual slaughter of each other. All which impreca-
tions God ratified against those wicked men. And most justly did they soon after reap the fruit of their madness in their mutual dif-
fendions."

These †† things being heard of in the Roman camp, the com-
manders were for hastening the attack upon the city. But Vespasian, as Josephus says, answered them, that the Jews were not now making armour, nor building walls: but they are every day tearing them-
selves to pieces by intestine wars and diffusions; and suffer greater miseries than could be inflicted upon them by us, if they were in our hands. And it was the best way to let the Jews destroy one another.

These things we suppose to have happened at the end of the year 67, and the beginning of 68. "However, Vespasian was not inattentive to affairs, and took care to reduce other places, before he went to Jerusalem. He then left Cefarea for a while, and marched to Gadara, the metropolis of Perea, as Josephus says, and entered it on the fourth day of March.

After which he returned to Cefarea, and left Placidus to carry on the war in those parts; who §§ took Abila, Julia, and Seph-
femoth, and other smaller cities and villages, as far as the lake Af-
phalites. Infomuch that now all Perea was in the hands of the Romans, excepting Macherus. This expedition was very fatal to the Jews. Many of the Jewish people were slain by the sword, others were driven into the River Jordan. The number of the slain was not less than fifteen thousand, besides two thousand and two hundred which were made captives. And Placidus had a rich booty of ass' s, and sheep, camels, and oxen. This disas-
fer was equal to any that had yet befallen the Jews."
In the mean time * Vespasian, with a part of his army, went from Cæsarea to Antipatris; where he spent two days in settling the affairs of that city. On the third day he marched on, laying waste and burning all the villages. And when he had laid waste all the places about the toparchy of Thamas, he passed on to Lydda and Jannia; and then came to Ammaus. Thence he went to the toparchy of Bethlephæphon; and destroying that and other neighbouring places, he slew more than ten thousand, and made captives more than a thousand. And on the second day of the month of July he pitched his camp at Corea, not far from Neapolis, called by the people of the country, Mabortha. And then went to Jericho.

Not long afterwards he returned to Cæsarea. And now, when he was getting ready for his forces for the siege of Jerusalem, he heard of the death of Nèus, which happened on the tenth of June, in the year of our Lord 68. Wherefore Vespasian for a while put off his intended expedition against Jerusalem: waiting to see to whom this empire would be transferred, and expecting to receive orders from him.

During the remaining part of the year 68, and the year 69, little was done by the Romans in the war against the Jews. They kept garrisons in the places already conquered, and fortified some places. But they made little progress, and the siege of Jerusalem was deferred; this delay was a favourable opportunity for the Jewish people to consider and relent, and make peace with the Romans their enemies, having first repented of their sins, and humbled themselves before God. But nothing of that kind came to pass. They went on in their old way, quarrelling among themselves, and forming parties, weakening themselves by divisions and contentions, and thereby hastening their ruin.

Our Lord foretold this, as appears from the terms of all his predictions concerning them. He foretold, that nothing would reclaim them, after his own teachings had failed of the effect. "When he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, saying: If thou hadst known, even thou, in this thy day, the things that belong to thy peace. But now they are hid from thy eyes. For the days will come upon thee, that thy enemies shall compass thee round, and lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee, because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation." Luke xix. 41.—44. He would still send among them prophets, wise men, and scribes, his Apostles and Evangelists. But they would not hearken to them. They would reject their message, and abuse them. Matt. xxiii. 34.

At this time, says Josephus, a new war begun at Jerusalem. And Simon, son of Gioras, who for a while had been troublesome to the people there by his furious attacks upon the place, was admitted

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* Ib. cap. viii. 2. † Ib. cap. ix. 1, 2.
1 Nihil hoc anno alieius mo menti in Judæa gestum. Papi. Agr. 69. n. xiii.
§ De annis quæ ante Ecclesiam universam nostam. L. ii. c. i. § 3, lxx.
mitten into the city, in the month of April, near the end of the third year of the war.

On the third day of July, in the year of our Lord 69, Vespasian was proclaimed emperor by the Roman army in Judea; as he had been proclaimed on the first day of the same month at Alexandria, which day was reckoned the beginning of his reign.

And may we not be allowed to suppose, that Vespasian and Titus were thus advanced by way of recompence for their services, as instruments in the hand of Providence for inflicting that punishment upon the Jewish people which their crying fins deserved, and thus accomplishing the predictions concerning it? We cannot say, that they were truly virtuous. But they were perfons of great eminence and many abilities. And they had a more social and benevolent disposition, than many others. Titus in particular is represented by Roman authors, as a man of a very amiable character. And Josephus, who was present with him in the war, often says, that he unwillingly treated the Jewish people so severely as he did, and that he often made them offers of mercy, if they would lay down their arms, and accept of reasonable terms.

Vespasian II., not long after this, went to Alexandria, and thence to Rome, leaving his son Titus, to carry on the war in Judea.

Vespasian stayed some months at Alexandria, waiting for a fair wind and good weather, or upon account of some political views and considerations. Several extraordinary things are related to have happened during his stay there; which are related very briefly by Dion Cassius, more particularly by Theon, and still more prolixly by Tacitus.

"Two
"Two men of low rank of Alexandria, one of them blind, the other lame in one of his hands, came both together to him in a humble manner, saying, that they had been in a dream admonished by the god Serapis to apply to him for the cure of their disorders. Which they were assured might be done for the one, if he would be pleased to anoint his eyes and face with his spittle; and for the other, if he would vouchsafe to tread upon his hand. Vespasian, as is said, hesitated for a while. However, the physicians having been consulted, they gave their opinion, that the organs of sight were not destroyed in the blind man, and that sight might be restored, if obstructions were removed; and that the other's hand was only disjointed, and with proper remedies might be set right again.

At length, moved by the entreaties of the disfavored persons, and encouraged by the flatteries of those about him, Vespasian performed what had been desired. And the effect was answerable. One of them presently recovered the use of his hands, and the other his sight."

I do not see reason to believe, that any miracle was now wrought. It was a contrivance between Vespasian and his friends and favourites. Nor could it be safe for any to examine and make remarks upon an event which an emperor and his favourites recommended to public belief.

Suetonius has accounted for these stories in the introduction to his narration, saying, that "somewhat was wanting to give dignity and authority to a new-chosen emperor." And at the beginning of his Life of Vespasian, he observes, that "the Flavian family was not renowned for its antiquity." And it is easy for any to discern, from several things said by Suetonius and Tacitus, that Vespasian was very willing to encourage the belief of extraordinary things concerning himself.

I think, that what Spartan writes of some miracles ascribed to Adrian, may illustrate this history; and therefore I have transcribed him below very largely. Spartan lets us know, that Marcus Maximus, who before him had writ the Life of Adrian, and some other emperors, said, those miracles were mere fictions. And says...

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*cor rectis, nec quidquam ultra incredibile,* *etiam ipsa voluntas, eureka quae astant hablit.

*tamen, jussit exsequiur. Statim conversa ad utram manus, ac cerco reliquit dies.*

*Utremque quia interfiscer nonque mensuravit, posse nullum mendacio priorum.*

*Tactit. Hist. 4. cap. 81.*

*"Ad rei ipse veritaem quod actuisti, non facile afferamini credere fecere, cum vis tum ut est id negare, que Imperator obsequientur Egypti, et quod praelde interem Imperatoris, verum videt. Fraudes ejus retagere, qui fallere vult, et omnium Reipub.*


*t "Imperium sucopie, fortunque tandem genti Flavia: obscura illa quidem, ac fac majorum imaginibus," Vespasian. cap. i.

*I "Ex tempestate supervenit quaedam mulier, que diceret, somnio se monstra, ut in finamaret Adrianus, ne se occideret, quod effe bene valuitur: quod cum non fecisset effe casamentum, Juffian tumen iterum Adrianino cadem dicere, atque genus ejus aequalitatem, recepturus vidit, ut id fecisset. Quod cum infamium impleret, oculos recept quum agns quin in sanum erat, ex quo venereret, oculos abolitibas. Venit et de Pannonia quaedam succur.*

*"Eamus quod febris hominem Adrianum, eumque costitigit: quo facto et ipsis oculos recepit, et Adrianum fugit reliquis; quanvis Marius Maximus hoc per annalesorum facto com."* Spartan. Haddan. cap. 25.
says the learned and judicious Reimar in his notes upon Dion Cassius: "Nec satis de Vepsiani," and Perhaps it may divert notice, that notwithstanding such fine things were ascribed to Vepsianus, Dion presently afterwards says, "he was not at all acceptable to the "Alexandrians, but they hated him, and ridiculed and reproached "him both in public and private." However, Crevier's observation is to this effect. "At the same "time, we ought carefully to observe, that those disorders which "Vepsianus cured, were not of an incurable nature. And confe-"quently, we are at liberty to think, that the healing them did not "exceed the power of the demon." And, indeed, Popish saints and Heathen demons are much alike. Nor is there any great difference between Heathen and Popish credulity. I cannot forbear to take notice of one remarkable history in this reign §. Sabinus †, in Gaul, engaged with some others in a re-"volt from the Romans, but was soon defeated. He might then have "escaped into Germany. But affection for his wife, the best of wom-
"en, whom he could not carry with him, led him into another scheme, which he communicated to two only of his freedmen, in whom he could confide. His country-house was burnt down, and he was supposed to have perished in the flames. But really he retired into a large subterraneous cavern, which he had near it. And his wife Epponnina abandoned herself to all the excesses of grief, and for three days and three nights refused to take any sustenance. Sabinus, hearing of it, and dreading the consequences, sent one of his freedmen to her, to allure her of his life, and to advise her to keep up the appearance of a mourner, still avoiding extremities. Af-
"terwards, she had access to him, and bore two children, of which she delivered herself in the cavern. By various artful pretences and the faithfulness of friends, the truth was kept secret, and Sabinus lay concealed nine years; in which interval there were once some hopes of obtaining the emperor's pardon; and Epponnina had Saba-
"inus to Rome, but disguised that none knew him. But being dis-
appointed in those expectations, they returned to the place of their retreat. At length Sabinus was discovered. He, and Epponnina, and their two sons, were brought before Vepsianus. She behaved with becoming firmness, yet endeavoured to move the emperor's pity.
pity, presenting her two sons to him. "These," says he, "Caesar,"
"I have brought forth, and nurtured in the cavern, that I might in
crease the number of your supplicants." And, as it is said, neither
the emperor himself, nor any others with him, could refrain from
tears. However, perceiving that he did not yield, she then up-
brailed him, and told him, she had lived more happily in the dark-
ness of a cave, than he upon his throne. Sabinus and his wife were
condemned, but the children were spared. Plutarch says that
thereby Vespasian provoked the vengeance of heaven, and brought
upon himself the extinction of his family. It was," says he, "the
most tragical action of that reign, a thing which neither gods nor
demons could bear the sight of." Indeed, not only he, but Ta-
citus and Dion, they a dislike of that action. But we have not
Tacitus's conclusion of the story, he having deferred it to a follow-
ing book, which is now wanting. It must appear not a little
strange, that a general and his wife should be put to death nine
years after a disturbance had been suppressed, and which had no bad
consequences; when likewise, of the two miscreant rebels and tyrants
at Jerusalem, one only was condemned to death, and the other to
perpetual imprisonment. Vespasian did not live long after this. We
now proceed in our history.

About this time the Jews became divided into three parties or
factions; the leaders of which were John, Eleazar, and Simon: by
whom the city, and every part of it, and the temple itself, were
filled with slaughter and bloodshed. This happened, as Josephus
expressly says, whilst Titus was with his father at Alexandria: and
must therefore be rightly placed by us in the year 69, and perhaps
not far from the end of it. "So," as the same writer says, "one
faction fought against the other. Which partition in evil cafes
may be said to be a good thing, and the effect of divine justice."

Eleazar had the temple, John was below him in the city, Simon
had the upper part of the city. Simon had with him ten thou-
sand, before the Idumaeans. His own men had fifty commanders, of
which he was supreme. The Idumaeans, that joined with him, were
five thousand, and had ten commanders. With Eleazar were two
thousand and five hundred of the zealots. John had six thousand
armed men under twenty commanders. But soon after the beginning
of the siege, these two parties united into one: after which there
were but two factions, John's and Simon's.

"But before that union, whilst they were in three parties, out of
spite to each other, as it seems, they set fire to several stores
houses, that were full of corn and other provisions, as if they
had done it on purpose to serve the Romans: destroying what
would have been sufficient for a siege of many years. So they
were
Transactons in the Year of Christ 70.

were taken with the famine; which could not have been, if they had "not by this means brought it upon themselves." So says our Jewish historian.

Titus now leaves Alexandria, and comes to Cesarea, designing to move forward to Jerusalem, and lay siege to it; having with him an army of about sixty thousand men, Romans and auxiliaries. He pitched his camp at the place called Scopus, making however two other encampments at a small distance, one of which was on the mount of Olives. He presented himself before the city about the time of Passover, which was on the fourteenth day of the month of April, in the year of Christ 70. Here he met with difficulties at the first, as the Jews made furious sallies upon his army. Some of his soldiers were put by them into disorder, and suffered very considerably.

The city of Jerusalem was surrounded by three walls, excepting in such parts where were deep vallies, which rendered the place inaccessible. There it had but one wall. On the eleventh day of the siege, which was the seventh day of May, the Romans got possession of the first wall, and demolished a great part of it. Titus then encamped within the city in a place called the Assyrians camp. On the fifth day after that, he got possession of the second wall, but was repulsed and beat out of it again. "Whereupon those Jews who were armed, and were the fighting men," as our historian says, "were much elevated, persuading themselves that the Romans could never conquer the city. For had blinded their minds for the transgressions which they had been guilty of, so that they did not consider the superior force of the Romans, nor discern how the famine was creeping in upon them. For bitherto they had fed themselves out of the public distresses, and drank the blood of the city. But poverty was now become the lot of many good men, and a great many had already perished for want of necessaries. But they supposèd the destruction of the meanner people to be a benefit to them." However, Titus renewed the attack. The Jews defended themselves resolutely for three days. But on the fourth day he again became master of that wall, and then he demolished all that part which lay to the north, and fortified the south side with towers, and placing soldiers in them; and then considered how he might attack the third and inmost wall.

Now Titus thought fit to relax the siege for a while, in order to ease the soldiers and pay them subsistence-money, as also to see whether the Jews would relent, and make some proposals for surrendering, that he might show them mercy. Moreover, Josephus, by order of Titus, took this opportunity to address the Jews in a pathetic discourse; having sought out a place

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† Cap. iii. 2. § L. 5. cap. iv. ++ cap. vii. § 2. ++ * ... 1b. § 3.
†† Cap. viii. § 1. 3. §§ L. 5. cap. iv. § 1. §§ § 3. 5.
to stand in, where he might be heard, and be in safety. In that speech he entreats the Jews to save themselves, their temple, and their country, and tells them, that they were fighting against God.

"Moreover," says he, "as for Titus, those springs which were almost dried up, when they were in your power, since his coming, they run more plentifully than they did before. Accordingly, you know, that Siloam, as well as all the other springs about the city, did so far fail, that water was sold in pitchers; whereas they now have such a quantity for your enemies, as is sufficient for themselves, and for their cattle, and for watering gardens. The same wonderful sign you had experience of formerly, when the afore-mentioned king of Babylon made war against us, who took this city, and burnt the temple; though the men of that time, I believe, were far from being such transgressors as you are."

With regard to that particular, the flowing of the springs without the city in the time of the king of Babylon, Mr. Whiston says in a marginal note upon the place, "The history of this is now wanting elsewhere."

Four days were spent in that relaxation. On the fifth day, when no offers of peace came from the Jews, Titus began to raise new banks at several places.

"The famine began now to be very severe. And with the famine increased also the madness of the fidiuous [as Jophenus calls them, meaning John and Simon, and the officers under them]. There could no corn appear publicly any where, but those robbers came running for it. They also searched private houses. If they found any corn, they tormented the people, because they had denied it. If they found none, they tormented them nevertheless, because they supposed the people had concealed it."

Here Jophenus enlargeth upon the miseries of the people, and the great wickedness of their present governors. "But," says he, "it is impossible to enumerate every instance of the iniquity of those men. But, in a word, never did any city suffer so great calamities. Nor was there ever, from the beginning of the world, any time more fruitful of wickedness, than that. These were the men who overthrew the city, and compelled the Romans, unwillingly, to gain a disagreeable victory. They did little less than throw fire upon the temple, and seemed to think it came too slowly."

"At § this time many came out of the city, to seek for food, or with a view of making an escape, who were apprehended by the Romans, and crucified before the walls. And many of them were scourged before they were crucified. This seemed to Titus very grievous. For five hundred Jews were taken in a day, and sometimes more. Nevertheless he allowed of it. To distinguish, and

* * * Other copies have a different verse, see note. ib. § 4. p. 350. Herod. 2. cap. xx. § 3. 3. cap. xx. § 44. 5. cap. xx. § 5.
Transactions in the Year of Christ 70.

"and to let them go off, would not have been safe. Nor could he
"spare men enough to keep guard upon so many. Moreover, he
"hoped that the sight of these miserable objects might dispose them
"in the city to think of surrendering. The soldiers, out of anger,
"and hatred of the Jews, hung them upon the crosses, some one
"way, some another, as it were in jest. And so great was the num-
"ber, that room was wanting for crosses, and crosses were wanting
"for bodies."

"Now also Titus ordered the hands of some of them, who had
"come out of the city, to be cut off; and then he sent them back,
"to let the people within the city know, that henceforth he
"should carry on the siege with vigour; however, still wishing
"them to repent, and not compel him to destroy their city, and
"their admired temple. But they who stood upon the wall re-
"turned reproaches upon him, and upon his father Vespasian, tell-
"ing him that death was better than slavery; and that so long as
"they had breath, they would do the Romans all the harm they
"could. As for the temple, they believed it would be preferred
"by him who inhabited it: having him for their helper, they de-
"fied all his threatenings; for the event depended upon God
"only."

The Romans were employed in raising batteries. But though
"they had begun to raise them on the 12th day of May, they had much
"soon to finish them by the 29th day of the same month, after having la-
"boured hard for seventeen days successively; in which time, however,
"four batteries were completed.
But John found means to undermine them, so that they fell down
"all at once, causing great confusion among the Romans. And after
"that, Simon and his men made a furious sally upon the Ro-
"mans.

The Roman army was greatly discouraged, to see their batteries
"ruined in one hour, which had cost them so much labour. And many
"despaired, thinking it impossible to take the city with the usual en-
"gines of war.

Titus consulted with his officers what might be fit to be done.
At length it was determined to encompass the city with a wall; which
"was completed in three days, with towers at proper distances, to place
"soldiers in as garrisons.

Our blessed Lord says, Luke xix. 45. "For the days will come
"upon thee, that thy enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and
"compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side." Some think,
"that this prophecy was now particularly fulfilled in the building of
"the wall, here mentioned by Josephus. Others may suppose, that it
"had its accomplishment, when the Romans laid siege to the city of
"Jerusalem, and encompassed it with an army.

"The famine now increasing, it devoured whole houses. For a
"while, they who had no relations to take care of them, were buried

L 2

"at
at the public expence. Afterwards the dead were thrown over the
wall into the ditch."

"When Titus, in going his rounds, near the vallies, below the
walls, saw the dead bodies, and the putrefaction issuing from them,
he fetched a deep sigh, and lifting up his hands to heaven, called
God to witness, that this was not his doing." However, he pro-
posed erecting new platforms; which was a difficult work, as all the
timber near the city was already consumed, and it was now to be
fetched from a great distance.

In the next chapter,Josephus relates the death of Matthias, son
of Boethus, one of the high priest, and several other person's of
eminence, and divers others, who were slaughtered by order of Simon
in a most shameful manner. Matthias was the person who had ad-
vised the admitting of Simon into the city, contrary to the inclina-
tions of many others. Matthias had four sons, one of which had
saved himself by getting away to Titus. The other three were all
put to death, together with their father; but with this express order
from Simon, that the sons should be first slain before the eyes of their
father. Nor was burial allowed to them. The execution was com-
mitted by Simon to Ananus, son of Bamadus, the most barbarous
man of his guards. After them were slain Ananias, a priest, and
Aristea, scribe of the Sanhedrim, and fifteen other men of eminence
among the people. They also flew such as made lamentation for these
persons, without further examination.

"Many did still find means to get out of the city. Some leaped
down from the wall; others went out of the city with stones in
their hands, as if they were going to fight with the Romans. But
most of them died miserably. Some perished by excessive eating
upon empty stomachs. Moreover, some of them had swallowed
gold, and were detected afterwards in searching for it in their ex-
crements. This having been observed in a few instances, excited
the avarice of the soldiers, who concluded that all the defectors
were full of gold. They therefore cut up their bellies, and searched
their entrails. In this way," Josephus says, "there perished two
thousand in one night. Nor does it seem to me, that any misery
befell the Jews more terrible than this.

"When Titus heard of it, he was greatly displeased, especially
when he found, that not only the Syrians and Arabians had prac-
tised this cruelty, but the Romans likewise. He therefore gave
orders, that all who for the future acted in that manner, should be
put to death. But the love of money prevailed against the dread
of punishment. And indeed it was God who had condemned the
whole nation, and defeated every method taken for their preserva-
tion."

About this time John melted down many of the sacred uten-
sils in the temple, to make use of them as instruments of war. He
also distributed the sacred wine and oil for common use to persons,
who

* § 4. ♦ Cap. xii. § 1. ¶ § 4, 5. & § 6, 7.
who in drinking, and anointing themselves, wafted them in a profuse manner.

"But why do I say to relate particularly these several calamities? For at this time Mannæus, son of Lazarus, fled out of the city, and came to Titus, and told him, that through the one gate, which had been entrusted to his care, there had been carried out no fewer than a hundred and fifteen thousand eight hundred and eighty dead bodies, from the day that the Romans encamped near the city, the fourteenth day of the month of April, to the first day of July. That was a prodigious number. The man was not a governor at the gate. But he was appointed to pay the public allowance for carrying the bodies out; and therefore was obliged to number them. Others were buried by their relations: though their burial was no other than to bring them, and cast them out of the city. After that man, there came to Titus several other defectors of good condition, who told him, that the whole number of the poor, who had been thrown out at the gates, was no less than six hundred thousand. The number of the rest could not be exactly known. They farther told him, that when they were no longer able to carry out the dead bodies of the poor, they laid them in heaps in large houses, and then shut them up.

"They likewise said, that a measure of wheat had been sold for a talent; and that afterwards, when it had been impossible to come out to gather herbs, because the city was encompassed with a wall, some were driven to such distresses, as to seek the common sewers and old dunghills of cattle, and to eat the dung which they found there: and that what they could not before endure to see, they now made use of for food. When the Romans heard of these things, they commiserated their case. But the seditious, who saw them, did not repent, till the same distresses reached themselves. For they were blinded by that fate which was coming upon the city and themselves."

There ends the fifth book of our Author's history of the Jewish War. The sixth book contains the progress of the siege, and the miseries of the people, till the city was taken by Titus.

The Roman batteries are now raised at the end of one and twenty days hard labour, and the miseries of the city increase. The Romans begin to batter upon the walls of the tower called Antonia. The Jews made a vigorous defence. But the Romans gained possession of it about the middle of July.

"Titus thenceupon ordered his soldiers to dig up the founda-
tions of the tower Antonia, and make way for him to come up with his whole army. And being informed, that on that very day, the seventeenth of July, the daily sacrifice had failed, and that it had not been offered up for want of men, and that the people..."
people were greatly concerned at it, he sent for Josephus, and 
commanded him to say to John the same things that had been said 
before. Accordingly Josephus sought for a proper place to stand 
in, and in the name of Titus himself earnestly exhorted John and 
those that were with him, to spare their own country, and to pre-
vent that fire which was ready to seize upon the temple, and to 
offer to God therein their usual sacrifices. But John cast many re-
proaches upon Josephus, with imprecations, adding withal, that 
he did not fear the city should ever be taken, which was God's 
own city: After which, Josephus went on with a pathetic speech; 
which, though it did not persuade John and his adherents, was 
not altogether without effect.

And some, watching for an opportunity, fled to the Romans. Of 
whom were the High-priests Joseph and Jefus, and of sons of High-
priests three, and four sons of Matthias, as well as one son of the 
other Matthias, formerly mentioned, who with three of his sons had 
been killed by order of Simon, son of Gioras. And many others of 
the nobility. All whom Titus received very kindly, and sent them to 
Gophna, a small city, where they might live quietly, following their 
own customs. Which offer they cheerfully accepted. But as they 
did not appear, the seditious within the city gave out, that those men 
had been slain by the Romans. It was in vain, therefore, they said, 
for any to go out to the Romans, unless they were willing to be put 
to death.

Titus therefore sent for those men from Gophna, and let them 
go round near the wall with Josephus, to assure the people that they 
might come over to him with safety.

If all this be true, as Josephus writes, it is a proof of the good tem-
per of Titus. Moreover, the Romans were now pushing their con-
quests upon the temple itself, which Titus seems unwilling to have 
destroyed.

And," as Josephus adds ||, "Titus was much affected with the 
present state of things, and reproached John and those with him; 
reminding them of the regard which had been shewn to the tem-
ple by the Romans, who had allowed them to erect in the courts 
of it a partition wall, with inscriptions in Greek, forbidding all 
foreigners to enter within those limits, and allowing them to kill 
such as did so, though they were Romans. I call to witneses, says 
his, the Gods of the country, and every God, who ever had a re-
gard to this place (for I do not now suppose it to be regarded by 
any of them): I also call to witneses my own army, and the Jews 
who are with me, and your own selves, that I do not compel you 
to pollute your sanctuary. And if you will change the place of 
combat, no Roman shall come near it. For I will endeavour to 
preferve your temple, whether you will or not."

Such
The Siege of Jerusalem.

Such things were spoken by Titus, and by Josephus after him in Hebrew, to John and the rest with him. But they perverted it, as if all these fine offers proceeded from fearfulness, and not from any good-will to them.

Titus therefore proceeded in his attacks. His soldiers fought with the Jews at the temple, whilst he continued on the higher ground in Antonia, to observe their conduct.

They had now made a broad way from the tower Antonia to the temple, and began to play on the temple with their battering engines.

The fight was very desperate. A cloister near Antonia was set on fire. On the 24th day of July the Romans set fire to another cloister, when the fire proceeded fifteen cubits farther.

Whilest the Jews and Romans were thus fighting at the temple, the famine prevailed in the city, till at length they did not have grain from girdles and shoes. The very leather that belonged to shields they took off, and gnawed. Wafers of old straw became food to them.

At this time, a woman named Mary, of a good family, beyond Jordan, who had fled from her native place to Jerusalem, to avoid the inconveniences of the war in the open country, when all she had brought with her was consumed, or taken from her by the rapacity of the tyrants and their adherents, was reduced to such extremity, that she killed her daughter child, and dressed it for food.

On the eighth day of the month of August the Roman batteries were completed; and Titus ordered the batteries to play upon the Temple. The battle between the Jews and Romans was very desperate.

Titus retired to the tower of Antonia; and resolved the next day early in the morning to storm the temple with his whole army, and to encamp about it. But certainly the divine sentence had long since condemned it to the fire. And now the fatal day was come, according to the revolution of ages. It was the tenth day of the month of August, the same day upon which it had been formerly burnt by the King of Babylon.

The temple was now on fire. Nevertheless Titus, still desirous to save it if possible, came near, and went into the sanctuary of the temple with his commanders, and saw it, with what was in it. Which he found to be far superior to the accounts of foreigners, and not inferior to our bawlings and persuasions concerning it.

As the fire had not yet reached the inner parts of the temple, Titus gave fresh orders for extinguishing the fire, and preferring the temple, but to no purpose. Such was the enmity of the soldiers against the Jews, filled also with the hopes of plunder, and now animated with the rage of war.

L 4

"Nor

Cap. iii. § 5.
Cap. iv. § 1.
§ 5, 7.
§ 8, 9.
"Ner * can we forbear to wonder at the accuracy of the period. For this happened, as before said, in the same month, and day of the month, in which the temple had been burnt by the Babylonians. And the number of years from its first foundation by King Solomon, to this its destruction in the second year of Vespasian, are collected to be one thousand and thirty, and seven months, and fifteen days. And from its second building by Haggai in the second year of King Cyrus, to its destruction by Vespasian, there were six hundred and thirty-nine years, and forty-five days."

Whilst † the temple was burning, every thing was plundered that came to hand, and ten thousand of those who were caught were slain. Nor was there any regard had to age, or condition; but children and old men, profane persons and priests, were all slain in the same manner.

At ‡ this time the treasury-chambers were burnt, where was an immense quantity of money, and an immense number of garments, with other precious things. For there it was, that the riches of the Jews were heaped up. The soldiers also came to the rest of the cloisters in the outer court, where were women and children, and a mixed multitude of people, to the number of six thousand. And before Cæsar had given any orders about it, the soldiers in a rage set fire to the cloister. Nor did any one of that multitude escape with his life. A false prophet was the occasion of their destruction; who that very day had made proclamation in the city, that God commanded them to go up to the temple, where they would receive signs of deliverance. And indeed there was then a great number of false prophets suborned by the leaders of the factions to impose upon the people, who told them, that they should wait for deliverance from God."

"Thus," as our Author goes on in the words next following §, was this miserable people deceived by impostors, who spoke lies in the name of God. But they did not attend, nor give credit to those prodigies, which evidently foretold their future defeat. But like men infatuated, who have neither eyes to see, nor minds to consider, they disregarded the divine denunciations. There was a star, a comet resembling a sword, which floated over the city, and continued for a year[]. And before the rebellion, and before the war broke out, when the people were coming together in great multitudes to the feast of unleavened bread, on the eighth day of the month of April, at the ninth hour of the night, so great a light shone round the altar and the temple, that it seemed to be bright day. Which light continued for half an hour. This"
The Siege of Jerusalem.

The unskilful seemed to be a good sign: but by the sacred scribes it was judged to portend what has since happened. And at the fame festival a heifer, as she was led by the High-priest to be sacrificed, brought forth a lamb in the midst of the temple. Moreover over the eastern gate of the inner court of the temple, which was of braze, and very heavy, which was not without difficulty shut in the evening by twenty men, and rested upon a basis armed with iron, and was fastened with bolts that went deep into the floor, which was made of one entire stone, was seen to open of its own accord at the sixth hour of the night. Whereupon they who kept watch at the temple, went to the captain, and told him of it. He then came up thither, and not without difficulty had it shut again. This also appeared to the vulgar a good sign: as if thereby God thereby opened them the gate of happiness. But the wiser men concluded, that the security of the temple was gone, and that the gate was opened for the advantage of their enemies. And they said it was a signal of the defolation that was coming upon them. Beside these, a few days after that festival, on the one and twentieth day of the month of May, there appeared a wonderful phenomenon: non almoet exceeding belief. And the account of it might seem fabulous, if it had not been related by those who saw it, and if the following events had not been answerable to such signs. For before fun-fet, chariots and troops in armour were seen carried upon the clouds, and surrounding cities. And at the festival which we call the Pentecost, as the priests were going by night into the inner court of the temple, as the custom was, to perform their ministrations, they first felt, as they said, a shaking, accompanied with a noise, and after that a found, as of a multitude, saying, 'Let us remove hence!' But, which is still more awful, there was one Jesus, son of Ananus, of a low condition, and a countryman, who four years before the war began, when the city enjoyed profound peace and flowing prosperity, came up to the festival, in which it is the custom for us all to make tabernacles, who on a sudden began to cry out in the temple: 'A voice from the east, a voice from the west, a voice from the four winds, a voice against Jerusalem and the temple, a voice against the bridegrooms and the brides, a voice against the whole people!' This was his cry, as he went about both by day and by night, in all the lanes of the city. Some of the chief men were offended at this ill-boding found, and taking him up, laid many stripes upon him, and had him beaten severely. Yet he said not a word for himself, nor made any peculiar complaint to them that beat him; but went on repeating the same words that he had said before. Hereupon the magistrates, thinking it to be somewhat more than ordinary, as indeed it was, bring him before the Roman Governor: where he was whipped, till his bones were laid bare. All which he bore, without shedding any tears, or making any supplications; but with a mournful voice, at every stripe, cried out: 'Woe to Jerusalem! Albinus, the governor, asked him, Who he was, and whence he came, and
and why he uttered those words. To all which he made no
swer, but continued making his mournful denunciations to
city. Albinus, thinking him to be mad, dismist him.
thenceforward, to the time of the war, he did not go to any of
his mournful denunciation, as if it had been his premeditated
Woe, woe to Jerusalem! He did not give ill language to the
who beat him, as many did frequently. Nor did he thank the
who gave him food: but went on repeating to all, the doleful
page. But especially at festivals his cry was the loudest. And
it continued for seven years and five months, without his grow
hoarse, or being tired therewith, till he saw his preface fulfilled
the siege. Then he ceased. For going round upon the wall, in
his utmost force, he cried out: Woe, woe once more, to
the city, and to the people, and to the temple! And then at lat
added: Woe woe to myself also! At which instant, there c
a flame out of one of the engines, that shot him, and killed
immediately. And whilst he was uttering these mournful prefa
he gave up the ghost.

"If any one considers these things," adds Josephus, "he,
be convinced, that God takes care of mankind, and by all w
possible forehews to our race what is for their benefit and
men perih by those miseries, which they madly and volunt
bring upon themselves."

Thus I have transcribed this whole article of Josephus at len
and in the place and order in which it stands in his own work.
must be so candid as to take notice of the reflections which k
learned men have made upon it.

To this purpose speaks Dr. Willes, in his first ε discourse u
Josephus: "The prodigies that he faith happened before the
strucktion of Jerusalem, would agree better to Livy or Tac
than to a Jewish historian. The flying open of the great bra
gate of the temple is the same as happened at Thebes just be
the great battle of the Lacedemonians at Leuctra, when the g
ates of the temple of Hercules opened of themselves, without
one’s touching them. I omit many other things of the like
true: whence it is evident, that Josephus endeavoured to gre
and shpfe the history of the Jews, as like as he could to thos
the Greeks and Romans." So Dr. Willes. And I shall tranfi
below the passage of Cicero de Divinatnς, to which he refers.

Baths, § in his History of the Jews, speaks after this man
Besides, deception was casy in many of the things related by h

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* Prefixed to L'Estrange's edition of Josephus, p. 31, 4. 5vo. 
** Quid f. Lacedemonis paulo ante Leuctram calamitatem, quae significatio facta 
*** cum in Herculis fane arma funt erant, Herculisque amiculum multo subore mans 
** At eodem tempore Thebix, ut ait Callisthenes, in templo Herculis valvis classis repug 
** fabiit & ipsa aperuerunt : armaque, quae faxa in parietibus fuerant, ea fuit humi inver 
De Divin. l. 1. cap. 24. n. 72. 
§ L. i. ch. viii. § 3. p. 234.
The bright light round the altar in the night time; the cow that
brought forth a lamb, as she was led to the altar; the chariots of
fire that were seen in the air, and passed over the city with a
frightful noise; are very liable to suspicion: the opening of the
temple seems to be rather better attested than the others, because it
is said, that the magistrate came to shut it. But the meaning was
doubtful. To some it seemed to be an assurance, that God had
opened the treasures of his benediction: whilst others concluded,
that he had abandoned the protection of his temple. But it is not
easy to deny the truth of the history of the man, that cried, "A
voice from the East, a voice from the West!" and every day pre-
dicted the ruin of the city. For this man was brought before Al-
binus, who examined him. He was severely scourged, and he was
often beaten by the people, who could not endure so dismal a noise;
but he was all along unmoved. His cry continued for the space
of seven years. At length he was killed upon the walls of the
city, at the beginning of the siege. This is not a thing about
which men might be deceived. Josephus, who relates it, was at
Jerusalem, when this preacher, who was treated as a madman,
denounced its desolation. And he might inform himself concern-
ing his death. So that, if there were any things to which we ought
to attend, it is this, in which we must acknowledge somewhat ex-
traordinary." So says Balfage.

I am inclined to go over, and examine every one of these pro-
digies,

"There was a star, a comet, resembling a sword, which stood
"over the city, and continued for a year."

How Mr. Whiston understood this, has been seen already. L'E-
frange translates thus: "What shall we say to the comet that hung
"over Jerusalem, for one whole year together, in the figure of a
"sword?" Archbp. Tillotson † in this manner: "A little before
"their destruction," he tells us, "there hung over their city a fiery
"sword, which continued for a year together. A little before
"their rebellion against the Romans, there appeared a comet, which
"shined so clear in the temple, and about the altar, as if it had
"been day." It must be confessed, that is not exact. Tillemont,
"There ‡ was also a comet which appeared for a year, and over
"Jerusalem an extraordinary star, which seemed to be a sword. But
"Josephus does not say the time." Neither is this very exact. How-
however, I have also transcribed below the words of Josephus
himself.

This is the first prodigy. And indeed it is a wonderful and very
awful thing. A star, resembling a sword, hanging over a city for a
whole year.—Upon this we cannot forbear to observe, that Jose-
phus has not told us the time when this star, or comet, appeared.

He

† As before, p. 554.
‡ "Il parut aussi une comète pendant un an, & sur Jerusalem un aigu extraordinaire,
qui semblait être une épée. Joseph n'en marqua pas le temps." Ruines des Juifs, art. 42.
He says, "It continued for a year." But does not say when. A strange omission. I must take the liberty to add, that, if about the time of the siege of Jerusalem, or some period within a few years before, there had been a star, resembling a sword, which hung over that city for a year together, I should expect to find it in some author besides Josephus, and an author that does not depend upon him, to borrow from him.

Tacitus * has mentioned several of the prodigies preceding the ruin of the Jewish people. But he does not mention this. However, I must be owned, that his omitting it is of no great importance, as he does not appear to have been careful to put down every thing of this kind.

2. It follows: "And before the rebellion, and before the war broke out, when the people were come together in great multitudes to the feast of unleavened bread, on the eighth day of the month of April, at the ninth hour of the night (or three hours after midnight), so great a light shone round the altar, and the temple, that it seemed to be bright day. Which light continued for half an hour." This prodigy is related by Josephus so particularly and circumstantially, as happening too at the time of Passet-over, when Jerusalem was full of people, and in the year 65, as it seems that I am not at all disposed to contest the truth of it. I think it must have so happened. But the design of this appearance is ambiguous. And as Josephus says, some thought it to portend good, others bad things. But that does not affect the truth of the fact.

3. "And at the same festival, a heifer, as the was led by the High-Priest to be sacrificed, brought forth a lamb in the midst of the temple." Here again, I hesitate. I am surprized to see so trifling a story in a grave writer. I think, Josephus infers this to gratify his Greek readers.

4. The next prodigy is the opening of "the eastern gate of the inner court of the temple at midnight:" which, as before observed by Dr. Wilkes, has such a resemblance with like stories told by credulous heathen people, that it seems to be only an imitation of them, and has therefore the appearance of a fiction, by way of accommodation to the judgment of heathen readers.

5. "Beside these, a few days after that festival, on the one and twentieth day of the month of May, there appeared a wonderful phæomenon, almost exceeding belief. And the account of it might seem fabulous, if it had not been related by those who saw it, and if the following events had not been answerable to such signs. For before funer, chariots and troops of soldiers in armour were seen carried upon the clouds, and surrounding cities." Thus

* "Everentur prodigia, quae neque hoffilia, neque votis placere futer gentes superstitio
coeneola, religionibus aeterna. Velle per culum concurrens acies, rotillanda arma, et fabrun
subium igne colluere templum. Expulsse repente templi fores, et audita major hamin
vox, Excjere Doct: simul ingentis motus excequeuntam.
 Tacit. Hist. IV. 5. cap. 15.
Such seeming appearances have often been the effect only of imagination, without any reality. But this is related by Josephus so particularly, and with so much solemnity, that it is hard to contest the truth. And if it be true, this, and "the light surrounding the altar and the temple," before mentioned, may be some of those things tended by our Saviour, when he said: "And fearful sights, and great signs, shall there be from heaven," Luke xxi. 11. Of this revier speaks in this manner: *"I say nothing of the armed chariots and troops of warriors, that were seen fighting in the air. That might be the natural effect of a phenomenon, then not understood, but which we are now well acquainted with, and call the Aurora Borealis, or northern light." A wise observation truly! Who ever before saw or heard of an Aurora Borealis in the day-time? Josephus expressly says, that these chariots and warriors were seen before sun-setting.

6. "And at the festival which we call the Pentecost, as the Priests were going by night into the inner court of the temple, as the custom was, to perform their ministrations, they first felt, as they said, a shaking, accompanied with a noise, and then a sound, as of a multitude, saying, 'Let us remove hence.'"

This passage is quoted by Eusebius, and this particular is taken notice of by divers ancient Christian writers. But they do not always quote it accurately as might be wished.

I beg leave to observe upon it, first of all, this is said to have happened in the night-time, and therefore deserves the less regard. Secondly, I do not know what ministrations the Priests had to perform in the inner temple in the night. Doubtless they kept watch at the temple by night as well as by day. But, so far as I can recollect, the ministrations at the temple, which were of divine appointment, were performed by day-light. Thirdly, the sound of a multitude, saying, "Let us go hence," has much of an heathenish air.

All these signs, or prodigies, just mentioned, (excepting the fir as a sword, of which before,) seem to be placed by Josephus in the year of Christ 65, the year before the war commenced.

7. The seventh and last is that of "Jesus, son of Ananus, who, four years before the war began, came up to the festival which we call the Feast of Tabernacles, and on a sudden began to cry out: "A voice from the East—a voice against Jerusalem and the temple. "And so it continued for seven years and five months, till he faw his*.

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† H. E. i. 3. cap. viii. et Dem. Ev. i. 8. p. 402. And see the Cred. vol. VIII. p. 60.
§ Unde et Josephus in sua narrat historia, quod podestiam Dominum crucifixus esset, et velum templi scissum esse, five laminare templi fractum currit, audita sit vox in adventu templi "virtutum coelestium, Transeamus ex his sedibus." Id. in Ezech. cap. 47. p. 1052.
his preface fulfilled in the siege." He therefore began his cry near the end of the year 62. This last Josephus calls "more awful than the rest, τὸ δὲ ἅριτον ἐστιν." And as Le Clerc * obse ven, "If it be true, Josephus rightly says, it was somewhat divine." I hope we may depend upon the truth of this history, which is related with so many particulars and circumstances.

All these things Josephus has recorded, as affecting signs, warnings, and prefaces of great calamities coming upon the Jewish nation: omitting entirely the warnings, and predictions, and admonitions of Jesus Christ, and of his Apostles after him, and also the three-hours darkness over the whole land of Judea, and the rending the veil of the temple, and the earthquake near Jerusalem, at the time of our Saviour's crucifixion. And though all these signs and warnings related by himself, are considered by him as very affecting, he acknowledged, that they made not any great impression upon his nation. And says: "But they did not attend, or give credit to these prodigies, which evidently foretold their de abandonment. But like men infatuated, who have neither eyes to see, nor minds to consider, they disregarded the divine denunciations." And his history verifies the truth and justness of this observation.

"Now † the Romans brought their ensigns to the temple, and set them over against the eastern gate. There they offered sacrifices to them, and there they made Titus emperor, with the greatest acclamations of joy. And all the soldiers had such vast quantities of spoils, which they got by plunder, that in Syria a pound weight of gold was sold for half its former value."

There ‡ were some priests, as Josephus says, sitting upon the wall of the temple, who continued there till they were pined with hunger. Then they came down, and surrendered themselves. When they were brought by the guards to Titus, they begged for their lives. But Titus answered, that the time of pardon was over as to them, that being destroyed, for the sake of which alone he should have saved them; and that it was very fit, that priests should perish with their temple. Whereupon he ordered them to be put to death.

Now § Simon and John, and they that were with them, desire a conference with Titus; which he granted. He placed himself on the western side of the outer court of the temple, and there was a bridge that parted them. There were great numbers of Jews waiting with those two tyrants, and there were also many Romans on the side of Titus. He ordered the soldiers to refrain their rage, and appointed an interpreter. And being conqueror, he spoke first. He then reproached them in very bitter terms, and very justly. And then concluded, "However, I will not imitate your madness. If you will throw down your arms, and deliver up your bodies to me, I grant you your lives. I will act like a mild father of a family."
Singe of Jerusalem.

"mily. What cannot be healed, shall be destroyed." The rest I will
refrave for my own use.

"They answered, they could not consent to that, because they
had sworn never to do it. They asked leave to go through the
wall that surrounded them, with their wives and children. So
they would go into the desert, and leave the city to him. At which
Titus was greatly provoked, that, when they were now already in
the case of men taken captives, they should pretend to make their
own terms with him, as if they were conquerors. He then gave
orders, that proclamation should be made to them, that hencefor-
ward none should be allowed to come over to him as defectors,
nor hope for security. For that now he would spare nobody,
but fight them with his whole army. He therefore gave orders to
the folders, both to burn and to plunder the city. On that day
however they did nothing. But the day following they set fire to
the repository of the archives, to the council-houses, to Acra, and
to the place called Ophihas: at which time the fire proceeded as
far as to the palace of queen Helena, which was in the middle of
Acra. The lanes also were burnt down, as were all the houses
that were full of the dead bodies of such as had died by the
famine."

"On the same day the sons and brothers of king Izates, and
with them many other eminent men of the city, got together, and
besought Titus to give them his right hand for their security.
Whereupon, though he was now very angry, and much displeased
with all who were still remaining, he did not depart from his
wonted moderation, but received them. However, he kept them
all in custody. And having bound the king's sons and kinsmen,
he took them with him to Rome, to be kept there as hostages for
the fidelity of their country."

Here, as I apprehend, we see a proof of the zeal of the Jewish
protestants at this time. For such were the relations of king Izates.
These persons had chosen to reside much in the holy city of Jerusa-
lem, or they had come up thither to the feast of the passover this
year, notwithstanding the danger it was in from the approaches of
the Roman army. And it was, as seems to me, a remarkable instance
of the moderation of this prince, that he now shewed mercy to their
persons, who might have come over to him long before, and did
not surrender themselves till matters were brought to the utmost
extremity, and after he had publicly declared that he would spare
none.

Titus still had difficulties remaining in taking the rest of the
city.

"Some there were who deflected to Titus, notwithstanding the
care of the tyrants to prevent it. These were all received by the
Romans, because Titus grew negligent as to his former orders, and
because

§ 4.

† . αρχή δὲ τῶν τοινύστατος ἡμέραν ἤπειρος ἐστὶν συντάξεως, λατρευτὴς κάθορσα, κ. λ.  
§ Cap. viii. § viii.  
§ Cap. viii. § 2.
because the soldiers were weary of killing; and because they hoped to gain money by sparing them. They therefore sold them with their wives and children, though at a very low price. For then were many to be sold, and but a few purchasers. Indeed the number of those who were sold was prodigious. And yet there were forty thousand of the people saved, whom Titus permitted to go where they pleased.”

And now were fulfilled those words of Moses, “And ye shall be fold for bond-men, and bond-women. And no man shall buy you.” Deut. xxxvii. 68. And likewise those words of our Lord, Luke xxii. 24. “And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem shall be trodden down by the Gentiles, until the time of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

“"At this time one of the priests, son of Thebuthus, whose name was Joshua, upon his having security given him by the oath of Cæsar, that he should be preferred, upon condition that he should deliver to him certain of the precious things deposited in the temple, came out, and delivered to him from the wall of the temple, two candlesticks, like to those that lay in the temple, together with tables, and cisterns, and vials, all of solid gold, and very heavy. He also delivered to him the veils, and the garments of the high-priests, with the precious stones, and many other vessels belonging to the sacred ministrations. And now was seized the treasurer of the temple, whose name was Phineas, who discovered to him the coats and girdles of the priests, with a great quantity of purple and scarlet, which were repurposed for the use of the veil; as also a great deal of cinnamon and cassia, and other sweet spices, which used to be mixed, and offered to God as incense, every day. A great many other precious things and ornaments of the temple were delivered by the same person. Which things so delivered to Titus, obtained for that man the same pardon that was allowed to such as deserted of their own accord.

“"At length, after great labour, and against a furious opposition, the Romans became masters of the rest of the city, and set their ensign upon the walls, in triumph, and with great joy. They then plundered the houses, and killed every one whom they met with in the streets. They set fire to the city, and made the streets run with blood, to such a degree, that the fire of many houses was quenched with men’s blood. However it so happened, that when the flames had left off in the evening, the fire greatly prevailed in the night. As all was burning, came on to Jerusalem the eighth day of the month of September, a city, which had suffered so many calamities during the siege, of which it was upon no other account so deserving, as upon account of its producing such a generation of men, as occupied its overthrow.

**“When**

*O. οὐανίκη ζα ἰεροκράτεια καὶ τιματομία, θεοὶ ἐνίκησαν Καλλίν. θεὸν ἐν ΙΔΑΙ. Ιβλι. τ. ΧΙ. § 3.*

*Ιβλ. § 4. § 5.*
When Titus was come into this upper city, he admired some places of strength in it, and particularly those strong towers which the tyrants in their madness had relinquished. And he expressed himself in the following manner. We have certainly had God for our helper in this war. It is God, who has ejected the Jews out of their fortifications. For what could the hands of men or any machines do, toward throwing down such fortifications? At which time he had many like discourses with his friends. He also set at liberty such as had been bound by the tyrants, and were still in the prifons. And when he entirely demolished the rest of the city, and overthrew its walls, he left those towers to be monuments of his fortune, which had fought with him, and had enabled him to take what otherwise would have been impregnable.

The soldiers were weary of killing. But there were many still alive. Titus therefore gave orders, that none should be killed, but such as were in arms, or made resistance; and to take the rest captive. Nevertheless the soldiers flew the aged and the infirm. But for those who were in their flowerish age, and might be useful to them, they drove them together into the temple, and shut them up within the walls of the court of the women. Over whom Titus set one of his freed-men, and Fronto, one of his friends, who was to determine the fate of each one according to his deserts.

Many were ordered to be slain. But of the young men he chose out the first, and the most beautiful, and referred them for the triumph. Such as were above seventeen years of age, he bound, and sent them to work in the mines in Egypt. Titus also sent a great many into the provinces, as presents to them, that they might be destroyed in their theatres, either by the sword, or by wild beasts. They who were under seventeen years of age were sold for slaves. And during the time that Fronto was determining the Vol. V.

* Cap. ix. § 1. 
† Τίνας γε κατασκευάζων...— ελ ιβ. 
‡ Undoubtedly Titus, upon entering into that part of the city which was now taken, and becoming master of the whole city of Jerusalem, had some discourses with his generals, fittable to the occasion. But Josephus, in imitation of the Greek and Roman historians, who made speeches for their generals, embellisheth here. And he makes Titus say some things, which he did not say. The tyrants, as Josephus calls them, were guilty of mad conduct in their divisions, in destroying, as they had done, many stores proper for sieges, and in other respects. But Titus could not charge them with folly and madness in relinquishing the three towers here referred to. Josephus has given a particular description of them. De B. J. l. 5. cap. iv. § 3. They were strong and lofty buildings, raised upon the north wall of the city. Herod had displayed his magnificence in them. But they were not fit for par"
the fate of these men, there perished eleven thousand for want of food. Some of them had no food, through the ill-will of those who guarded them. Others would not take what was given them. And indeed there were so many, that there was not food for them."

Josephus does not here speak of any Jews being crucified at this time. Nevertheless, I apprehend, that many now suffered in this manner. For in one of the last sections of his life, giving an account of things prefently after the city was taken, he says he was sent by Titus, with Cerealis one of his generals, and a thousand horse, to a village called Thekoa, to see whether it was a place fitted for a camp. "As I came back," says he, "I saw many of the captives crucified. Among them I discerned three of my former acquaintance, which gave me great concern. I thereupon went to Titus with tears in my eyes, and spoke to him. Who immediately gave orders to have them taken down, and that the best care should be taken of them for their recovery. However, two of them died under cure. The third survived."

"The number of those who were taken captive, during the whole war, was computed to be ninety and seven thousand; and the number of those who perished during the siege, eleven hundred and thousand. The greater part of them were indeed of the same nation, but not inhabitants of the city. For they were come up from all the country to the festival of unleavened bread, and were on a sudden shut in by the army. Which occasioned so great a fright, that there came on a pestilential disorder, and then a famine, which was more severe."

And prefently afterwards. "This great multitude was collected from other places. The whole nation was shut up as in a prison. And the Roman army encompassed the city, when it was crowded with inhabitants. Accordingly the multitude of these who perished therein, exceeded all the destructions that men or God ever brought on the world."

"As many were hid in caverns, the Romans made searches after them. If any were found alive, they were prefently slain. But besides, they found there more than two thousand, some killed by themselves, and by one another, and more destroyed by famine. The ill favour of the dead bodies was offensive. Nevertheless, for the sake of gain, many of the soldors ventured into the caverns, where was found much treasure."

"John and his brethren, who were with him in a cavern, wanted food. Now therefore he begged, that the Romans would give him the right hand for security, which he had often rejected before. But Simon struggled hard with the distress he was in, till..."
he was forced to surrender himself, as we shall relate hereafter. So
he was referred for the triumph, and to be then slain. John was
condemned to perpetual imprisonment. And now the Romans
set fire to the extreme parts of the city, and burnt them down, and
demolished the walls of the foundation.

"Thus was Jerusalem taken in the second year of the reign of
Vespasian, on the eighth day of the month of September. It had
been taken five times before. This is the second time of its defo-
lation." Josepbus then enumerates these several times, and com-
putes how many years it was from the time of its being first built,
and then adds: "But neither its antiquity, nor its immense
riches, nor its reputation of the nation, celebrated throughout
the whole world, nor the great glory of its religion, has been suf-
ficient to preserve it from destruction. Such was the end of the
siege of Jerusalem."

These are the last words of his sixth book of the Jewish War.
Then, at the beginning of the seventh book, he says:

"And now, when no more were left to be slain, nor any more
plunder remained for the soldiers; Caesar gave orders, that they
should demolish to the foundation the whole city, and the temple:
leaving only the fore-mentioned towers Phasælus, Hippicus, and
Mamæne, and so much of the wall as was on the west side of
the city. That was spared, in order to afford a camp for those
who were to lie in garrison. But § as for all the rest of the whole
circumference of the city, it was so thoroughly laid even with the
ground, by those who dug it up to the foundation, that there was
nothing left to make those who came thither to believe it had even
been inhabited."

So said our Lord, Luke xix. 44. "And they shall lay thee even
with the ground, and thy children within thee. And they shall
not leave in thee one stone upon another, because thou knewest not
the time of thy visitation."

The soldiers who were left in garrison near the city, must have
been instruments in digging up every part of it to the foundation.
For Josepbus afterwards, describing the journey of Titus through
Palestine to Alexandria, and observing how Titus was affected at the
light of the deplorable condition of the place, has these expressions.

"And no small part of its riches had been found in its ruins.
This the Romans dug up. They found a great deal of gold and
silver, and other precious things, which the owners had treasured
up under ground, against the uncertain fortunes of war. And they
were afflicted by the captives in the discovery of such things.

And Eleazar, in one of his speeches at Mædiæa, to be farther taken
notice of hereafter, where he Perkins the people with him to consent

M 2
to be put to death, has these expressions. "Where is now that
great city, the metropolis of the whole Jewish nation? . . . When
is that city, which we believed to have God inhabiting in it? It is
rooted up to the foundation, and has no other monument left,
but the army of those who have destroyed it, encamping upon its
ruins. . . . Who can consider these things, and not be forry that
he is still alive? I cannot but wish, that we had all died, before
we had seen the holy city overthrown by its enemies, and the holy
temple so profanely dug up to the foundation."

And Whitby in his notes upon Matt. xxiv. 2, says: "The Jewish
Talmud and Maimonides add, that Turnus [i.e. Terentius Rufus],
captain of the army of Titus, did with a plow-share tear up the
foundations of the temple, and thereby signally fulfill those words
in Micah iii. 12. Therefore shall Zion for your sakes be plowed as
a field, and Jerusalem become heaps, and the mountain of the
house as the high places of the forest."

Grotes has well observed upon Matt. xxiv. 1, "that the temple,
which had been repaired, or rebuilt by Herod, was rightly esteemed
to be the same temple that had been built by Zorubabel. So
therefore Josephus says, that the temple had been twice destroyed,
once by the Chaldeans, a second time by Titus. And the Jewish
authors call the destruction made by Titus, the destruction of the
second temple. Whilst this temple stood, the Maccabees was to be
expected, not only according to the prophecy of Daniel, but like-
wife of Haggai, ch. ii. 8. and Malachi, ch. iii. 1.

Cæfar determined to leave there as a guard the tenth legion,
with some troops of horse and companies of foot. Having now
completed the war, he returned thanks to his whole army, and
distributed rewards among them. For this purpose he had a large
tribunal erected for him in the place where he formerly encamped.
That was a work of three days.

"The reft of the army was sent away to several places. But he
permitted the tenth legion to stay as a guard upon Jerusalem. Then
he went to Cæfarœa by the sea-side, taking with him two legions,
the fifth and the fifteenth, to attend him, till he should go to
Egypt. At Cæfarœa he laid up the spoils in great quantities, and
gave orders that the captives should be kept there."

"From that Cæfarœa Titus went to Cæfarœa Philippi, where he
layed some while, and exhibited all sorts of shows. Here many
of the captives were destroyed. Some were thrown to wild beasts.
Others, in great numbers, were compelled to fight with each other.
Whilft he was there, he heard of the seizure of Simon son of Gio-
ras, who during the siege had commanded in the upper city, and
who had concealed himself under ground as long as he could;
but now fell into the hands of Terentius Rufus, who had been
left

† Nekatec ev σαλπιγγας . . .
‡ ἐπὶ τοὺς τοὺς δύον τιτούς προσέξω τιμωρητησόν. Ibid.
§ L. 7. cap. i. § 1.
¶ § 2.
** Cap. ii. § 2.
Siege of Jerusalem.

keep guard at the ruins of Jerusalem. When Titus was re-
d to Cæsarea by the sea-side, Simon was brought bound before
who ordered him to be kept for the triumph at Rome.

* Cæsarea Titus solemnized the birth-day of his brother Do-
, on the 24th day of October, in a splendid manner, doing
r to him in the punishment of the Jews. For the number
ofe who were now slain, in fighting with beasts, or were
to death, or fought with one another, exceeded two thou-
and five hundred. Yet did all this seem to the Romans,
h they were destroyed ten thousand ways, beneath their de-

Afterwards Titus went to Berytus, a city in Phœnicia, and

an colony. There he stayed a longer time, and exhibited

ing some while at Berytus, he set forward to An-

and, as he went, exhibited magnificent shows in all the
of Syria, making use of the captives as public instances of

throw of the Jewish nation.\footnote{Antioch he was received with loud acclamations. Thence he Zeugma, which lies upon the Euphrates. Whither came to

fingers from Vologesus, king of Parthia, who brought him of gold, congratulating him upon his victory over the Jews, e accepted. There he feasted the king's messengers, and then
to Antioch.

not appear, that Titus celebrated any shows there. And

e people of that place requested him to expel the Jews out of
,
he refused to comply with them, and confirmed to them

ileges which they had hitherto enjoyed there.

\footnote{\vaut away the two before-mentioned legions, by which

een attended, one to Myria, the other to Pannonia; and
given orders for sending Simon and John, and seven hundred

left and handsomest of the captives, to appear in the tri-

Rome, he went to Alexandria, and thence to Rome. And

ough Palestine, in his way to Egypt, he was much moved,
us says, at the sight of the desolations of that country.

** Titus came near Rome, he was received with great re-
by the people, who came out to meet him, as also by his

ian. And though the senate had decreed to them two

umps, they chose to have but one. Josephus has not in-
s exactly concerning the time of it. And learned critics

t of different opinions. Some \footnote{\vaut place it near the end of

th of April, in 71. Others \footnote{\vaut argue, that it must have been

any \footnote{other spoils," says Josephus, "were carried in great

tance. But the most considerable of all were those taken out of

\footnote{\vaut the

iii. § 1. \footnote{\VTL. Pagi ann. 70. n. iii. et Balfag. ann. 70. n. xviii.}
v. § 1. \footnote{\vaut § 2. \footnote{\vaut § 3, 1. \footnote{\vaut § 3, 4.}

. Pagi ann. 70. n. vi. \footnote{\vaut Balfag. 71. n. iii. \footnote{\vaut § 5.}
"the temple of Jerusalem. There was the golden table, of many talents. And the candlestick, likewise of gold, with its seven lamps, a number much respected by the Jews. The last of all the spoils was the law of the Jews. After which were carried images of victory, made of gold, or ivory. After which came Vespasian first, on horseback, then Titus. Domitian also was there splendidly attired, and riding upon a beautiful horse.

"The end of this pompous show was at the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus. When they came thither, they stood still. For it was the ancient custum of the Romans to stay, till word was brought, that the general of the enemy was slain. This was Simon the son of Gioras, who had been led in the triumph among the captives. A rope was put about his neck, and he was led to a proper place in the Forum, where malefactors were put to death. When tidings of his death were brought, all the people set up the shout of joy. And sacrifices were offered up, with the accustomed prayers. The emperor then went to his palace, and feastings were made every where.

"And now Vespasian determined to build a temple of Peace, which was finished in a short time, and in a splendid manner. Here he laid up those golden vessels and instruments, that were taken out of the Jewish temple, as ensigns of his glory. But their law, and the purple veils of the holy place, he ordered to be deposited in his palace.

"That temple was adorned with paintings and statues. In it were collected and reposed all such curiosities as men are wont to wander all over the world to obtain a sight of."

The book of the law does not now appear in what is called the triumphal arch of Titus, though the table and the candlestick are very visible.

Josephus, in his Life, says, that when the city was taken, Titus gave him leave to ask what he pleased. One § of his requests was, to have the sacred books, which were granted to him. Here, in the history of the war, he seems to say, they were deposited in the emperor's palace. Possibly, they were placed there; but Josephus was allowed to have the use of them when he desired it.

The temple of peace, according to the description which Josephus has given of it, appears to have resembled our British Museum, and other like rich cabinets of princes in several parts of Europe.

The temple of peace was burnt down in the reign of Commodus. But it is likely, that many of the curiosities deposited in it were preserved from the flames. And the Jewish spoils were in being in the fifth century, and afterwards, though not at Rome, as we learn from ** Adrian Reland."

* § 6.  † § 7.  † 1b. § 7.
* § 6.  † 7.  † 1b. § 7.
* § 6.  † 7.  † 1b. § 7.
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* § 6.  † 7.  † 1b. § 7.
* § 6.  † 7.  † 1b. § 7.
We have seen the overthrow of the city and temple of Jerusalem. But there still remained some strong places in Judea, not yet taken by the Romans. Of which Josephus has given an account. And it is fit we should trace him to the end of his history of the Jewish war. For, as our Lord said, "Wheresoever the carcase is, there "will the eagles be gathered together," Matt. xxiv. 28. And see Luke xxiv. 37.

Lucilius Baffus* was sent into Judea by Vespasian as lieutenant, where he received a sufficient army from Cerealis Vitellianus. He soon took Herodian, and made the garrison prisoners.

He † then determined to go to Machærus. By means of an accident, well improved, he became master of it, without much loss on either side.

"Having ‡ settled affairs there, he marched hastily to the forest "of Jarde; where, as he was informed, many were gathered to- "gether, who during the siege had escaped from Jerusalem and Ma- "chærus. When they engaged, the battle was fierce and obstinate "on both sides. Nevertheless of the Romans there were not more "than twelve killed, and not many wounded. But of the Jews not "one escaped out of the battle; but they were all killed, being not "fewer in number than three thousand, and with them their general, "Judas, the son of Jairus, who had been captain of a band in the "siege of Jerusalem, and by getting through a vault under ground, "had privately escaped.

"About ‡ this time the emperor sent orders to Lucilius Baffus and "Liberius Maximus, that all Judea should be exposed to sale. For "he founded not any city there, but referred the country to himself. "However he assigned a place for eight hundred men, whom he dis- "missed from the army, which he gave them for their habitation. "It is called Ammaus, and is distant from Jerusalem sixty furlongs. "He also laid a tribute upon the Jews wherever they were, requiring "that every one of them should bring two drachmas [half a shekel] "every year to the capitol, the same they had been used to pay to "the temple at Jerusalem."

Baffus § having died in Judea, Flavius Silva was sent to succeed him in the government of that country; who soon made an expedi- tion against Mañada, the only remaining fortress. It was in the pos- session of Eleazar, a commander of the Sicarii. He was a descendant of Judas, who had persuaded many of the Jews, as formerly related, not to submit to the assaultment of Cyrenius, when he came into Judea after the removal of Archelaus.

When ** there was no room left for escaping, Eleazar called to- "gether the principal persons, and consulted with them what might be "best to be done. At which time he made an oration to them, to in- "duce them to kill themselves, rather than to fall into the hands of the Romans.

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* Lu. 7. cap. vi. 1.
† 1b. § 1—4.
‡ 1b. § 5.
§ Cap. viii. § 2.
** § 6.
That oration had great effect upon many. Some however there were, who hesitated. He therefore went on, and made another oration to the like purpose. All now were persuade.

They then chose ten men of the number by lot, to stay all the rest. When these ten men had without fear slain all the rest, men, women, and children, as determined, they cast lots upon themselves; and he who had the first lot killed the other nine, and then himself. These people to die, with the intention that they might not leave so much as one man among them to be subject to the Romans. However, there was one ancient woman, and another woman, related to Eleazar, who exceeded most women in knowledge and prudence, and five children, who had hid themselves in a cavern under ground. They had carried water with them for their drink, and lay quiet there, whilst the rest were in tent upon the slaughter of each other. The whole number of these people, including the just-mentioned women and children, was nine hundred and sixty. This slaughter was made on the fifteenth day of the month of April, in the year 73, as may be computed.

When the Romans entered the place the next morning, their surprise was very great, as may be well supposed.

Soon after this, some turbulent Jews were the occasion of disturbances at Alexandria, where six hundred were slain, and after that in Cyrene, where more than three thousand suffered. The disturbance there was occasioned by the imprisonment of Jonathan, a weaver, who persuaded many people of the meaner sort to follow him into the wilderness, where he promised to shew them signs and wonders. Moreover Vespasian sent express orders, that the Jewish temple of Onias, as it was called, built in the prefecture of Heliopolis in Egypt, should be demolished. Which was done in the year of Christ 74, about two hundred and twenty-four years after it had been first built, as Prideaux computes.

We before saw, what was the number of those who were computed to have perished in the siege of Jerusalem. "But taking in also those who had suffered in other places out of Jerusalem, these, added to the eleven thousand that perished in the siege, make the whole number thirteen hundred and thirty-seven thousand four hundred and ninety; an innumerable company still being omitted, that perished through famine, banishment, and other miseries." Which I think to be no aggravation at all.

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* Re" 168

† Cap. ix. § 1, 2.  
‡ Cap. x. & xi.  
§ See his Connexion, acc. year before Christ 149, p. 266.  
••• See Usher's Annals, p. 907, in English, Lond. 1658.
On the preceding History.

REFLECTIONS UPON THE PRECEDING HISTORY.

IX. Let us now reflect.

1. All these things have we seen in Josephus, who, at the beginning of his works, says: "I * Josephus son of Matthias, by birth a Hebrew of Jerusalem, and a Priest, who myself at first fought against the Romans, and was afterwards forced to be present at the things that were done, have writ this history."

The conclusion of the whole work, at the end of the seventh and last book of the Jewish War, is to this effect. "Here † we put an end to our history, which we promised to deliver with all accuracy to those who are desirous to know how this war of the Romans with the Jews was managed. Concerning the style, let the readers judge. Concerning the truth, I may boldly say, that only has been aimed at throughout the whole work."

Perhaps likewise it may not be amiss to observe what he says of this work in his first book against Apion, writ long afterwards, near the period of his life.

"As ‡ for myself, I have composed a true history of that war, and of all the particulars that occurred therein: as having been concerned in all its transactions. For I acted as General among those among us who are called Galileans, as long as it was possible for us to make any opposition. And when I was taken captive by the Romans, Vespasian and Titus had me kept under a guard; but obliged me to attend them continually. At first I was in bonds, afterwards I was set at liberty, and was sent to accompany Titus, when he came from Alexandria to the siege of Jerusalem. During which time, nothing was done which escaped my knowledge. What happened in the Roman camp I saw, and wrote it down carefully. What information the defectors brought out of the city, I was the only man that underfooted it. Afterwards I got leisure at Rome. And when all my materials were prepared, I procured the help of one to assist me in writing Greek. Thus I composed the history of those transactions. And I was so well assured of the truth of what I related, that I first appealed to those who had the supreme command in that war, Vespasian and Titus, as witnesses for me. For to them I first presented those books, and after them to many of the Romans, who had been in the war. I also communicated them to many of our own men who understood the Greek philosophy: among whom were Julius Archelaus, and Herod, a person of great gravity, and King Agrippa himself, who deserved the greatest admiration. All these bore testimony to me, that I had the strictest regard to truth; who would not have dissembled the matter, nor have been silent, if through ignorance, or out of favour to either side, I had altered, or omitted any thing."

2. Josephus's

2. Josephus's history of the Jewish War is an ample testimony to the fulfillment of all the predictions of our Lord concerning the demolition of the temple and city of Jerusalem, and the miseries to be endured by the nation during the siege, which were such as had never before happened to any people, nor were likely to happen again.

3. The sufferers in these calamities were, generally, men of the worst characters, Robbers and Sicarii, and others too much resembling them. It is reasonable to believe, that no Christians were then shut up in the city, nor many other good men, to partake in the miseries of that long and grievous siege. As St. Peter says, having instanced in the preservation of Noah the eighth person, "when God brought in the flood upon the world of the ungodly, and then delivering just Lot, when the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah were turned into ashes," adds, with a view to other like cases, and probably to the destruction of Jerusalem itself, "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to serve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished." 2 Pet. ii. 5—9.

4. I think it ought to be observed by us, that there was not now any pestilence at Jerusalem, but the Jews perished by the calamities of war. It might have been expected, that the bad food, which they were forced to make use of in the straitness of the siege, and the noisome smell of so many dead bodies, lying in heaps, in the city itself, and in the valleys or ditches without the walls, should have produced a plague. But nothing of that kind appears* in the history, which must have been owing to the special interposition of Divine Providence. Josephus† in some of the places, where he speaks of the putrefaction of the dead bodies, may use expressions equivalent to pestilential. But he never shews, that there was an infection. If there had, it would have equally affected the Romans and the Jews, and the siege of the place must have been broke up, and the Romans would have gone off as fast as they could.

5. None can forbear to observe the time when all these things came to pass. Our Lord says, Matt. xxiii. 36. "Verily, I say unto you, all these things shall come upon this generation." And xxiv. 34. "Verily I say unto you: This generation shall not pass, till all these things shall be fulfilled." So likewise Mark xiii. 30. and Luke x. 32. So it was. All these things foretold by our Lord came to pass, before the end of that generation of men. Jerusalem and the temple were no more, before the end of the year 70, of the Christian epoch, and within forty years after his crucifixion.

Concerning the time also our Lord said: "And this Gospel of the

* "Il est difficile que tant de peuples renfermés dans une ville durant les chaleurs de l'été,
  de six ménagères nourrissent, et surtout la quantité de tant de corps morts, n'ait joint la
  fête à la famine. Joseph n'en parle néanmoins qu'en un endroit, en passant. Ce qui ma-
† Vid. De B. Jud. L. 5. cap. xii. § 4."
On the preceding History.

"... kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness to all nations." Matt. xxiv. 14. Compare Mark xiii. 10.

This we know from Christian writings, particularly the books of the New Testament, most of which were writ before the destruction of Jerusalem. They bear witnesses, that the Gospel had been preached to Jews and Gentiles, in Judea, Syria, Asia, Greece, Macedonia, and Rome, and other places, and with great success. And the preaching of the gospel throughout the world was a testimony to all nations, that the calamities inflicted upon the Jewish people were just and fit. They bear witnesses, that the Jewish nation had been called upon to repent, and were faithfully, and affectionately, and earnestly warned and admonished; but they refused to hearken. See the Acts of the Apostles, and Mark xvi. 20. Rom. x. 18. Col. i. 6, and 23.

Says Archbishop Tillotson: "We * have this matter related, not by a Christian (who might be suspected of partiality, and a design to have paralleled the event with our Saviour's prediction), but by a Jew, both by nation and religion, who seems deignedly to have avoided, as much as possibly he could, the very mention of the Christian name, and all particulars relating to our Saviour, though no historian was ever more punctual in other things."

Says Mr. Tillemont †: "God has been pleased to choose for our information in this history, not an Apostle, nor any of the chief men of the church, but an obstinate Jew, whom neither the view of the virtue and miracles of the Christians, nor the knowledge of the Law, nor the ruin of his religion and country, could induce to believe in and love the Messiah, who was all the expectation of the nation. God has permitted it so to be, that the testimony which this historian gave to an event of which he did not comprehend the mystery, might not be rejected, neither by Jews nor heathens, and that none might be able to say, that he had altered the truth of things to favour Jesus Christ and his disciples."

Dr. W. Wotton says of Josephus: "He ‡ is certainly an author very justly to be valued, notwithstanding all his faults. His 'History of the Jewish War' is a noble demonstration of the truth of the Christian Religion, by shewing, in the most lively manner, how the prophecies of our blessed Lord concerning the destruction of Jerusalem were literally fulfilled in their fullest extent."

And Dr. Doddridge, in his notes upon the xxivth chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel, says: "§ Christian writers have always with great reason represented Josephus's History of the Jewish War as the best commentary upon this chapter. And many have justly remarked it, as a wonderful instance of the care of Providence for the Christian Church, that he, an eye-witness, and in these things..."

* Vol. II. p. 363. ferm. 186. the seventh sermon upon 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4.
† Rupe des Juifs, art. i. p. 722.
‡ Preface to his Miscellaneous Discourses relating to the Traditions and Usages of the Scribes and Pharisees, p. xlix. The faults which he observes in Josephus, may be seen at p. xxxiii. &c.
of so great credit, should (especially in so extraordinary a manner) be preferred, to transmit to us a collection of important facts, which so exactly illustrate this noble prophecy, in almost every particular circumstance. But as it would swell my notes too much to enter into a particular detail of those circumstances, I must content myself with referring to Dr. Whitby's excellent notes upon the xxvith of Matthew, and to Archibishop Tillotson's large and accurate discourse on the same subject, in the second volume of his posthumous works, Serm. 183—187.

Istode of Pelusium, who flourished about the year 412, in one of his epistles, has these expressions: "If you have a mind to know what punishment the wicked Jews underwent, who ill-treated the Chrift, read the history of their destruction, writ by Josephus, a Jew indeed, but a lover of truth, that you may see the wonderful story, such as no time ever saw before since the beginning of the world, nor ever shall be. For that none might refuse to give credit to the history of their incredible and unparalleled sufferings, truth found out not a stranger, but a native, and a man fond of their infitutions, to relate them in a doleful strain."

Eusebius often quotes Josephus, and in his Ecclesiastical History has transcribed from him several articles at large. Having rehearsed from the Gospels divers of our Lord's predictions of the evils then coming upon Jerusalem, and the Jewish people, he adds: "Whosoever shall compare these words of our Saviour with the history of the whole war, published by the above-mentioned writer, must admire our Lord's great wisdom, and acknowledge that his foresight was divine."

In his Chronicle, as we have it from Jerome in Latin, Eusebius says: "In subduing Judea, and overthrowing Jerusalem, Titus slew six hundred thousand people. But Josephus writes, that eleven hundred thousand perished by famine and the sword, and that another hundred thousand were publicly sold, and carried captives. And he says, that the occasion of there being so great a multitude of people at Jerusalem was this, that it was the time of Passover. For which reason, the Jews having come up from all parts to worship at the temple, they were shut up in the city, as in a prison. And indeed, it was fit they should be slain at the same time, in which they crucified our Saviour."

It is certainly very fit, that Christians should attend to the fulfilment of our Lord's predictions relating to the Jewish people; which are so frequent, so solemn, and affecting. The testimony of Josephus is the most considerable of all. It is the most full, and particular

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* Lib. 4. ep. 75. Vid. et ep. 74.*
† H. E. I. 5. cap. S. p. St. D.*
Testimonies of other Writers.

X. Josephus, in the preface to his own work, intimates, that some histories of the war had been before written by others. But he represents them as partial, and defective, and composed by men who were not well informed. Undoubtedly none of these remain now. They have been lost long since.

Justus of Tiberias, contemporary with Josephus, between whom there were many differences, also wrote a history of the war. Josephus, in his Life, chargeth him with falsity, and blames him for not publishing his work until after the death of Vespasian and Titus and king Agrippa. Josephus owns * that Justus was well skilled in Greek learning. And he plainly says, that he wrote of the war.

I do not clearly perceive Eusebius † to have known any thing of Justus, but what he learned from the testimonies of Josephus above referred to by me.

Justus ‡ is in Jerome's catalogue of Ecclesiastical writers. He seems to ascribe to him two books.

Photius §, I think, speaks of but one work of this author, which he calls a Chronicle. He says, it began with Moses, and ended at the death of Agrippa. He also takes notice of Josephus's cenuses both of the author himself and his work.

Stephanus Byzantinus, in his article of Tiberias, says: "Of this city was Justus, who wrote of the Jewish War in the time of Vespasian ||.

Diogenes Laertius **, in his Life of Socrates, quotes a passage from Justus of Tiberias; and seems to quote the same book that was read by Photius.

Several learned moderns †† are of opinion, that Justus, like Josephus, wrote two books, one of the Jewish War, another of the Jewish

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† Ἡ Ἱσ. τ. 3. cap. 2. p. 86. B.
§ Ἀναγραφὴν Ἀποκρίνει τίτους, καθαρόν. α. λ. Cod. 55. p. 20.
** ὁμοὶος ἰδίᾳ τῇ Πολικῇ ἐν τῷ εἰρήματι. Diog. La. 1. 2. § 42.
†† "Unde collego (ex Hieronymi Catalogo), ut Josephus, ita et Justum, non modo de Antiquitatis Judaeorum, sed etiam de Bello Judaeo scriptisse." Vell. de H. Gr. Vid. et Vales. An. in Euseb. l. 3. cap. 2. Tabel. Ruines des Juifs, art. 84.
Jewish Antiquities. Menage*, in his notes upon Diogenes Laertius, ascribes to Justus three books, that is, Memoirs, beside the two before mentioned. I rather think, there was but one: and that what Justus wrote of the war was comprised in the Chronicle. Menage’s argument from Suidas is of no value. For Suidas expresseth himself inaccurately. Nor does he mention more than two works. The Memoirs, Ἀνατριχία, are the same with Jerome’s “Commentarioli de Scripturis.” Indeed, Suidas only transcribes Jerome, or his interpreter Sophronius, and has done it inaccurately.

Some learned men lament the loss of this work. ‘Others think it was of little value. I cannot but wish, that the work, which was in being in the time of Phocius, had also reached us. It must have been of some use. Perhaps the censure passed upon it by Josephus, who was in great credit, has been a prejudice to it.

I have allowed myself to enlarge in my notice of this writer, who lived at the time, and was an actor in the Jewish war with the Romans. Though his work is not extant, he is a witness to that important transtaction.

Pauflanias, who § lived in the second century, and wrote after the year of our Lord 180, speaks ¶ of a monument of queen Helena at Jerusalem, which (city) an emperor of the Romans had destroyed to the foundation.

“Minucius Felix refers ** the Heathen people, not only to Josephus, but also to Antonie Julian, a Roman author, from whom they might learn that the Jews had not been ruined, nor abandoned of God, till they had first abandoned him: and that their present low condition was owing to their wickedness, and obstinacy therein, and that nothing had happened to them but what had been foretold.”

Who that Julian was, cannot be said. There have been several of that name, one ++ of whom was Procurator of Judea, and was present with Titus at the siege of Jerusalem, as we know from Josephus. Tilllemont says, ¶ that possibly he wrote a history of the siege of Jerusalem,

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* “Scriptit ille Historiam Judaeam, eodem tempore quo Josephus, a quo mendacii argumentorum, scripta praverae ενεργήματα, quorum mensitis Suidas. Scriptit et Chronicon Regetium Judorum, qui coronati furens: Ut eft apud Photiium. Quod opus signat hic Laertius.”

** Menag. in loc. p. 94.

† ** Josephus, in Vitae suae, et alibi, quasi parum fido scriptorii convenient. Sed de infermico, non magis ei crediderim, quam Julio de Josepho crediderim, si historia ejus exaeret, etque in ea mulo ab eo detractum viderem. Utinam vero, quacumque fuerit, ad nos eique perveniretur.” Cleric. H. E. A. C. C. cap. viii.

† Torem. as above, art. 80.


¶ “Επαρχεις ο’ ἐλάζεις γεωμετρίας ἐν χρόνοις πάρον ἐν τῇ ἡλικίᾳ, ἐν τῇ Φαρόῳ καθίσας.”

++ Pauflan. I. 8, cap. 16, p. 633.

+++ * Scripta eorum relege. Vel si Romanis magis gaudet, ut transfecus veteres, Flavius Josephi, vel Antonii Juliani, de Judaeis require. Jam sicel, requirit suae, hanc eos meos ruiffe fortunam: nec quidquam accidisse, quod non sit his, si in contumacia perseveraverat, ante predicitum. In quin eos deferuife comprehendes, quam ait decretos: nec ut imple suae loqueatis, cum Deo suo esse capitum, sed a Deo, ut disciplinae transfugas dedisset.”

†† Menac. cap. 33. Conf. cap. 10.

+++ Kau Marçes. Αὐτικος ιουδαιος, ἐν τῇ ἡμερῃ ἐπιτροπ. Jof. de B. J. l. 6. cap. iv. 3.

+++ Ruine des Juifs, art. 72.
The Testimony of other Writers.

G. Vossius*, upon the ground of this passage of Minucius, puts Antonie Julian among Latin historians, who had writ a history of the Jews.

Minucius reckons Josephus among Roman writers. Dr. Davis suspects it to be an interpolation, and assigns not improbable reasons, in his notes upon the place.

Suetonius† has mentioned the occasion of the war, the appointment of Vespasian to be general, his, and his son's triumph‡ at Rome, and several other material things, which have been already observed, or will in time be observed by us from him.

What § Tacitus has writ upon this subject, so far as it remains, may be taken notice of hereafter.

Dion Cassius|| is another witness, whose testimony also may be taken more at large hereafter.

Philostorus says, "that ** when Titus had taken Jerusalem, and filled all about it with dead bodies, and the neighbouring nations offered him crowns, he said, he was not worthy of such an honour, nor had he himself, he said, done that great work. He had only lent his hand to the service of God, when he was pleased to shew his displeasure." Philostorus says, that Apollonius was much pleased with that token of wisdom and humanity. He likewise says, that Apollonius wrote a letter to Titus, and sent it by Damis, to this purpose. "Apollonius sendeth greeting to Titus emperor of the Romans. Since you refuse to be applauded for bloodshed and victory in war, I fend you the crown of moderation. You know, for what things crowns are due."

Dionysius of Heraclea, as we have seen, states, that Titus refused to be crowned for his victory over the Jews. Baigne †† and other learned men on the contrary are of opinion, that we may rely upon the authority of Josephus, who tells us, "that he went from Antioch to the Zeugma, whither came to him messengers from Vologeses, king of Parthia, and brought him a crown of gold, upon the victory obtained by him over the Jews: which he accepted of, and sealed the king's messengers, and then returned to Antioch. Moreover, he accepted of a triumph for his victory over the Jews, and all other honours customary upon the like occasions." Nevertheless Olearius, in his notes upon the place, argues, that †† Philostorus needs

* "Antonius Julianus Judaicam videtur historiam confignisse, &c." De Hist. Lat. 1. 3.
† De Historiae incertae aetatis.
|| Sueton. Vespas. cap. 43. §
‡ "in triumphum uruitique Judaicum, quo alio comitatus est." Domit. cap. 2.
** "Eripit Titus triumphum, qui librum illum in patriam, ubi praebebat illam, ad ilium illum de Rhodiarcha habebat. Sunt eis quinque equitum gubernatorum, et quinque equitum gubernatorum."
†† Domitianus Titus laudibus effecit Baronius, quod oblati superbis quaerunt provincie.
|| Julius coronae, teftatus de profusis igniugnum. Ufuerius, allique erudit, illud et ipsum tradunt, fiant auctoritate Philofoftrati."—Baigne. Ann. 70. n. xi.
‡‡ "Quem ramos Josephi locum imperio Philofoftrato oppudi putem. Nunc enim "Philofoftratus repugnare coronam Titum sit, atque eam non accepta legatos dimittisse, "quod
needs not to be underflood to say, that Titus refused the crowns of fered him, but only said, that he was unworthy of that honour, be having been only an instrument in the hand of God for displaying his just vengeance against guilty men.

And it must be owned, that Olearius expresseth himself with great judgement and moderation. Either way, those learned men are to be reckoned mistaken, who have maintained that Titus refused to be crowned for his victory over the Jews.

However, we are still to reckon Philostratus, at the beginning of the third century, a good witness to the overthrow of Jerusalem by Titus.

These are early Heathen authors, who have related the destruction of Jerusalem, and thereby borne testimony to the accomplishment of our Lord's predictions concerning it.

Nor can any forget the triumphal arch of Titus, still standing at Rome, of which we before took notice.

There is also an ancient inscription to the honour of Titus *, who "by his father's directions and counsels had subdued the Jewish na tion and destroyed Jerusalem, which had never been destroyed by "any princes, or people before."

Which has occasioned some learned men to say, that even inscrip tions are not free from flattery. But then it must be owned, that the genuineness and antiquity of this inscription have been called in quest ion †. And there are some reasons to doubt, whether this comes from the senate of Rome itself, as is pretended.


† "ubi feteter, ignoratur. scaliger vult ab onufrio fictum." ap. gruter. ib.

A L L
ALL THE

ACTIONS recorded in the GOSPEL

ARE PROBABLE.

If the Gospels were forgeries, it is natural to suppose, some of the actions therein recorded would be unbecoming the character and circumstances of the persons to whom they are ascribed. The truth is, this sort of censure has actually been passed upon a few of the things performed by Jesus, by his disciples, and by his enemies. Indeed, the boldness with which particular actions have been thus condemned, looks as if they were really blameable; yet, upon examination, it appears that there is not any just foundation for cavil here. In the relation which the Evangelists have given of our Lord's actions, they have maintained the nicest propriety. He has done nothing below his dignity as the Son of God, and Saviour of the world. The conduct of his disciples and of his enemies is equally in character, being exactly such as might be expected from persons of their dispositions. — In this, therefore, as in all other respects, the Gospels are sufficiently probable, yea carry a high degree of evidence in their own bosom. But, that the reader may judge for himself, I propose to examine matters minutely; beginning with the ordinary actions of our Lord's life, which have been blamed by the enemies of revelation, as unworthy of the high character ascribed to him in the Gospels.

SECT. I.

Shewing that all the ordinary actions of our Lord's life, were perfectly suitable to his character and undertaking.

OUR Lord's ordinary actions are such as follow. During the years of his childhood and youth, he remained with his parents, being in subjection to them, and working with his father at his occupation. — When he entered on his public life, he went about doing good to the bodies and to the souls of men. He minded no private concern of his own, being wholly employed in the duties of his ministry. — He therefore did not live in worldly pomp or splendor, but in continual hardships and mortifications; being supported

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by
by the charity of his friends. — In all this he plainly acted agree-
sably to his character and function. Nor, in fact, have our adver-
tories found any fault with his general conduct. What reproaches
have been thrown out, are levelled against a few actions, which
may be easily defended, being reasonable and decent in the highest
degree.

I. His behaviour towards his parents has been cenured as not
sufficiently respectful. And the following instances are mentioned.
His flaying behind them in Jerusalem without their knowledge, when
at the age of twelve years they carried him up to the passover. The
answer which he gave to his mother at the marriage in Cana, when
she informed him that the wine was run short. And what he said
of his mother and brethren, to one who told him, that they stood
without, deferring to speak with him.—As to our Lord's "turn-
seeing in Jerusalem after his parents were gone," though his mother
blamed him for it, because of the pain which it had given them, it
was no sort of disobedience. They had not ordered their son to
come away. Having parted with them by accident, perhaps on the
day they proposed to set out, they thought he had gone away with
some of their kinsfolk. And in this persuasion they departed with-
out making any search for him. The fault, therefore, if there was
any here, lay in themselves. His parents having thus left him, Je-
fus proposed to spend his time profitably till they should return.
He presented himself to the doctors, who in the chambers of the
temple instructed such young ones as had been brought up by their
parents to the feast. And when it came to his turn, by asking the
doctors certain questions in the course of the exercise, he modestly
infinituated to them a correction of the errors they were guilty of in
teaching. Thus he gave the people a specimen, by way of prelude,
of what he was more fully to perform afterwards in the course of
his ministry. If his parents had duly considered what the angel
formerly told them concerning the dignity of their son, they might
have expected some such extraordinary transaction during his first
attendance in his father's house. At last, when they found him em-
ployed, instead of finding fault, they ought with reverence to
have beheld those first manifestations of his divinity. Wherefore
the answer which he returned to his mother's complaint, is a suffi-
cient vindication of his conduct in this matter. Luke ii. 49. "And
"he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me?" viz. on the road,
that was an improper place. "Wilt ye not that I must be about my
"Father's business?" or, as others translate it, "in my Father's house?"
You ought, therefore, to have sought me in the temple.—What Jef-
us said to his mother at the marriage of Cana, was by no means
disrespectful. John ii. 4. "Woman, what have I to do with thee?
"Mine hour is not yet come." In our language, indeed, the com-
pellation of woman sounds harsh, being a term of disrespect. But it
was by no means so among the Easterns, who made use of it in ad-
dressing persons of the first quality, as all know who are acquainted
with the Grecian writings. Our Lord, therefore, is very ignorant.
All the actions recorded in the Gospels are probable.

found fault with on this account; especially as he is well known to have addressed his mother by the appellation of Woman, at a time when he meant to shew her the highest and tenderest regard, by recommending her from the cross to the care of the beloved disciple. John xix. 26. "Woman, behold thy son." To proceed, the sentence read interrogatively will easily run thus: "Woman, what have "I to do with thee? is not mine hour come?" is not the season of my public ministrv commenced, in which I am to be no longer under the direction of my parents; but must work miracles, when I myself and not you judge it proper?—The answer which he gave to the people in Capernaum, who told him that his mother and brethren desired to speak with him, does not imply the least contempt of the natural relations established by God among mankind in general, nor any want of affection to his mother and brethren in particular; on the contrary, it imports the highest regard to both. Matth. xii. 49. "Who is my mother and brethren?" Who do you think are the objects of my tenderest regard? "And he stretched forth his hands towards his disciples, and said; Behold my mother and my brethren. For whatsoever shall do the will of my Father which "is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother." They who do the will of God, are beloved by me with a tenderness equal to that which I bear to my brother, my sister, and my mother. A declaration of this kind is so far from throwing contempt in general on the relations established between mankind by nature, or on Christ's mother and brethren in particular, that it implies these relations to be objects of the strongest and tenderest affections in the human nature; and that he had the highest respect and love for his own relations in particular.

2. The manner in which Jesus reformed the abuses committed in the temple is found fault with. We are told that his driving out, with a scourge of small cords, not only the cattle and those who sold them, but the money-changers also, and the people; his overturning the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them who sold doves; and his scattering the changers money; were outrageous actions, more becoming the furious zeal of an enthusiast, than that command of temper and forbriety which Jesus is said to have possessed.—But to understand this part of our Lord's conduct, we must remember, that in the action itself he called himself "the Son of him to whom the temple belonged," John ii. 16. "And he said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence, and make not "my father's house, a house of merchandise." Wherefore, as on this occasion he expressly affirmed that he was the Son of God, his right to reform the abuses of the temple, the house of God, was unquestionable. Nor can any fault be found with the manner of the reformation, considering the authority of the person who made it. He acted plainly as master of the house. And though he was unsupported, the terror which he singly impressed upon the minds of the men, by the air of his countenance and the tone of his voice, was so great, that none of them made any resistance. The whip of cords...
All the Actions recorded in the Gospel are probable.
cords was designed not for the men, whom he never could have
intimidated by the exertion of bodily force, but for the beasts, which
were at market in the temple, and which could no otherwise be
driven out. Wherefore, the whole of this transaction was per-
efectly suitable to our Lord’s dignity as the Son of God; and the ra-
ther that, in so far as it regarded the men, there was here an ex-
tration of his miraculous power, very proper at the beginning of his
ministry. Accordingly, the Jews neither found fault with the action
itself, nor with the manner of it: they only desired him to prove
that he was the person he pretended to be. ver. 18. “What sign
’s shewest thou unto us, seeing thou dost these things?” Besides,
among the Jews, it was common for prophets, by their own autho-
rity, to reform such abuses as were introduced into the worship of
God, and to punish with their own hands, upon the spot, gross viola-
ciations of the law: witnesses the action of Phinehas, by which he
staid the plague, and which (Pl. civ. 30.) “ was accounted to him
“ for righteousness to all generations for evermore.” The pro-
fanations of the temple which Jesus reproved were the most hor-
rrid abuses imaginable. The priests for gain allowed a fair to be
kept in the outer court, whereby the Gentile profaners were excluded
from the place of worship allotted them. Or if any room was left
them, they could not but be exceedingly disturbed in their devo-
tions, by the noise and hurry of the market. Add to this, that
great frauds were committed in the bargains transacted here, by which
the court of the temple, which had been assigned to the Gentiles as
a house of prayer, was made a den of thieves. No wonder, therefore,
that Jesus expressed the utmost indignation against the transgressors,
and used some violence in expelling them. The men he intimidated
by his miraculous power; the cattle he drove out with the scourge
he had made; the implements of their illicit trade he overthrew;
and the things which he could not himself remove, he ordered to
be taken away. In all this he acted agreeably to the character which
he sustained. His zeal was no greater than what prophets far inferi-
or to him had shewed; and the severity which he used was no
greater than the crime deserved. Wherefore, in every respect,
this part of our Lord’s conduct was perfectly proper and confis-
tent.

3. That Judas should have been of the number of the apostles,
is thought inconsistent with the knowledge and wisdom ascribed to
Jesus in the Gospels. This objection our Lord himself has taken
notice of. He forefaw, that his honouring Judas with the apostle-
ship, would be considered as a presumption that he was ignorant of
his real character. Wherefore, long before Judas discovered himself,
Jesus foretold what he would do, to shew that he was fully acquainted
with the character of the man. John vi. 70. “Have not I chosen
“ you twelve, and one of you is a devil?” Wherefore, if any objec-
tion lies against the founder of Christianity for this choice, it cannot
affect his foreknowledge, but must be levelled against his prudence.
Yet in this part likewise, as in every other, he is perfectly free of
blame,
All the Actions recorded in the Gospel are probable.

His making Judas an apostle is a shining instance of wisdom; was designed to be a demonstration of our Lord's innocence. A man profligate dispositions, who he foresaw would at the conclusion be
ey him, Jesus choose into the college of the apostles. By the choice, a wicked person, who had not yet discovered himself, is appointed master's constant attendant, and made the witnes of the most secretions; he is admitted into all the mysteries of his fellowship. Who
s not in this see, that Jesus was not afraid of the eyes of his ene-
s, however malicious? that his miracles were no juggling tricks, formed by compact with his disciples? and that he was not carry-
on any plot, to deceive the world? If Jesus had been engaged such a design, must he not have foreseen that Judas, when he ayed him to the chief priests, would discover the whole fraud?
choice therefore which our Lord, with the fullest knowledge of
as's character, made of him for an apostle, instead of being an
ance of imprudence, was a proof of the most profound wisdom.
thereby demonstrated, in the clearest manner, his own most per-
innocence.—I have only to add, that in this view the wisdom
propriety of the choice was so great, that it was fore-ordained to
rom the beginning: and that notices thereof were given early in
Jewish prophecies, which described Messiah's life, sufferings, and
h.

The freedom Jesus used in "rebuking the Scribes and Pharisees,"
the vehemence with which he denounced woes against them more
once, are thought inconsistent with the sweetness of his dispo-
n, and with the respect due to persons of their rank. Neverthe-
we consider the matter in its just light, we shall soon be
ble that the severity wherewith Jesus treated this order of men,
by no means inconsistent with his general character, but was the
flary result of his wisdom, and of his love to the rest of man-
The Scribes and Pharisees were persons remarkable for aven-
sensualty, pride, obstinacy, and contempt of real religion.
ir corruption of heart exceeded all bounds. Gentle means would
made no impression upon them. They needed the severest re-
es.—Besides, without regarding their reformation at all, which
aps was not to be accomplished by any methods; considering
how of worth which they assumed, and by which mankind were
ted into an high admiration of them, it was necessary, for the
of the people, to pull off the mask of hypocrisy under which
had so long concealed their wickedness, and led the world
y, Luke xvi. 15. "Ye are they which justify yourselves be-
men, but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is
ghy esteemed among men, is abomination in the sight of God." Was there any other method to prevent the pernicious influence
seir example and doctrine. This was the reason Jesus rebuked
openly, and denounced woes against them with such vehem-
c. By so doing, he, whose judgment was by his miracles
t to be the judgment of a prophet, shewed his hearers every
e what opinion he had of those hypocrites, and cautioned
them,
them, in the most affecting manner, to beware both of them and of their doctrine. And though on these occasions he expressed himself with more than ordinary vehemence, it must be owned that he preferred an entire command of himself. For he uttered no sentiment of expression, but such as the offences fully warranted, and the regard which he had for virtue absolutely demanded.

5. Our Lord’s riding into Jerusalem on an ass, amidst the acclamations of his disciples and the people, has been grossly misconstrued, and ignorantly ridiculed by the adversaries of religion. Hitherto Jesu had assumed the title of Messiah, only in private, and among his disciples. The reason was, if he had declared his intentions publicly in the beginning of his ministry, the rulers would have put him to death before his work was finished. It was necessary, however, both for the more certain information of mankind, who were not to be left to guess who he was, and for the credit of his own character, which was not to be doubtful or ambiguous, that he should openly assume the dignity which really belonged to him. Wherefore, his ministry having continued the time determined, a few days before his death he resolved to receive the titles of Messiah, Son of David, and king of Israel, publicly; though he knew it would become the foundation of that acculation by which he was to be cut off. —This season was of all others the most proper for his purpose. A great multitude now attended, in expectation that he was to set up his kingdom immediately. He knew that such people as coming from the city, to usher him in with the pomp and state of Messiah. Among the rest, there were to be many Scribes and Pharisees, his enemies, before whom it was proper he should acknowledge himself Messiah. Wherefore, he did not think of shunning the multitude as formerly; but determined to enter Jerusalem amidst the acclamations which he knew they would offer him as Messiah. And left, in the narrow passages and lanes leading into the city, he might have been hurt by the crowd, he made his disciples bring him an ass to ride upon. Nor in this equipage was there any thing mean or ridiculous; asses being the beasts commonly used by the Easterns, who seldom rode on horses, except they were persons of the first rank. Hence, in the prophecy which foretold this event, it is mentioned as an instance of Messiah’s humility, that when he should make his public entry into Jerusalem, he would ride, not upon an horse, after the manner of great kings and princes, but upon an ass, because “he was meek and lowly.”

6. The defenency which Jesu shewed in the garden of Gethsemane at the approach of his trial and death, and the words which he uttered upon the crofs, are thought inconsistent with that patience and fortitude, which, as the Son of God, he ought to have possesed. But they can be so only, on supposition that his sorrow and trouble in the garden, with his agony and bloody sweat, proceeded from the fear of death. Nevertheless, the prospect of death, though it was in him to be attended with every aggravating circumstance of pain and ignominy, cannot be supposed to have raised any violent perturbation.
All the actions recorded in the Gospel are probable.

I know some imagine our Lord's distress in the garden arose from the more lively view, which he at that time had, of the miseries of mankind, occasioned by sin. But the considera-
tion of thieves, however lively, could only raise sympathy in the breast of Jesus; where too it must have been greatly softened by the certain prospect he then had of their de-
struction, by what he had already done, and was still to do for their recovery.

In the above account of our Lord's agony, I only affirm the fact, that it arose from the
nins which were then inflicted upon him by the immediate hand of God. And I affirm it,
because in every page, the scriptures speak of Jesus as having suffered for the sins of mankind, not because he kept accounts for his behaviour in the garden. To object to the fact, that we
are not know how one who knew no sin could suffer for sin, is incompetent, because it may
be a matter above our comprehension. It deserves however to be considered, whether Al
mighty God, who by means of second causes conveys into our minds every sensation, whe-
ter of pleasure or pain, may not by the direct operation of his power, without the inter-
vention of any second cause, convey precisely the same sensations. If this is admitted, though
et was no sin, God might, by the immediate operation of his power, make him feel
such pains which shall be the punishment of sin hereafter, in order that by the visible ef-
ects which they produced upon him, mankind might have a just notion of the greatness of
his pains. In this no injustice was done to Jesus. He freely consented to suffer in this
manner, because it was for so great an end as the salvation of the human species. His bear-

ing these pains, with a view to shew how great they are, was by no means punishment. It
was merely suffering. These pains were not the effects of the divine anger; for at no time
was God better pleased with his Son, than when he made his soul an offering for sin. Lobry
he did not arise from God's withdrawing his favour from his Son. Of the divine
suffering Jesus in his sufferings had the fullest consolation: as appears from the affectuate
manner in which he then addressed God; "O MY FATHER, if it be possible," etc.—The
bore particular merit attention, not as matters contained in revelation, but as an explica-
tion of facts cohered there, which some reasoners reject. I suppose, because they think a
noper explanation cannot be given of them.
the character of the founder of Christianity, below that of many of his own disciples, who have suffered greater pains than his, with the utmost fortitude.

Thus, after the severest search into our Lord’s conduct, it appears that none of the ordinary actions of his life can be cen sured with justice. To his parents he was ever dutiful. The abuses in the temple he reformed with a zeal similar to that which the Jewish prophets in ancient times had often shown. His choice of Judas for an apostle did not betray any ignorance of the man’s character: he did it to prove the purity of his own designs and actions. The stubborn incorrigibleness of the Scribes and Pharisees, made it necessary that he should denounce woe against them; that the people might be led to a just notion of their character. He rode into Jerusalem on an ass, amidst the acclamations of the people, to publish his claim to the dignity and character of Messiah. Withal, his sorrow and affliction in the garden of Gethsemane was perfectly consistent with entire resignation; while, at the same time, it shewed in the most lively colours the greatnefs of the pains which he then endured. In short, his whole behaviour was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners; and therefore was perfectly such as became the Son of God in the human nature.

S E C T. II.

Showing that miracles in general are possible, and that they are capable of proof.

1. THE opposers of revelation affect to treat miracles in general with contempt, as things in their own nature impossible. Hence, without any examination at all, they reject the Gospels as utterly unworthy of credit, merely on account of the miracles which they contain.—But that miracles are things naturally possible, will appear from what follows. To use the definition which our adversaries give of a miracle, it is a deviation from, or alteration of, the established course of nature. Now that such things may be, is perfectly agreeable to the notions mankind have of the operations of the Deity. The laws of nature, called by some immutable, are nothing, on the principles of Theism, but the rules whereby God directs himself in his operations throughout the mundane system. These laws he may alter at his pleasure; unless we affirm, that the Deity is necessitated in his actions, and cannot suspend the exertions of his power. These doubts are the sentiments of Atheists: but all who acknowledge the existence of an Intelligent Mind the Creator of the Universe, believe him to be perfectly independent in his operations. Of consequence, they find no difficulty in supposing that, as often as he pleases, he can differ from the ordinary methods which he has prescribed to himself in the government of the universe. A miracle, therefore, is by no means a thing in its own nature impossible.—This reasoning is confirmed by the persuasion which has universally prevailed concerning miracles. For mankind are so far from having any general prejudices against such things, that they have ever looked upon them as what might
might be expected. Accordingly the belief of miracles has prevailed so universally, even from the beginning, that there never was a nation which did not boast of prodigies, whether real or supposed. But a persuasion so general, could scarcely have found place in the breasts of mankind, if the object of it had been a real impossibility.

2. Next we are told, that though the possibility of miracles should be granted, they can never be rendered credible by human testimony. The person who sees them, or is the subject of them, may believe them: but others, to whom he reports them, cannot consistently with prudence receive them. It is pretended, that the only reason why one man believes the testimony of another, is that the fact attested is agreeable to his own experiences. If therefore a man pretends to attest things altogether repugnant to the whole course of human experience, his attestation is to be rejected, because the evidence arising from one's own experience must always preponderate that of another man's testimony, which is neither more nor less than that other's experience reported to us. But this argument, however specious, is at bottom both trifling and fallacious. For, in the first place, it will prove too much; namely, that the world had no beginning, the making of things out of nothing being contrary to all human experience, which teaches us, that the various races of animals are produced from parents, who in like manner had their existence from those of their kind who went before them. So invariable is this law, that not one instance can be produced of the creation of any substance whatever. And as the world may by this argument be demonstrated to have had no beginning, so we may prove in like manner that it will have no end. For experience teaches, that all things continue exactly in the order wherein we found them at our coming into the world. The revolutions of the heavenly bodies are the same: the changes produced in the face of nature by the seaons, are the same; nay, there is not to be observed in the whole compass of nature, so much as a single particle of matter annihilated, far less do we find any considerable portion of the system destroyed. The creation therefore, and destruction of the world, being wholly out of the road of human experience, cannot be received as facts, on the authority of any attestation whatever.

—Further, according to this method of arguing, no natural phenomenon can be rendered credible, if it happens to have no place in the country where the perfon lives, to whom it is proposed as an object of belief. For instance, the existence of snow and ice, being contrary to the experience of the inhabitants of certain climates, could not to them be rendered credible by the attestation even of whole nations with whom such things are common. —I conclude: allowing this method of reasoning to be just, many things will occur, in which a man ought not to trust his own senses. For seeing experience is the only measure of possibility, if our experiences concerning any matter are fewer on the one side than on the other, the fewer ought to yield to the greater. The wisest men, how-
ever, often in practice contradicted this maxim, believing many things firmly, though the experiences which support them are fewer in number than those which oppose them. Thus appeareth the absurdity of the rule of belief, which the opposers of revelation are so anxious to establish, with a view to destroy the credit of the Gospel miracles.

Secondly, the argument under consideration, turned against the Gospel miracles, does not proceed rightly on its own principles. For though it were really necessary, to render human testimony credible, that it be agreeable to the former experience of mankind, the miracles of Jesus and of his apostles would still be worthy of credit notwithstanding no man living at present ever beheld anything like a miracle. I begin the proof of this point with observing, that the relations of things are very different from the laws of the material system. The latter, depending entirely on the will of God, may be changed; but the relations of things, resulting necessarily from their natures, are absolutely immutable. And therefore, while the Deity can easily make iron to swim on water, contrary to the laws of gravitation, he cannot make any part of a thing greater than the whole, nor a being perfectly true capable of falsehood. These are plain impossibilities, beyond the reach even of the divine power, being direct contradictions. It follows, therefore, that if among men one invariably true could be found, his attestation of any matter within the compass of possibility, would deserve the highest credit: because reason teaches the absolute impossibility of such a person's falsifying. It must be owned, indeed, that perfection in truth is not to be had in the present corrupt state of our species. Nevertheless, reason and experience concur in affuring us, that human nature is capable of this moral quality to a very high degree; and that by how much the power of truth prevails in the mind of any person, by so much does the difficulty of that person's falsifying increase. The fact is, all men love truth, and practice it, unless they are diverted from it by some temptation falling in their way. They have likewise an high esteem of probity in others: and where they meet with it, they fail not to bestow the praise that is due to it. Few are without a strong natural sense of the barts of a lie, even in matters most common. If the lie is told in a serious affair, where truth is most expected, it is detestable. If it relates to a subject of near concernment, and leads one into errors which prove fatal for life, it is monstrous. But if this falsehood, so pernicious, is delivered in the name of God, and committed to writing, with a view to deceive thousands in after-times, to their ruin, without any the least advantage to the person who thus propagates the falsehood, no words can paint its barts; it is devilish, and altogether horrible. In short, merely and circumstances may easily be supposed, wherein, with the ordinary degree of veracity common to good men, it is next to impossible for them to falsify. Besides, it ought to be remembered, that in the human heart there are many and strong supports of veracity, which render it morally impossible for him who is under their complicated influence to be guilty of deceit. For instance,
All the Articles recorded in the Gospel are probable.

instance, let us suppose the person who bears testimony in the matters and circumstances above mentioned, is possessed of a great degree of benevolence towards mankind; this principle, it is plain, as well as his own honesty, and the acknowledged importance of the matter, will place him at the utmost distance from deceiving others. Unto honesty and benevolence, join the fear of God; and experience will declare, that the person who lives under the united power of these three, cannot possibly go about in the name of the Deity, deceiving mankind into the belief of matters, which not only expose them every where to be malicious, but which must ruin them eternally: and all this without the least advantage to himself. The truth is, so many virtues may enter into the composition of a human character, that though neither any one of them alone, nor all of them together, may make it strictly impossible for the person who is possessed of them to be guilty of a single lie, yet they may render him absolutely incapable of a "long track or course of deliberate deceit," in matters of the highest importance. This impossibility, I think, the universal voice of human experience teaches; and with it the speculations of reason agree; as it is an impossibility resulting from the natures and relations of things.

I therefore infer, that when matters of fact, however extraordinary, are reported to have happened, if they are not impossible, if they are matters of great moment, on which the happiness or misery of multitudes depend; if they are in their nature things so obvious to sense, that, in judging of them, the person who reports them could not be deceived; if they are attested by a great number of witnesses, whose veracity, benevolence, and piety, are undoubted, whose relations are perfectly consistent, and whose testimony is delivered with that calm assurance which is natural to truth; if these witnesses had no manner of interest of their own to promote by such an attestation; last of all, if they proved the sincerity with which they gave their testimony, by sealing it with their blood: I say, in these circumstances, an attestation of any possible matter, however extraordinary it may be, deserves the highest credit, even upon the principles of belief contended for by modern infidels. Because both reason and experience assure us, that it is morally impossible for such persons to falsify in such a case, as it would imply a total suspension of all the essential principles, by which the human mind is known to be conducted: consequently their falsifying would be more miraculous a great deal, than any of the matters which they have related; and to refuse such credit, would be to contradict the most frequent, the most important, and the most undoubted experiences of the human mind. Thus it appears, that the objections which have been raised against miracles in general, by the adversaries of revelation, with a view to destroy the credit of the Gospel miracles in particular, are mere sophisms, and ought to be treated as such by those who deal candidly in this controversy.

S E C T. III.
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Shewing that no just objection can be urged against the particular miracles ascribed to our Lord in the Gospels.

The primary and general end of the miracles performed by the founder of the Christian religion, was to confirm his mission. Considered in this view, they are all abundantly probable, being naturally adapted to shew that he acted by commission from God. Moreover, in his miracles there was a greatness which plainly demonstrated them to be the works of God. Nor do we find the least circumstance accompanying any of them, by which we can say it was disfigured. The immediate ends likewise of the particular miracles mentioned in the Gospels render them probable; for they were such as became the Son of God. Jesus never wrought any miracles lightly. No trifling purposes were accomplished by them. They were performed, to relieve mankind from the miseries of life, or to bestow upon them some signal blessing. In short, all of them tended to good. Nor can any instance be mentioned, except two, where even by accident Christ’s miracles proved in the least hurtful. The withering of the barren fig-tree, and the destruction of the herd of swine in the country of the Gadarenes, are the miracles I have in view. These, together with the many cures of Demoniace, which are all thought incredible, because no such possessions of devils are observed now-a-days; and the turning of water into wine at the marriage in Cana, which is thought indecent, on account of the largeness of the quantity of wine that was produced; and the resurrection of Lazarus, which is ridiculed, because he is said to have come forth bound hand and foot; are the only miracles which our adversaries have pretended to find fault with, as inconsistent with our Lord’s character and pretensions.

1. With respect to the miracle of the fig-tree, it ought to be considered, that as the earth and the fulness thereof is the Lord’s, it is his right to dispose, not of the estates only, but of the lives of men. If so, we may as reasonably find fault with the providence of God, because he destroys men’s goods by fire, and hail, and furious storms, as object against the miracle of the fig-tree, or that of the Demoniace, on account of the hurt done by them, to individuals. The good produced by the natural evils which happen, has even been judged reason sufficient for admitting them into the system of the universe. In like manner the more valuable moral purposes, answered by the miracles objected against, ought to apologize for the place which they have in revelation; notwithstanding they occasioned some loss to individuals. Thus the withering of the fig-tree, being a sensible and affecting representation of the punishment of moral unfruitfulness, under the best advantages possible, might have been of great use to the Jews, in awakening them to a sense of their danger, from the impending judgments of God. Besides, as this miracle was performed by Jesus in the character of a prophet, it had a great and evident propriety; being similar, though vastly superior
to the symbolical actions whereby the Jewish prophets anciently fore-
told God's judgments upon rebellious nations. In such representa-
tions, both Jesus and the prophets acted agreeably to the genius of
the Easterns, with whom it was familiar to instruct their disciples, by
actions as well as by words. Farther, in most translations of the
Gospels an unfavourable air has been given to this miracle, by a mis-
representation of one of its principal circumstances. For, from the
modern sense of the word curse, infidels have taken occasion to repres-
fent Jesus as flouting, raving, and uttering execrations against the
tree; an indecency which nothing but the extravagance of passion
could produce. Nevertheless, all that Jesus said to the tree was,
"Let no fruit grow on thee henceforth." And the tree having withered
from the root, in consequence of this sentence, the apostle Peter, who
passed by next day and observed it, was struck with wonder. "Master,"
said he, "behold the fig-tree which thou cursedst, is withered away."
But, in the Hebrew language, to curse the land or the trees is simply
to make or pronounce them unfruitful. Thus Heb. vi. 1. "But
that which bareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto
"curfing, whose end is to be burned." The tree therefore which
Jesus cursed is no more but the tree which he had pronounced un-
fruitful. Lastly, though it be said, in our translation, that, when Je-
fus expected fruit from this tree, the time of figs was not yet; it does
not follow, that his expectations were unreasonable, or that the sen-
tence pronounced on the tree was unjust. "The time of figs," in
scripture language, signifies the time of gathering figs. This every
one must acknowledge, who looks to Matth. xxi. 34, 41. where
parit tov apagw signifies "the season of gathering the fruits." The
circumstance therefore, that "the time of gathering figs was not yet,"
instead of shewing our Lord's expectations to have been unreasonable,
proves that he had ground to look for fruit on it; for, if it had been
in use to bear, it would have had figs ripe, which, though not
perfectly ripe, might have been eaten by one who was hungry, as
Jesus happened to be at that season.

2. The miracles said to have been performed upon the Demonic
may be defended, though no such possession have been observed either
before or since. Because for wise reasons the devils may have been
allowed to exercise ephical power over the bodies and souls of men,
in the age wherein the Son of God lived on earth, to refrain their
malice and to cast them out: among the many important ends which
determined the Son of God to come down from heaven, this was
one; that he might reveal the real state of the invisible world, so far
as it has a connexion with human affairs. On this subject, mankind
in all ages had been universally and grossly ignorant. The inhabi-
tants of the Weft believed the invisible world to be full of weak capri-
cious divinities, who exerted a partial, opposite, and often a fruit-
less superintendancy over human affairs. The power even of Jupiter
himself, whom they considered as supreme, they fancied to be limited
by some greater inexplicable power, to which they gave the name of
Fate. In the East, two supreme independent principles were acknow-
ledged,
All the Actions recorded in the Gospel are probable:

ledged, the one good, the other evil. These two they supposed to be continually at war together, the one to produce all the good he could, the other all the evil. It was thus they accounted for that mixture of good and evil in the universe, so difficult to be reconciled with just ideas of God. The most pernicious effect however of this system was, that it led men to the basest species of idolatry, to the worship of the devil, in order that they might escape the direful effects of his malice. Mankind thus erring in their conceptions concerning the invisible world, the Son of God came from that world, and testified unto all the things which he had there seen; namely, That there is but one God supreme; That all beings are absolutely subject to him; That he is infinitely powerful and good; and that he is the friend of mankind; That God has an only begotten Son, by whom he made and governs all things; That Jesus himself is this Son of God; That he loves mankind, is their protector, and will be their judge at the last day; That, beside the Father and the Son, there is the Spirit of God, who also loves the human race, afflicts them in becoming good, and prepares them for eternal life: Finally, that there are in the invisible world many good angels; that they too bear a friendly regard to the virtuous; and that they are often sent forth to minster to them who shall be the heirs of salvation; That Jesus taught men what numerous, powerful, and benevolent friends they have in the invisible world. On the other hand he taught them, that they have there also numerous, powerful, and malicious enemies; namely, the devil and his angels, who go about continually seeking whom they may destroy. At the same time, against the dread of those enemies he has fortified us, by affording us, that the devils are all absolutely subject to God, who allows them no farther than is agreeable to the ends of his own righteous administration; and that in due time their kingdom he will utterly destroy. But the Son of God came to instruct the poor. Therefore he did not content himself with giving a scientific account of the invisible world, for the benefit of the learned. He revealed it in a manner adapted to the comprehension of the vulgar, and which at the same time afforded to all classes of men a complete demonstration of the truth of what he taught. He made the inhabitants of the invisible world the actual objects of men's fancies; refuting unto us the knowledge of these things, in the very manner wherein, according to the Mosaic history, it had originally been communicated. For, in the first place, being himself "the only begotten Son of God, the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person; yea, having the fulness of the Godhead dwelling in him bodily;" by appearing in our world, he manifested the character and perfections of the Godhead to the fancies of men. More especially, he manifested to them the infinite wisdom of God in the scheme of redemption which he taught. He showed them his boundless power in the many and great miracles which he performed, or enabled his apostles to perform. He displayed God's unspeakable goodness, in his own life, which was one continued course of beneficence. Hence, in allusion to the fact, that God was manifested in the flesh," he told his disciples and the people,
All the Mornians recorded in the Gospel are probate.

people, John xii. 45. "He that seeth me, seeth him that sent me." In like manner, when Philip said unto him, John xiv. 8. "Shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us;" he replied, 9. "Have I been so long time with you, and yet haft thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou 'then, Shew us the Father?'" 2. Jesus shewed mankind the maker, governor, and judge of the world. Being himself that great personage, by appearing in the human nature, and conversing so long upon earth, he made himself the object of men's fenes. By supplying eyes and limbs to those whose bodies wanted these members, and by raising the dead, he shewed men his creating power. By changing the course of nature in all its parts, and by ruling the wills of men, so that they did not lay hold on him till his own time came, he shewed himself to be the governor of the world. By riling from the dead, and at the same time raising others who were dead, he demonstrated that he will raise all men, and bring them to judgment. 3. The existence of the devil, and of evil spirits his angels, also their malice and their power, Jesus shewed by allowing the devils in that age, not only to afflict mankind with incurable diseases, but, by means of those diseases, to take possession of their bodies and souls. Nevertheless, their absolute subjection to him, and conseqently that he is himself the sole governor of the world, he demonstrated by casting them out. Whatever power therefore the devils exercise in this world, is merely by permission from him. 4. By possessions of a kind different from these just now mentioned, Jesus shewed mankind the existence of the Spirit of God, their great friend, together with the reality and efficacy of his operation in their salvation. The apostles and first converts he filled with the Holy Ghost; and the reality of that possession he made evident to the fenes of men, by the miraculous gifts which the persons filled with the Holy Ghost exercised. They spake a variety of languages, which they knew nothing of before; they uttered prophecies, the meaning of which they did not understand; they discerned spirits; they wrought miracles: so that no one, who saw these men, could doubt that the spirit of God was in them of a truth. 5. The existence of good angels, and their afficity in ministering unto those who shall be heirs of salvation, Jesus made evident to the fenes of men, by giving the angels frequent occasions of appearing in visible forms to minister unto him; namely, at his conception, birth, temptation, agony, resurrection, and ascension. Thus our Lord may be said, while on earth, to have made the whole inhabitants of the invisible world, along with himself, the objects of men's fenes, and by doing to have put their existence and their several characters beyond doubt, in all succeeding generations.

These things considered, the miracles performed upon the Demonicis in the Gospels appear credible, though no such possessions are now observed among mankind. The possession of devils was peculiar to those times: just as the possessions of the Spirit of God, the appearances of angels, nay, and the appearance of the Son of God himself, undoubtedly were. Moreover, as there were reasons for con-
fining the posessions of the Spirit of God, the appearances of angels, and the presence of the Son of God on earth, to the first age of Christianity; so there may have been reasons of great importance determining the posessions of devils to that age also. It was not agreeable to the wisdom of God to repeat in every age, those proofs addressed to the senses of men, by which he was pleased to reveal to them the state of the invisible world. The age in which his Son appeared on earth, he honoured with the miraculous effusion of the Holy Ghost, and with frequent appearances of angels, because thereby the doctrines of his Son, concerning the friends which mankind have in the invisible world, was made an object of their senses. For the same reason, he confirmed what his Son taught concerning the devil and his angels, by the peculiar power which he allowed the devils to exercise in that age. Of this dispensation mankind could not then complain; because in that age the Son of God, and the apostles of his Son, lived on earth, armed with miraculous powers for restraining and calling out the devils. Such a dispensation tended greatly to the instruction and benefit of mankind, in all future generations. It has made us sensible of the number, nature, and power of our enemies. And this information, while it fits us up to watchfulness, is too tempered as not to dispirit us. At the same time our enemies were shewed to us, we were fortified against the excessive dread of them, by the sensible demonstrations which were given in their ejections, proving that the devil, though powerful, is not independent and infinitely powerful, but is absolutely subject to God and to his Son; so that he cannot hurt no man beyond what is permitted him of God. Wherefore, however strange it may seem, that evil spirits were allowed, not only to afflict mankind with diseases, but by means of those diseases to take possession of them, in the age wherein the Son of God appeared on earth, the great importance of the end gained by this dispensation, renders it every way worthy of the perfections and government of God, and consequently gives sufficient probability to all the posessions recorded in the Gospels.

* In the above defence of the miracles wrought upon the Demoniaca, it is allowed that the devils have not now that power over the bodies and spirits of men, which they exercised in our Lord's age. From this, however, it is not to be inferred, that they have no power at all over them. The visible operation of their power, in the age mentioned, proves the contrary; being intended to convince men, that evil spirits often intermeddle in their affairs. Many diseases, called incurable, may be brought on and continued by the operation of evil spirits. Other mischiefs, of various kinds, they may be instrumental in producing. For the Scriptures attribute to the devils much more influence in the affairs of the world than most people are willing to allow them. For example, the Apostle Paul calls the devil, "the prince of the power of the air," Eph. ii. 2. and his angels "the rulers of the darkness of this world," Eph. v. 12. These titles mark the influence which evil spirits have in changing the constitution of the air, and by that means of bringing diseases both upon man and beast, and of destroying the fruits of the earth. Farther, we are told that the Apostles delivered over to Satan incorrigible offenders for the destruction of their faith; and it is to be supposed, that, in consequence of this sentence, the devil punished them with mortal diseases. In the moral world also the Scriptures represent the devils as having great power: for, on two different occasions, Jesus attributed to them the machinations whereby he was put to death, John xiv. 30. Luke xxiv. 35. In like manner, the evangelist Luke describes the treachery of Judas to an especial energy of Satan upon his mind, chap. xxii. 3. and the cowardice of Peter to the same cause, chap. xxii. 31. also the wickedness of Ananias, Acts v. 3. Hence Peter, taught by experience,
"All the Actions recorded in the Gospel are probable.

30. "The destruction of the herd of swine," which happened in consequence of the possession of the Demons of Gadara, may be defended upon the soundest principles of reason, if the foregoing vindication of possessions in general is admitted. Impostors have pretended by exorcisms to expel devils; for the idea of demons and their power is not only of ancient original, but hath widely prevailed. These exorcisms, however, have never succeeded, unless by compact with impostors like themselves, who have counterfeit possessions, in order to besow upon their accomplices the honour of miracles. Wherefore, to prevent every suspicion, even the most distant, that this was the case with Jesus in the miracles which he performed upon the possessed, it became both his wisdom and his goodness, in one instance at least, to order matters so that the miracle should be raised above all doubt. This happened in the possession of the demons of Gadara. For the devils, who were expelled, being permitted to enter into a herd of swine on the neighbouring mountain, they drove them into the sea, where they perished, to the number of two thousand. This extraordinary circumstance very happily answered the end designed by it; because both the learned and the ignorant must be feasible, that, whatever bargain our Lord may have made with the Demoniaces, he could make none with the swine. In this illustrious miracle, therefore, by a proof addresed to the fenses of men, a proof which, if it had not been found in the Gospels, the enemies of revelation very probably would have expressly required, Jesus has taught men that there are really evil spirits existing in the world, enemies to mankind, and authors of all evil; that these wicked spirits are many in number; that a multitude of them are often employed in hurting particular persons; that their power and malice are very great; but that they are absolutely subject to God and his Son; and that God actually restraineth them from doing all the mischief they incline. Finally, by this undeniable miracle, Jesus has given credit to his apostles.

Vol. V.

O bility

thee, earnestly cautions his disciples to beware of the devil, who, he tells them, 1 Eph. v. 3, "goeth about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." To these representations the Apostle Paul agrees; for he tells us, 2 Cor. iv. 4, that "the devil blindeth the minds of those who believe not." Besides, it is on account of the power which the devil exerceseth both in the natural and moral world, that our Lord has styled him, in three different places, the PRINCE OF THIS WORLD (John xii. 31, xiv. 30, xvi. 11); and the Apostle Paul, THE GOD OF THIS WORLD, 2 Cor. iv. 4. Finally, to impress mankind with a sense of their danger from evil spirits, our Lord, in the form of prayer which he taught his disciples, hath commanded us to beseech God "to deliver us (ε λαλεσανε) from the evil one," the Devil.—Such are the representations which Jesus and his Apostles have given, of the power exercised by evil spirits in the natural and moral world. If any one takes upon himself to disbelieve those things, he ought to remember that they are matters of fact which he cannot reason upon, because he knows nothing of the invisible world at all; and that Jesus, having come from that world, deserves to be credited in the account which he has given of it.

The reader, no doubt, observes, that I have not produced our Lord's temptation in the wilderness as an example of the agency of evil spirits in the moral world. The reason is, Le Clerc affirms, it was transferred in a vision; and the ingenious Mr. Farmer, in his "Inquiry" 4th, that it happened in a "Divine Vision." But I now mention it after the other proofs from Scripture, relative to the agency of the Devil in human affairs, not doubting but the whole taken together, will convince impartial judges, that the literal sense of the history of the temptation is agreeable to the representation which the Scriptures have given us of the agency of evil spirits; and the rather, that all the objections which have been raised against the literal sense may easily be removed, by attending to the circumstances of the translation, and to the true meaning of the phrases which the Evangelists have made use of in that part of their narrative.
ility to the other miracles which he performed upon the Demoniacs, and has vindicated his own character from the aspersions which have been thrown upon it, as if, to aggrandize himself in the eyes of the ignorant multitude, he made the spectators believe the disfigures which he cured were not natural, but the effects of possession; while in reality there never was in the world any person whatever possessed with devils.

4. That so great a quantity of wine was furnished at the marriage of Cana, cannot be thought indecent, considering that, among the Jews, marriage-feasts lasted a whole week, and that on those occasions great numbers of people were gathered together. In the whole of his life, Jesus showed the most perfect temperance. We may therefore believe, that he would not be present at any meeting where was excess; far less would he be instrumental in carrying on the debauch, by furnishing the means thereof. For which reason, though the quantity of wine that was produced should be thought too great for the occasion and the company, we ought to view it in any favourable light, rather than imagine that he acted here quite contrary to his acknowledged character. In particular, we may suppose Jesus did not intend that the whole of the wine which he formed should be drunk at this time. He designed it as a nuptial present, for supplying the future necessities of the new-married couple. It was usual for relations and friends to make presents on such occasions: wherefore, seeing the nature of the miracle required that the quantity of wine which was formed should be large, to prevent all suspicion of fraud, could there be any thing more proper than that what remained should be charitably designed by our Lord as a provision for the new family? In the history no circumstance occurs, hindering us to put this favourable construction upon the miracle. We are told, indeed, that the governor of the feast, when he tasted the wine that was made, said to the bridegroom, ver. 10, "Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse, but thou hast kept the good wine till now." And the adversaries of revelation complain, that the true import of the word μεθυσθήναι is disguised in the translation, by being rendered, "when men have well drunk;" because they say the proper meaning of it is, "when men have got drunk." However, as this is not the constant signification of the word, the translators cannot be charged with unfair dealing. It means no more, often, but to drink "to satisfaction, or plentifully." Thus, Gen. xliii. 30. it is said of Josephus's brethren that μεθυσθησαν, μη ουν, which can mean no more but that they drank "to satisfaction." Nay, the word is applied to "meat" as well as to "drink." For Hosea, xiv. 7. speaking of the Israelites, says, οὐκ ἡμεῖς, μη μεθυσθήσατε αὐτούς. In like manner, the Apostle, blaming the Corinthians for eating together in parties, and not waiting for one another, when they met for celebrating the Lord's supper, mentions it as one of the inconveniences of that method, 1 Cor. xi. 21. ἐὰν γὰρ ἐστιν, ἐὰν μὴ μεθυσθήσΑΤΩ "one is hungry, and another is filled." Wherefore, from the words of the governor of the feast at Cana, it cannot be inferred,
ferred, that at marriage entertainments it was usual for all the guests to get drunk, far less that the guests were so at this entertainment. To conclude: he who in the first creation made such liberal provision for the necessities of men, might on a particular occasion, when he was forming nourishment for the natural life of his friends, with all decency do it plentifully: because thus the favour was enhanced; and by the quantity furnished he both shewed his own exuberant goodness, and gave such magnificence to the miracle, as removed it beyond all possibility, and even suspicion of fraud.

5. The resurrection of Lazarus is spoken against, on account of a circumstance taken notice of in the history of that miracle, John xi. 44. "And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave cloaths." Here the question is, How a man could come out of a grave, who was bound hand and foot? Yet to this puzzling question, I do not despair of returning a satisfactory answer. From the writings of Josephus, and of such travellers as have visited Palestine, we learn that the Jewish sepulchres were generally caves or rooms hewn out of rocks. Wherefore, as the Jews did not make use of coffins in burying the dead, they placed the bodies generally in niches, cut into the sides of these caves or rooms. (See Maundrell's description of the sepulchres of the kings. Travels, p. 76.) This form of the Jewish sepulchres suggests an easy solution of the difficulty under consideration. The Evangelist does not mean to say, that Lazarus walked out of the sepulchre; but that, lying on his back in a niche, he raised himself into a sitting posture; then putting his legs over the edge of his niche or cell, slid down, and stood upright upon the floor. All this he might do, notwithstanding his arms were close bound to his body, and his legs were tied strait together with the shroud and rollers, wherewith, after the manner of the Jews, he was swathed. Accordingly, when he thus came forth, it is said, Jesus ordered them to looie him and let him go; a circumstance plainly importing, that the Evangelist knew Lazarus could not walk till he was unbound.

S E C T. IV.

The Actions ascribed in the Gospels to the Apostles, are probable.

I. THE apostles are thought to have shewed too much precipitancy in their attachment to their Master. This seeming impropriety was taken notice of anciently by Porphyry and Julian, who offered it as a personal objection against Matthew's character, but not against the history itself. In either view, however, the objection is frivolous and incompetent, arising merely from the brevity of the narration. I acknowledge that three of the Evangelists do not mention our Lord's having had any previous interviews with the persons whom he afterwards called to be his apostles. Yet from this circumstance to infer, that they had neither seen nor heard of one another before, would be very absurd. John in his Gospel affirms us, that Peter, Andrew, Philip, and Nathanael, all of whom afterwards became Christ's
All the Actions recorded in the Gospel are probable.

Christ's apostles, waited upon him, and conversed with him at Jordan, when he came to be baptized of John. They were therefore no strangers to his character and pretensions; but had a favourable opinion of both, long before they joined themselves to him as his disciples. How then can it be thought strange, that, when Jesus called them to follow him, they readily obeyed? The censure indeed is levelled chiefly against Matthew, whom Jesus called from the receipt of custom. Yet he likewise may be vindicated by the apology just now offered. The receipt of custom, from which he was called to follow Jesus, was near Capernaum, the place of our Lord's ordinary residence. Wherefore, if this publican, as is probable, was an inhabitant of Capernaum, he could be no stranger to our Lord's character, doctrine, and miracles. He may not only have heard him often preach, but he may have seen him perform miracles; and from both may have formed a just notion of his pretensions. In such circumstances, could Matthew be blamed for infantly obeying the call of one whom he believed to be Messiah, and who in calling him conferred a favour upon him? The same account may be given of James and John the sons of Zebedee, and of all the rest; who, besides the personal knowledge which they had of Jesus, were no doubt acquainted with the Baptist's testimony concerning him, and with the august character which the voice from heaven had given him, when, in the hearing of the multitude, it declared him to be "the beloved Son of God, in whom he was well-pleased."

2. It is thought, that if our Lord's character and miracles had been really such as in the Gospels they are said to have been, it is not probable that any of his disciples would have betrayed him. The expectation which they had of being raised to the chief places in his supposed kingdom, would have attached even the most covetous of them to his person; and the consideration of his knowledge and power as the Son of God would have deterred the most daring among them from attempting any thing to his disadvantage. The sum which the traitor received for giving up his Master, in value did not exceed three pounds ten shillings sterling. It was therefore a trifling, which the most covetous wretch cannot be supposed to have taken as an equivalent for the life of a friend, from whom he had any expectations of gain at all. To suppose that he betrayed his Master in retribution of the rebuke which he gave him for blaming the woman who came with the precious ointment, is attributing too much to the force of such a passion. That rebuke was not levelled against him singly. It was directed also to the rest. Besides, it should be considered, that though he struck the bargain with the chief priests about betraying his master, a few hours after he was rebuked, almost two days passed before he fulfilled his bargain; so that he had time enough to think deliberately of what he was going to do. From all this our adversaries infer, that the treachery of Judas, as we were pleased to call it, was occasioned by some suspicion which he entertained of his Master's character. His eyes, it seems, were at length opened. He found that Jesus was not the Messiah; and he delivered him into the hands of
All the Actions recorded in the Gospel are probable.

If the supreme court of justice, in a fit of despair, for having been so excused by him. But to this I reply, that though no probable account would be given of the motives which induced Judas to betray his Master, there are, in the history itself, circumstances which demonstrate that his treachery did not proceed from any suspicion which he entertained of his Master's character. For, in the first place, if this disciple had thought his Master an impostor, and professed nothing by his treachery but the price he put on his life, how came he to tell him for such a trifle, when he well knew the priests would have given him any sum, rather than not have gotten him into their hands? In the second place, if Judas believed Jesus to be an impostor, he must have observed something in his behaviour which led him to form such an opinion of him. And, in that case, he certainly would have mentioned the matter to the chief priests and elders at the time he made the bargain with them. It is plain, however, that he made then no discovery tending to the prejudice of his Master's character; otherwise the priests would have urged it against Jesus in the course of his trial, when they were at such a loss for evidence to prove him a deceiver. For, even in the eye of impartiality itself, the testimony of a constant attendant is the best evidence for detecting an impostor. Moreover, they would have urged the discoveries made by Judas against the Apostles after their Master's death, when they reproved them for preaching in his name; Acts. iv. 24. and v. 27. Nay, they would have upbraided Judas himself with it, when he told them he had "sinned in betraying innocent blood," and not have answered coldly, "What is that to us?" see thou to it." Thirdly, if Judas thought his Master an impostor, how came he, before he hanged himself, solemnly to declare to the chief priests the innocence of the man, and his remorse for having betrayed him? If Judas knew Jesus to be an impostor, he could have no remorse for what he had done. He had only put him into the hands of a court, whose province it was to judge of his pretensions. Jesus deferred the sentence which his judges had passed upon him. When his sentence was executed, what occasion was there for the person who had brought it about to have any remorse? Or why should he have fled to a halter, for relief from his own tormenting thoughts?

Having thus shewn, from all the circumstances of this transaction, that no argument can be drawn to our Lord's disadvantage from the conduct of Judas; I now go on to propose what in my opinion were the motives determining him to an action, which will render his memory odious, while the human species subsists. He was so covetous, we are told, as to steal money out of the common bag. It is therefore more than probable, that he first followed Jesus with a view to the riches and other temporal advantages which he expected Messiah's friends would enjoy. And, as hitherto he had reaped none of those advantages, he grew impatient under the delay; and the more so, that Jesus towards the end of his ministry had expressly discouraged all ambitious views among his disciples, and had rejected the opportunity of erecting his kingdom, offered him by the multitude, who accompanied him with Hofannas into Jerusalem. Judas's
All the Actions recorded in the Gospel are probable.

impatience therefore becoming excessive, put him upon the scheme of delivering his Master into the hands of the senate, thinking it the most proper method of obliging him to assume the dignity of Messiah, and consequently of enabling him to reward his followers. For this court was composed of the chief priests, elders, and scribes, that is, the principal persons of the nation, Judas did not doubt but that Jesus, when before such an assembly, would prove his pretensions to their full conviction, gain them over to his interests, and enter forthwith on his regal dignity. And though he must have been sensible, that the method he took to bring this about would be very offensive to his Master, he might think the success of it would procure his pardon, and even recommend him to favour. In the mean time, his project, however plausible it might appear, was far from being free of difficulty; and, therefore, while he revolved it in his mind, many things no doubt occurred to stagger his resolution. At length an incident happened which urged him on. Thinking himself affronted by the rebuke which Jesus had given him in the matter of the last anointing, and that rebuke fitting heavier on him, as he had procured a former mark of his Master’s displeasure, by an imprudence of the same kind, he was provoked. And though his resentment was not such as could inspire him with the horrid design of putting his Master to death, it impelled him to execute the resolution he had formed, of making him alter his measures, by putting him into the hands of the grandees. Thus the devil, laying hold on the various passions which agitated the traitor’s breast, tempted him by them all. It is evident, therefore, that Judas was not moved to betray Jesus, by any thing suspicious in his character. His perfidy, instead of implying that he entertained doubts of his Master’s integrity, plainly proves, that he had the fullest conviction of his being the Messiah. And, to say the truth, it was not possible for any one, intimately acquainted with our Lord as Judas was, to judge otherwise of him; having seen his miracles, which were great and true beyond exception, and having experienced his divine power in the ability of working miracles, which along with the rest of the apostles he had received from him, and no doubt exercised with extraordinary pleasure. No objection, therefore, lies against the Gospels on account of the treachery of Judas, of which so plausible an explication can be given; an explication which is not only conformable to the known character of the man, but honourable also for our Lord, against whose pretensions it seems to bear hard at first view.

S E C T. V.

Shewing that the actions of our Lord’s enemies are probable.

EN the Gospels, Herod King of Judea, and his son of the same name, who was tetrarch of Galilee, Pontius Pilate the Roman governor, with Annas and Caiaphas Jews high priests, are all mentioned by name, and represented as unfriendly to our Lord. The Scribes, Pharisees, Elders, and Chief Priests, that is, the persons of greatest distinction
At the Actions recorded in the Gospel are probable.

Distinction in the Jewish nation, are set forth in the same light. They perfecuted Jesus through the whole course of his ministry, and at last put him to death as a malefactor in the public place of execution near Jerusalem. To examine the particular actions ascribed in the Gospels to the persons just now named, would be tedious and needless. I shall only observe, in general, that all the evil things said by the Evangelists to have been done by those persons, and among the rest the slaughter of the infants of Bethlehem, the horrid action of Herod, are rendered sufficiently probable by the accounts which profane historians have given of them; especially Josephus, who has written fully of those persons and times. See Dr. Lardner’s Credibility, Vol. i. 71.

On reviewing the matters mentioned in the several sections of this chapter, it appears, that all the actions, without exception, which the Evangelists have recorded, are of a probable nature; whether they be those ascribed to Jesus himself, or to his disciples, or to his enemies. For they are all, not only things possible in themselves, but they are perfectly suitable to the characters of the persons to whom they are ascribed. And if any particular action has been objected to, upon a more perfect knowledge of the action itself and of its circumstances, every shadow of blame vanishes. Wherefore, upon the narrowest search that it is possible for us to make, we must acknowledge, that the Gospels cannot be found fault with as books of history, on account of the impropriety or improbability of any of the actions, whether ordinary or extraordinary, therein recorded.

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Of the Argument arising from the Conversion of the World to Christianity.

We come now to the most shining of all the proofs, whereby the Gospels are established; a proof taken from an event the grandest undoubtedly that ever happened on earth; an event too, of which we are as certain as we are of the present existence of mankind, and that is, the conversion of the world from heathenism to Christianity, by means of the publication of the Gospel-history. The persons to whom the things concerning the Lord Jesus were first preached, entertained no doubt of them. Their forsaking the religion in which they had been educated, and their embracing the Christian faith, is such a demonstration of their belief of the history of Jesus, that to demand farther proof of their belief, were idle and impertinent. But if great numbers of sensible people everywhere believed the history of Jesus, immediately upon its being preached to them, when it was in their power to have detected whatever falsehood
All the Actions recorded in the Gospel are probable.

falsehood was reported of him, no doubt can now-a-days be reasonably entertained concerning this history; especially as the belief of it was attended with no advantage, but rather exposed people to all manner of personal sufferings.—Before I offer the particulars whereby the reader will be enabled to form a proper notion of the conversion of the world, and of the importance of the argument resulting therefrom, it will be necessary to propose the historical evidence upon which we believe, not only that this astonishing revolution in the religious opinions of mankind actually happened, but that it was effected by the persons at the time, and in the manner, wherein we affirm it came to pass.

S E C T. I.

Testimonies from heathen authors, proving that the Christian religion took its rise in Judea, and that the world was converted at the time suspected.

EVERY one knows that the Gospels have fixed the origin of the Christian religion to the reign of Tiberius. Agreeably to this representation, there is not to be found, prior to the reign of Tiberius, the smallest vestige of Christianness, nor the least trace of any sect setting itself in opposition, whether to the superlition of the Jews, or to the idolatry of the Gentiles. Till then, Jews and Gentiles enjoyed the peaceable possessoin of their respective religions. But from that period downwards, in all kinds of books, there is mention made of the Christian sect, of their opinions, of their numbers, of their endeavours to subvert the established religions, and of the persecutions they underwent on that score; of their confinancy in sufferings; and of the general establishment of their faith throughout the Roman empire.

The account which the Christian record, entitled, "Acts of the Apostles," gives of the origin, progress, and state of Christianness in the first ages, is that this faith took its rise in Judea, the country which was the scene of our Lord's ministry; that it began at the time in which the Gospels say Jesus lived; that the preachers and professors of this new religion were severely persecuted, first in Judea, and then in the different provinces of the Roman empire; that, notwithstanding this, Christianness spread itself quickly into all the noted towns of Asia, Greece, and Italy: that Rome itself was early blest with the light of the Gospel, and cherished many converts to the new faith; lastly, that in a short time our religion spread itself, upon the ruins of idolatry, through all the provinces of the Roman empire.

This account of the origin, progress, and state of Christianness is highly worthy of credit, notwithstanding it is given by a Christian writer, who was himself the author of one of the Gospels. The reason is, it agrees with, and is confirmed by, the testimony of the Roman historians of that age, and is not contradicted by any of those learned men, who in the infancy of Christianness
All the Apolions recorded in the Gospel are probable.

anity wrote against the cause itself, or against its abettors. To shew
this, is the design of the present section.
1. First of all, then, Suetonius represents the Christians to have been
erly numerous in Rome, so early as the reign of Claudius, who suc-
ceeded to the empire A.D. 41. about seven years after our Lord's
death. Claud. cap. 25. "Judæos, impulsiore Christo, assidue tu-
nultuanentes," &c. But of this testimony enough has been said, B. II.
C. III. § 1. p. 299.
2. Tacituslikewise, who wrote about thirty years after our Lord's
death, tells us that Christ was the founder of the Christian religion,
that he lived in Judea under the reign of Tiberius, that he had many
disciples, and that he was put to death by the procurator Pontius
Pilate. See the original passage with remarks in the following sec-
ction, Art. I.
3. Arrian was the disciple of Epiæetus, the Stoic philosopher, who
lived at Rome in the reign of Nero, about 25 years after our Lord's
death. Wherefore both the master and the scholar being contempo-
rary with Peter and Paul, they may have seen these apostles in Rome.
This Arrian, in the second book of his Commentary upon Epipæetus,
LXXIII. chap. ix. towards the end, speaks of baptized and elected
priests, whom he calls Jews; but who, from the circumstance of the
baptism and election, must have been converted to Christianity;
and tells us, that in their conduct they were always steady to their
principles, insomuch that when a man's practice did not correspond
with his professions, the common saying was, he is not a Jew or
Christian, but a dilettante.
4. Justin Martyr, in his Dialogue with Trypho, which he com-
mits to writing about the year 146, describes the progress of Chris-
tians in the following words: "There is no nation, whether of Barbarians, or
Greeks, or any others, what names soever they are called by,
whether they live in waggons, or without houses, or in tents,
among whom prayers are not made and thanksgiving offered up to
the Father and Creator of all, through the name of the crucified
Jesus." Dial. p. 345.
5. Lucian the Syrian philosopher, who lived under Adrian, Anto-
nius Pius, and Marcus Aurelius, about 120 years after Christ's
death, in his history of the death of Peregrinus, having told how
this philosopher joined the Christians in Palestine, and became a man
of great note among them, adds, that, "having been taken into cu-
ted on the score of his new doctrine, this misshap did much con-
tribute to his glory, and helped to bring him into credit. For
upon this news the Christians, who of his private difftres made
the public calamity, began to set heaven and earth at work, for the
end of procuring to procure his enlargement; which seeing they could
nothing about, they paid him all the devoirs imaginable, by way
of sweetening and mollifying his imprisonment. A whole troop of
old men, widows, and orphans, were seen by break of day at his
prison door; and the principal paid the nights with him, after
having corrupted the jailer. They banqueted there too, and cele-
brated their mysteries; and deputies came thither from the churches of Asia, for the assuring of him of the grief they lay on his account, and for the offering him their assistance. For it almost incredible what care and diligence they use on such occasions sparing nothing for the relieving one another in necessity: information that they sent him money from all parts on this pretext; and their charity proved to him a vast revenue. In a word, those rable creatures despise all things and death itself in hopes of immortality, and offer themselves willingly to punishments. For the first legislator made them believe they are all brethren, when they have renounced our religion! and that adoring their fed Saviour, they live according to the laws (namely of their own religion) so as they despise all, and believe all is in constant receiving his dogmas with a blind obedience." Spence's translation. From this testimony it plainly appears how numerous Christians were in Lucian's time, not much above 100 years after Christ's death. In this likewise the crucifixion of Jesus is acknowledged; he is called by the name of Saviour; the attachment of his disciples to his doctrines and precepts is flattered; and their behavior towards one another is described; and all in a manner very conformable to the representation given of these things in the books of the New Testament: on which account this is justly esteemed a valuable relick of antiquity.—The same Lucian, in his Pseudomenitis, informs us, that the Christians of Pontus having met about exposing Alexander's impotence, he complained that Pontus was full of them. His words are, "When several wise men had discovered the cheat, and particularly the philosophers of the Epicurean sect, exclaimed, that all the country was filled with Christians and blasphemers, who sowed calumnies against him; and commanded that the people should stone them, if they expected the favour and blessing of God upon their land." Spence's translation, p. 255. The Epicureans and Christians, it seems, agreed in this, that both of them were active in exposing the folly of the commonly practised worship. Hence, by the bigoted heathens, they were always joined together.—Moreover, Lucian tells us, that the Christians were every where where the objects of public odium, and that they were ranked with Atheists, as being equally impious. For, in his account of the mysteries celebrated in Pontus by Alexander, he says, the Christians were excluded along with Atheists and Epicureans, by a solemn proclamation, the form of which was the same with that used at Athens in the celebration of the mysteries there. He had also instituted a kind of society or fraternity, wherein the carried torches with various ceremonies, which lasted for three whole days. On the first they proclaimed as they do at Athens: "If there be any Epicurean, or Christian, or Atheist, who is come to make a mock of our mysteries, let him depart; but let the true believers be initiated in God's name." Then he, marching in the front, cried out, "Hence, ye Christians! and the whole multitude
All the actions recorded in the Gospel are probable.

6. The emperor Marcus Aurelius, who succeeded to the empire A.D. 161, in his Meditations, Lib. xi. § 3, speaks of the Christians as existing in his time, and mentions their fortitude in sufferings, calling it obstinacy. For, describing the condition of the soul of a virtuous man, he represents it as ready to be separated from the body, or to be extinguished, or to be dissipated, or to exist a while longer: then adds, "That it is thus prepared, must proceed from its own proper judgment, and not from pure obstinacy, as is the case with the Christians."

7. Galen the physician, who was born at Pergamus A.D. 131, in the reign of the emperor Adrian, has spoken also of the Christians, and of the firmness wherewith they maintained their faith. Says he, "One may sooner prevail with the followers of Moses and Christ to change their principles, than with those physicians and philosophers who are engaged in facts."

8. Ireneæus, in his Treatise against Heresies, which, according to Dodwell, he published A.D. 176, has accidentally described the state of the church in his time, by observing that "the Christian religion was diffused through the whole earth to the very ends of it." This is the more to be remarked, considering that the persecutions had been so very sharp and numerous, and of long continuance, and so close on the back of one another.

9. Tertullian, in his Apology, published A.D. 200, gives an account of the prevalence of the Christian faith in his time. For, addressing himself to the Roman governors, probably the proconsul in Africa, and the chief magistrate residing in Carthage, he says, Apologia, c. 37. "We are but of yesterday; nevertheless we have filled every thing belonging to you; cities, islands, villages, free boroughs, assembling places, the armies themselves, the wards, the rolls of judges, the palace, the senate: we leave to you nothing but the temples."—The same author, advers. Judæos, cap. 7. affirms that all the nations had believed in Christ, "Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and those who inhabit Mesopotamia, Armenia, Phrygia, Capadocia, and the inhabitants of Pontus, and Asia, and Pamphylia; they who tarry in Egypt, and they who inhabit the region of Africa, beyond Cyrene, both Romans and natives. Likewise the Jews in Jerusalem, and the other nations: so that already the various tribes of Gutuli, and the many countries of the Moors, and all the provinces of Spain, and the different nations of Gaul, and the parts of Britain inaccessible to the Romans, are now subject to Christ: and the Sarmatians, and Dacians, and Germans, and Scythians, and many remote nations and provinces, and many islands to us unknown, which we cannot enumerate, in all which places the name of Christ, who is already come, reigns."

10. Porphyry likewise, the Tyrian philosopher, in the life which he wrote of his master Plotinus, who was born in the 13th year of
the emperor Severus, A. D. 206, informs us, that while Plotinus lived in Rome, whither he came in the fortieth year of his age, A. D. 246, there were many Christians in the city. De virt. Plotin. c. 16.

11. Cornelius was bishop of Rome in the time of the Decian persecution, A. D. 251. He, writing to Cyprian bishop of Carthage, gives the following account of the church at Rome. "We have in this place forty-four presbyters, seven deacons, and as many sub-deacons; and widows, and other persons maintained by the church, fifteen hundred." Euseb. Eccl. Hist. Lib. vi. C. 43. Now supposing every twentieth person to have received maintenance, there will have been no less than thirty thousand Christians in Rome at this time. A vast number, considering that, the emperors having their usual residence in this city, their edicts for persecution must have been executed with the utmost rigour, under their eyes, and by their direction.

12. Lampridius, a Greek writer, who flourished in the reign of Diocletian, A. D. 290, tells us, that the emperor Alexander Severus, who obtained the purple A. D. 222, had the image of Christ in his private chapel, and would have built him a temple, and admitted him among the gods, as he says Adrian, who became emperor A. D. 217, intended to have done, had not the priests assured him, from their divination, that it would make all the world Christians, and cause the other temples to be deserted. His words are: "If he had leisure in the morning, he worshipped in his private chapel, wherein he had the deified emperors, making choice however of the best. There also he had the more holy fouls, among whom was Apollonius, and, as a writer of that age says, Chriff, Abra-ham, and Orpheus, and such like Gods, also the image of his ancestors.—He intended to build Christ a temple, and to receive him among the gods; which Adrian likewise is said to have dwelt among, who in every city caused temples to be raised without images, which, because they had no gods, are at this day called Adriani. These temples he is said to have prepared for the end now mentioned; but he was hindered by those who, having consulted the augurs, found that what he proposed were accomplished, all men would become Christians, and the other temples would be deserted." Lamprid. apud Hift. Auguf. Script. p. 439. D. p. 351. E. Adrian began to conceive a favourable opinion of Christianitv, about the beginning of the second century, that is, in the very infancy of the Gospel. It seems, mankind thus early shewed so strong a disposition to embrace our faith, that the emperor judged it good policy to adopt it into the system of religions professed throughout the empire. But the Heathen priests foreseeing, that if this honour was conferred upon Christianitv, the whole world would embrace it, and the temples be deserted, diverted the emperor from his purpose, by feigning that the gods had given them premonition of the direful consequences.
All the actions recorded in the Gospel are probable.

13. Arnobius, formerly a Heathen teacher of rhetoric at Sicca in Africa, flourished A.D. 306. In his first book against the Gentiles, he speaks thus: "Is not this an argument for our faith, that in so little a space of time, the sacraments of Christ’s great name are diffused over the world? That orators, grammarians, rhetoricians, lawyers, physicians, and philosophers, men of great genius, love our religion, despising those things wherein before they trusted? Slaves will rather suffer torments for their masters, wives sooner part with their husbands, and children rather be disinherited by their parents, than abandon the Christian faith."

14. The emperor Julian, who obtained the purple A.D. 361, acknowledges, apud Cyrill. Lib. x. p. 327, that, in the days of John the Apostle, great numbers in many cities of Greece and Italy embraced the religion of Jesus, which, on account of its spreading nature, he calls a distemper wherewithal people were seized. By the confession therefore of Julian himself, Christianity even in his time was no recent forgery, but had existed as early as the Christian records inform us. — The fame Julian, in his letter to Arslakios, chief of the Pagan priests in Galatia, which is the 49th epistle, Oper. p. 429, gives an honourable testimony to the practice of the ancient Christians. His words are, "Do we not see what has chiefly increased this impiety," so he falsely calls the Christian religion: "their benevolence to strangers, their care to bury the dead, and their feigned sanctity of life? every one of which ought to be truly and carefully practised by us. Not that this sanctity is sufficient; but in general oblige all the priests in Galatia, by threats or perfusions, to be diligent, or dismiss them from the priestly function, if with their wives, children, and servants, they do not attend upon the gods, and do not hinder their servants and children, or their wives, who are Galileans, to behave impiously towards their gods, and to prefer piety to impiety." Then he gives particular precepts concerning the behaviour of his priests, whom he would have formed upon the model of the Christian priests, as it would seem. For he says, "Exhort each priest not to go to the theatre, not to drink in taverns, and to follow no base or infamous trades; and those who obey you, honour; and those who disobeys banish." Next, he orders houses to be set up for the entertainment of strangers, whether they were of the emperor’s religion or not, and settles a revenue upon them; adding, "For it is a shame, seeing there is no beggar among the Jews, and these impious Galileans maintain not only their own poor, but ours, that the latter should be destitute of the help we ought to afford them."

Thus, by a clear succession of undoubted testimonies, it appears that the Christian religion took its rise in Judea, as the Gospels affirm; that it began in the reign of the emperor Tiberius, the time fixed for it in the Christian records; and that from Judea it immediately spread itself into the neighbouring countries, and by degrees into all the provinces of the Roman empire, great multitudes every where
where forsaking the religion of their ancestors for the sake of this better faith, and more perfect form of worship. It is therefore certain, that the world was converted to Christianity precisely at the time, and by the instruments, we suppose.

S E C T. II.

Shewing that the Christian religion spread itself into all countries under the severest persecution.

IT is not sufficient to have shewed, that Christianity began at the time mentioned in the Gospels. We must shew likewise that in the first ages mankind embraced our faith under persecution. This fact, being of great importance in the present argument, merits particular attention; for which reason I have classed the proofs of it by themselves. I must however observe, that these proofs establish likewise the point handled in the preceding section, namely, the antiquity of our religion, and the numerousness of its disciples in the first ages. It seems the heathen magistrates, priests, and philosophers, from the beginning, were jealous of our sect, on account of its numbers. And not knowing any other way to prevent the world from being over-run with the new principles, they rigorously persecuted those who espoused them, in whatever province or corner they appeared. But though I am to shew that the professors of the Christian religion were from the beginning persecuted in all countries, it is not my purpose to speak of the sufferings of the Apostles, and first preachers of the Gospel. These have been sufficiently explained already, B. III. C. III. § 3. What I propose is, to demonstrate from history and other authentic evidence, that in the first ages the profession as well as the preaching of the Gospels unanimously exposed men to manifold and great sufferings. The importance of the subject requires that this proof be not slightly passed over; for the persecutions which the first Christians sustained, as we shall see by and by, demonstrate that nothing but the strongest conviction could determine them to embrace Christianity. The Gospel-history was rendered indubitable by the testimony and miracles of the Apostles, and of the rest of the eye-witnesses. People therefore did not scruple to part with every thing, and to undergo every thing, for the sake of a religion so clearly proved to be divine.

The enemies of revelation, sensible of the force of this argument, have, upon I know not what foundation, insinuated or affirmed, that the sufferings of the first Christians were not so great as they are commonly thought to have been. To this purpose, Mr. Voltaire, in his Essay on universal history, vol. 1. chap. 5. pag. 60. where, speaking of the Jews, he says, "Having an imachable hand, tried to the professors of Christianity, they accused them of being the incendiaries who destroyed some part of Rome under the emperor Nero. It was as unjust to impute this accident to the Christians as to Nero. Neither he, nor the Christians, nor the Jews
Jews, had any interest in setting Rome on fire. But there was a
necessity for appeasing the populace, who had the same detestation
as the Jews for those strangers. A few poor wretches were sacri-
fied to the public vengeance. This instance of violence ought
not, I apprehend, to be reckoned among the persecutions which
the Christians underwent on account of their faith; it had noth-
ing at all to do with their religion, which was not so much as
known, and which the Romans confounded with Judaism, them
under the protection of the laws.——This is very certain, that it
was not the disposition of the senate to persecute any man for his
opinion; that no emperor ever attempted to force the Jews to
change their religion, neither after the revolt in Vespasian's reign,
nor that which broke out under Adrian. It is true, their wor-
ship was reviled and derided, and statues were erected in their
temple before its demolition. But never did emperor, procon-
sul, or Roman senate, dream of hindering the Jews from believ-
ing the Mosaic law. This single reason shows what liberty the
Christians had to extend their religion in private. The Christians
were not molested by any of the emperors till the reign of Do-
mitian. Dion Cassius says, that under this emperor, there were
some people condemned as Atheists, and for imitating the man-
er of the Jews. It seems, that this oppression, of which we
have but very imperfect accounts, was neither long nor general.
We cannot exactly tell why some persons were exiled, nor why
they were recalled.—Nerva, Vespasian, Titus, Trajan, Adrian,
and the Antonines, were not persecutors. Trajan, having pro-
hibited all private assemblies, wrote notwithstanding to Pliny:
'You must make no inquiry after the Christians.' These words
sufficiently prove, that they might conceal themselves, and exer-
cise their religion with prudence, though through the malice of the
priests and the hatred of the Jews they were frequently carried be-
fore the magistrates and punished. The people, and especially
the people of the provinces, hated the Christians. They incited
the magistrates against them, and were for having them exposed
to wild beasts in the circus. The emperor Adrian not only gave
strict charge to Fodaninus the proconsul of Asia Minor, not to
persecute them, but his orders expressly mention, 'That if the
Christians were flattered, the flanderer should be severely punish-
ed.' This regard to justice in Adrian, made some people falsely
imagine, that this emperor was a Christian. But would he, who
erected a temple to Antinous, erect one to Jesus Christ? Marcus
Aurelius ordained, that the Christians should not be persecuted on
the account of religion. Caracalla, Heliogabalus, Alexander,
Philip, Galien, openly protected them; therefore they had full
leisure to extend their doctrine, and to strengthen their infant
church.' Nugent's translation.

In opposition to these false colourings and violent contradictions
of truth, I place the following clear and authentic testimonies, many
of them furnished by the heathens themselves, whereby it will ap-
pear
All the Actions recorded in the Gospel are probable.

pear, that from the very beginning the Christians were persecuted pre-
pressly on account of their religion; that in these persecutions infinite
multitudes suffered death, that the evils which followed the pro-
fection of the Gospel were not confined to a particular province or cen-
son; but were met with in every country, and continued for the space
of three hundred years.

The first and most ancient sufferings of the Christians are those
which they underwent from the inferior magistrates, from the priests,
and from the populace in every country, immediately upon their
embracing the Gospel. It would be tedious, and indeed needless,
to recount all the instances mentioned in the Christian records.
The general appeals made there concerning those evils, will give
just enough idea of them. For example, the Christians in Judea
suffered great afflictions immediately on receiving the Gospel, Heb. 11,
32. "But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after
"ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions; 33.
"Partly whilst ye were made a gazing-flock, both by reproaches
"and afflictions; and partly whilst ye became companions of them
"that were so used. 34. For ye had compassion of me in my bonds,
"and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in your
"selves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance.
"So likewise the churches of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and
Bithynia, 1 Pet. iv. 12. "Beloved, think it not strange concern-
ing the fiery trial, which is to try you, as though some strange
"thing happened unto you. 13. But rejoice in as much as ye are
"partakers of the sufferings of Christ.—15. But let none of you
"suffer as a murderer, &c. 16. Yet if any man suffer as a Chris-
tian, let him not be afanned; but let him glorify God on this
"behalf. And the churches of Macedonia, 2 Cor. viii. 1.
"Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God be-
flowed on the churches of Macedonia: 2. How that in a great
"trial of affliction, the abundance of their joy, and their deep po-
verty, abounded unto the riches of their liberality." And the
church at Thessalonica, 2 Thess. i. 4. "So that we ourselves glory
"in you in the churches of God, for your patience and faith in all
"your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure." 1 Thess. ii. 14.
"For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God,
"which in Judea are in Christ Jesus: for ye also have suffered like
"things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews.
"15. Who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets,
"and have persecuted us." And the church at Corinth, 2 Cor. i. 6.
"And whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and sal-
vation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings
which we also suffer:—7. And our hope of you is vivid, know-
ing that as you are partakers of the sufferings, so shall ye be also
of the consolation." 2 Tim. iii. 12. "Yea, and all that will
live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution." The Apostle
Paul acknowledges, that he himself had been a violent persecutor
of the apostles and disciples of Christ, 1 Tim. i. 12—14 putting me
All the Actions recorded in the Gospel are probable.

1. into the ministry; 13. Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious. But I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.” And more fully in his defence before Grippa; a passage worthy of particular notice, because it shews how reat and general the persecution was which the Christians suffered in 20a the beginning. Such was the miserable condition into which all the first Christians were brought by their belief and profession of the Gospel. Against this proof offered, I do not see what can be objected. The early publication of the writings wherein these things are mentioned, renders them sufficiently credible; because, if the Gospel had not exposed its professors to sufferings, all men must immediately have been sensible of the falsehood of these narrations, and have rejected the books which contained them. Besides, what purpose could it serve, for the Christians to speak of themselves as despised, afflicted, and persecuted every where? Such representations of the consequences of the Christian profession could allure no new profiteers; and as for the old ones, they would rather be delighted than pleased with such things. Not to mention that this was the ready way to raise their fears, and tempt them to apostatize. It is evident, therefore, that these affecting representations of the miseries to which the first Christians were subjected, proceeded from no other cause but truth alone.

However, we do not depend upon the Christian records alone for our knowledge of this important fact, that the disciples of Jesus were everywhere persecuted in the early ages: it is attested likewise by a variety of heathen writers, who inform us farther, that the prevalence of the Christian religion excited the jealousy of the Roman emperors themselves; and that, to stop it, they raised furious persecutions against its abettors. The fact is certain, that the laws for persecuting the disciples of Jesus were issued by the Roman emperors, consequently these persecutions were extended to the whole empire; and they were put in execution by the governors of the provinces, often with great cruelty. These persecutions are reckoned to have been ten in number; for so many were the general more violent and known persecutions. Nevertheless, it is certain, that during the first three centuries, the Christians were continually harassed in one province of the empire or other. The heat and extent of the persecutions indeed were sometimes abated, according to the humanity of particular emperor, and the moderation of this or that governor. But the laws against the Christians were never repealed till the reign of Constantine, who, by declaring himself of our religion, put an end to all the hardships which our fathers had for so many ages suffered.

1. The first persecution of the Christians was raised by the emperor Nero, A.D. 65, that is, about thirty years after our Lord’s death. Concerning this persecution, we have the testimony of Tacitus and Suetonius, who, being both of them Roman citizens and heathens, are witnesses of unfulfilled credit. Tacitus is supposed to have been fifteen years old at the death of Nero, A.D. 67, and therefore
All the Actions recorded in the Gospel are probable.

therefore may have been an eye-witnese of this persection. In the account which he gives of the burning of Rome, he says, the people imputed that calamity to Nero, who they imagined set fire to the city with an intention to have the glory of rebuilding it more magnificently, and of calling it after his own name; but that Nero laid the blame of the crime on the Christians; and that, to give more plausible colour to his calumny, he put great numbers of them to death in the most cruel manner. Withal to reconcile the people to him, he was at great pains to adorn the city, bestowed largesses on those who had suffered by the fire, and offered many expiatory sacrificies, to appease the gods. Tacitus's words are * Sed non ope humana, non arrogationibus principis, aut delib. placamentis decidit infamia, quo jutum incendium. Ergo abhinc nunquam, Nero subdedit reos, et quandox fuit eum, quisque deum invenerit, vulgus Christianos appellabant. Audie re minimis ejus Christus, qui Tiberio imperante, per procuratorem Pontium Pilatum supplicio auctus erat. Repressaque in prefens exidiis suppfinito rursum grumpebat, ne modo per Judaeos, originem mail, sed per urbem et in terram conueneret. Egerus tumur pilum, detineat tanta tumu in crimine ineundi, quod olim hominum genus conviclii sunt. Et presumptus addita ludibria, ut tera quum terras contenta, ianuuas canam interirent, aut crucibus affxerat, aut flammandi, atque ubi dextrales dies in utrius nocturni luminis uscentur. Igerus fuus el spectaculo Nero obtulerat, et Cruente ludicrum adstant, habitum sursum permixtus plebi, vel circulo infletis. Unde quantum adversus fontes et noviilia exempla merito meritario obliterat, tamquam non utile publica, in favitiam unius absumentur. *
All the actions recorded in the Gospel are probable.

"Supplicia Christiani, genus hominum superstitionis novae ac mali- 

decæ;" i.e. "The Christians too were punished with death, a 

fort of people addicted to a new and mischievous superstition."

From the above testimonies it appears, 1. That in Nero's reign

the Christian religion had made great progress, that its professors

were very numerous in the city itself, and that many of them

suffered in this first persecution. For Tacitus affirms us, that there

was a great multitude of them (ingens multitudo) put to death,

contrary expressly to Mr. Voltaire, who from his own imagination

asserts, that "a few poor wretches only were sacrificed to the public

vengeance." And though, at first, the disciples of Jesus were con-

founded with those of Moles, for reasons afterwards to be mentioned

(p. 214), yet the learned Heathens soon came to distinguish them.

Accordingly, in the passages quoted above, the two historians not

only give the Christians their proper name, but they mention their

religion as a thing altogether new. They understood it therefore

to be different from Judaism, which they knew was an ancient reli-

gion, being well acquainted with it by reason of their commerce

with the Jews. In particular, Tacitus had so distinctly a knowledge

of Christianitv, that he was able to tell the name of its author, the

time and place where he lived, and the manner in which he died.

—2. Both Tacitus and Suetonius call the Christian religion a

mischievous superstition; and the former tells us expressly, that the

professors thereof were universally hated for their crimes. Now

considering the excellence of our religion, and the sanctity of the

first Christians, these characters may seem somewhat strange. Yet

when we remember that the Gospel required all men everywhere to

turn from the worship of idols to fence the living God, and that the

first Christians were professed enemies of the reigning superstitions,

our wonder will cease, and we shall be sensible that in the judg-

ment of all who thought superficially, whether in high or low life,

they could not fail being considered as Atheists, and being loaded with infamy on that account. Mankind standing thus affec-

ted towards them every where, how could Mr. Voltaire, in flat

contradiction to common sense, from the indulgence which was

granted to the Jews, infer that "the Christians had liberty to ex-

tend their religion in private"?—3. It is worthy of notice, that Tacitus represents Christ as put to death on account of the

new religion which he gave out; for he says expressly, that the

Christian "superstitions, being for the present suppressed" by the

punishment of its author, "broke out aresh, not only in Judea

where the evil began, but in the city also." The same thing

Lucian testifies, still more directly, in the passage "De morte perse-

gini" already quoted, B. II. C. IV. § 2. art. II. pag. 326.

These are notable testimonies of our Lord's innocence. He suffered the punishment of a malefactor; but it was for no crime. To use

the words of Lucian, "He was crucified in Palestine, for having

introduced the Christian faith." The history of Jesus must have

been well known, when the Heathens themselves were able to give

P 2 an
an account of his death so conformable to truth.—4. What Tacitus has testified concerning the cause of the sufferings of the Christians under Nero, deserves particular notice likewise. He tells us they "were convicted, not so much of the crime of the burning, as "of the hatred of mankind." Their hatred therefore of mankind was the crime for which they were punished. What else could this be but their religion? Their innocence in other respects was admirable, and their love of mankind noble and disinterested. But they opposed the worship of the Gods falsely so named; they showered the folly and impiety of the established rites; and they exhorted all men to turn from these vanities. This by the bigots would be considered as downright Atheism; than which no greater injury can be offered to mankind. Wherefore, when Tacitus tells us, that the Christians were punished for "their hatred of mankind," he in fact testifies that they were persecuted for their religion. If any doubt is entertained of this fact, Suetonius’s testimony will remove it. He says expressly, that "the Christians were punished with death, being a "sort of men addicted to a new and mischiefous superstition." The general manner in which Suetonius has represented this matter, affords room for supposing that not the Christians of the city only, but that many others also were thus punished. The persecution diffused itself widely. Some ancient inscriptions found in Spain prove this. It is true, Mr. Voltaire considers them as doubtful, and endeavours to put a false colouring upon them. Yet, even according to his own account, they remain illustrious monuments of the persecutions which the first Christians underwent so early as in the reign of Nero. His words are, Essay, &c. p. 62. "If it be true "that in Spain they have found inscriptions, in which Nero is "thanked for having abolished a new superstition in that province," "the antiquity of these inscriptions is strongly suspected. But, even "supposing them authentic, Christianity is not mentioned. And, after "all, if those copious expressions were levelled against the "Christians, must we not impute them to the Jews settled at that "time in Spain, who were jealous of the Christians, and abhorred "their religion as a domestic and inveterate enemy? Further, the "pretext on which the Christians were punished, shews that their "sufferings at this time must have been general. The burning of the "city was imputed to them; not directly however, but by con"quence; just as in after-times all the calamities which befell the "empire by the invasions of the barbarous nations, by famine or by "pen"lence, were imputed to the prevalence of Christianity. The Christians were reckoned Atheists. They contempt the worship of the "Gods, they spread their pernicious principles, and the people were "drawn away from the established religion. The Christians therefore were enemies of mankind, the Gods were incensed, and the city was "burnt because the rulers tolerated such impieties. To this agree all "the circumstances of the history. Expiatory sacrifices were offered "by the emperor, to appease the Gods who had brought on the cala"mity; and the Christians, who by their impieties had provoked them, were
were sought after to be punished. "Some were apprehended, who confessed," not the burning of the city, for Tacitus himself tells us, that was Nero’s work. But they confessed their being Christians, and they gave information concerning their brethren. Upon this, a prodigious number of the sect was seized. And these "were convicted, not so much of the crime of the burning, as of their hatred of mankind," that is, of their being Christians. The severity of the punishments, which on this occasion the Christians underwent for their religion, must not be overlooked. They were not only put to death in the most cruel manner, but they were insulted in the agonies of death: "Et pereuntibus addita ludibria." To make diversion for the people, they were felled in the skins of wild beasts, and torn to pieces by dogs; they were hanged on crosses, the punishment which the Romans inflicted on their slaves; they were covered over with inflammable matter, and, when the day-light failed, had fire set to them, that by their burning they might give light in the night-time, supplying the place of torches in the more frequented parts of the city, and in the emperor’s gardens, where the Circensian games were celebrated on the occasion.

That the Christians were exposed to sufferings every where on account of their religion, even before Nero punished them, we learn from Epictetus, who lived at Rome in the reign of Nero. For this philosopher, Ap. Arrian. lib. 4. c. 7. alludes to the persecutions which he observed the Christians to suffer in his time, when he speaks of it as a matter of custom, or of madness among the Galileans, to neglect their estates, their bodies, their wives, and their children. — Upon the whole, having such authentic testimonies, shewing the dreadful opinion which the Heathens entertained of the Christian religion, and declaring what evils the first Christians underwent on that account, Mr. Voltaire ought not to have affirmed, as he has done, "that the Christians were not molested by any of the emperors till the reign of Domitian," and that their sufferings under Nero "had nothing at all to do with their religion, which was not so much as known, and which the Romans confounded with Judaism, then under the protection of the laws."

II. The second persecution of the Christians happened under Domitian, about the 55th year after our Lord’s ascension, A. D. 90. During this persecution, Flavius Clemens the confusil, a near relation of the emperor, was put to death even in the time of his confusilhip. His wife Flavia Domitilla, nearly related as well as her husband to Domitian, was banished. Glabrio likewise, a person of confusil dignity, was capitally punished, with many others whose names

* The particulars above mentioned give probability to Laetanius’s account of this persecution, De Mort. percut. cap. 2. "When Nero observed that not only at Rome, but everywhere else, great multitudes daily forsook the worship of idols, and went over to the new religion, condemning the old, being an execrable and pernicious tyrant, he leaped forth to demolish the heavenly temple, and to destroy justice. So first of all, persécuting the servants of God, he crucified Peter, and slew Paul."
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names have perished. For these facts we have the testimony of Dion Cassius, preferred by Xiphilin, Domitian. His words are, "And in the same year, besides many others, he (Domitian) put to death Flavius Clemens the confus, although he was his cousin (autem patruelis), and had to wife Flavia Domitilla, who was her self also his kinswoman. The accusation brought against both was that of Atheism, (athaeismo): For which also many others were punished, who had turned aside to the Jewish institutions, "(in ecclesiis nescem), so the vulgar called Christianity). "Some of them were put to death, others were deprived of their estates, but Domitilla was only banished to Pandateria. Gibrius also, who had governed as consul with Trajan, being accused of like crimes with the rest, as well as of other offences, he ordered to be put to death, after he had fought with wild beasts." To understand this passage, we must remember that for a while the ignorant con- founded the Christian with the Jewish religion, because both the first preachers of Christianity and the first converts to it, even in the heathen countries, were of that nation. The Heathens confounded the two religions together, for this reason likewise, that the Jews and Christians agreed in their opposition to Polytheism and idolatry. Moreover, as the professors of Judaism offered no sacrifices but in the temple of Jerusalem, all of them who lived among the Hea- thens agreed with the Christians in this other point, that sacrifices made no part of their worship. Wherefore, when the vulgar, who universally considered sacrifice as the most essential part of the wor- ship of God, found that the Jews and Christians denied the exist- ence of the Gods commonly worshipped, and that, while they obsti- nately refused all society with them in their sacrifices, they had none of their own, they could not avoid looking upon them as Atheists guilty of the most atrocious crimes. Hence Atheist and Jew or Christian were terms synonymous. This is the reason why, in the passage above quoted, many are said to have been punished as Atheists, who had gone over to the Jewish religion; so they termed Christianity, on account of its conformity with Judaism in the two great articles above mentioned, which made such an impression upon the Heathens. Their embracing the Christian religion, there- fore, was the crime for which Domitian punished Flavius Clemens and his wife Domitilla, though both of them were his relations; the crime also for which he punished Gibrius and the rest. This de- fection he and his counsellor considered as downright Atheism; and, being persuaded that the fate of the state was intimately connected with religion, he was so enraged, that, deaf to the voice of nature and friendship, he thought he could not too severely punish such detestable crimes. And as in these instances he was restrained nei- ther by the dignity of the persons, nor by the ties of blood, we may be sure, no favour was shewed to any others guilty of the like of- fences. It is therefore reasonable to believe, that as this persecu-
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tion was most cruel, so it was general. We have one trace of it in the Christian records. The evangelist John, Rev. i. 9, writing to all who believed in Jesus every where, calls himself their "brother and companion in tribulation:" and tells them, that he was banished to "the isle of Patmos for the word of God, and for the testi-
mony of Jesus." For that these tribulations befell the Christians, and this banishment happened to John in the reign of Domitian, is probable, because that date agrees more perfectly to John's age than any other.

The professors of Christianity being universally looked upon as Atheists, and suffering the punishment by law due to such, it is little wonder that the worst of crimes were imputed to them by the ancient Heathens, who were wholly ignorant both of their character, and of the nature of the religion which they professed. Wherefore, Christianity and its disciples lying under these aspersion, it need give us no pain at all, now that we understand the true state of the case, to find the ancient apologists vindicating both from the charge of Atheism, professionalism, and debauchery, which was thus ignorantly levelled against them.

III. The third persecution began in the third year of Trajan's reign, about the 65th year after our Lord's ascension, A. D. 100. There were now severer laws made against hetaeriar or illegal societies. Of this kind were reckoned all colleges, corruption, and associations, which were not established either by the confirmation of the emperors, or by the decree of the Senate. Where these legal bonds were wanting, the society was supposed to be knit together purely by friendship (fratres). And as this principle naturally leads men to enter deeply into one another's views, societies founded thereon were regarded with an evil eye by the state, and considered as nurseries of sedition. They were therefore prohibited by law, and the members of them were deemed guilty of treason. But the Christians being so unlucky as to fall very early under general displeasure, on account of their opposition to the established worship of the countries where they lived, the governors of the provinces about this time harassed them exceedingly, on pretence of their holding hetaeriar; so that a sharp persecution broke out against them in most parts of the empire, and many of them fell by the rage of popular fury, as well as by edicts and proceesses. This persecution was so much the more grievous, that the Christians suffered under the character of malefactors, by the appointment of an emperor famous through the whole world for his singular wisdom, justice, and humanity. But his severities against them proceeded from his being unacquainted with the nature of their religion, and the manner of their life. During this persecution, the younger Pliny was proconfus of Bithynia, a province of the Roman empire on the Euxine sea. In this remote country there were now prodigious numbers of Christians, against whom the proconfus, by the emperor's edict, was obliged to use all manner of severity. Nevertheless, being a person of good sense and moderation, he thought it prudent not to proceed to the highest ri-

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gors of law, till he had represented the case to Trajan himself, and knew his pleasure concerning it. He therefore wrote him a letter, wherein he explained his difficulties, told him the method he had hitherto observed in punishing the Christians, gave him an account of their belief, their worship, and their manners, according to the information he had received from such Christians as had apostatized to avoid perdition; last of all, he begged the emperor's advice how he should act towards the Christians for the future. This letter is cited by Tertullian and Eusebius; and, being still extant, does great honour to our religion many ways. It is the 97th of the 10th book of Pliny's letters, and is as follows. —Pliny to Trajan. It is

"my custom, Sir, to consult you upon all things about which I have any doubt. For who can better either relieve my doubts, or remove my ignorance? I never was pretent at any of the pro
ceffes against the Christians. Therefore I know neither what it is in them that uses to be punished, nor how far the enquiry con
cerning them uses to be carried. Moreover, I hesitated not a little, whether there was not some distortion of ages to be made; whether the weakest differ in guilt from the more robust; whether pardon may be granted to the penitent; or if it ought to be no advantage to him, who was really a Christian, to have left

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off being so: although, whether the name itself, without any other crimes, or crimes going along with the name, ought to be punished. In the mean time, with respect to those who were brought before me as Christians, I observed this method. I asked them, whether they were Christians? And when they confessed, I asked them a second and a third time, threatening the punishment. Those who persevered, I ordered to be carried off. For whatever that might be which they confessed, I did not doubt that their contumacy and inflexible obstinacy ought to be punished. There were others infected with the like phrensy, whom, because they were Roman citizens, I set down as to be remitted to the city. The crime, as commonly happens, spreading itself by the very prosecution, more species thereof immediately occurred. An anonymous libel was given in, containing the names of many. These denied that they were Christians, or ever had been; whilst at the same time they invoked the Gods, I repeating the form before them, and by offering incense and wine worshipped your image, which for this purpose I had ordered to be brought along with the statues of the Gods. Moreover they reviled Christ: none of which things, they say, those who are really Christians can be compelled to do. Therefore I judged they were to be dismissioned. Others, named by an informer, said they were Christians, but denied it again; they had been so, but had left off some three years ago, some more years, and some even twenty. All these worshipped both your image and the statues of the Gods. These also reviled Christ. They affirmed, however, that this was the whole of their fault or error: that they were wont on an appointed day to meet before it was light, and to sing with one another an hymn to Christ as a God; and to bind themselves with an oath, not to any wicked thing, but to commit no thefts, no robberies, no adulteries, to break no promise, and to refuse giving back no pledge when asked. These things finished, it was their custom to depart, then to meet again in order to take food, which however was innocent and eaten in common. But even this they had left off doing after my edict, whereby, according to your orders, I had prohibited illegal societies. From this account, I judged it more necessary to search out the truth, even by torture, from two young women who were called deaconesses. But I found nothing else but a perverse and immoderate superstition. Wherefore, deferring farther cognizance of the matter, I have recourse to you for advice. For it seems to me a matter worthy of deliberation, chiefly because of the number of those who are in danger. For many of all ages, of every rank, and of both sexes also, are called to account, and will be called. Neither through the cities only, but the villages also and the country, is the contagion of that superstition spread, which it appears may yet be stopped and corrected; at least it is very certain, that the almost defolate temples are begun to be frequented, and the sacred rites long neglected to be renewed. Moreover the victims every where
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are sold, of which hitherto scarce any buyer was found. From this it is easy to collect what a multitude of men may be reclaimed, if there is allowed place for repentance.”

From this letter, which was written about the 65th or 66th year after our Lord’s ascension, it appears, 1. That in less than the ordinary term of a man’s life, Christianity had made incredible progress, and in remote heathen countries was become the prevailing persuasion. In Bithynia particularly, almost all the inhabitants were now become Christians, and the ancient religion was maintained only by the influence of the priests and magistrates. To this purpose the following passage of the above letter. “It seems to me a matter worthy of deliberation, chiefly because of the number of those who are in danger. For many of all ages, of every rank, and of both sexes also, are called to account, and will be called, Neither through the cities only, but the villages also and the country, is the contagion of that superstition spread.” The prevalence of the Christian religion appears likewise from the universal decay of the Pagan worship. The temples were deserted, and the sacrifices discontinued. Or if any victim happened to be offered, scarce any person would buy it. “The now almost defolate temples are begun to be frequented, and the sacred rites, long neglected, to be renewed; moreover the victims every where are sold, of which hitherto scarce any buyer was found.” But 2. That for which the above letter is chiefly valuable in the present cause, is the distinct account which it gives of the sufferings of the Christians, and of the violence with which the proceedings against them were carried on. For Pliny insinuates, that before he obtained the proconsulship, procefses against the Christians were common every where, and punishment had often been inflicted upon them. I never was present at any of the proceedings against the Christians; therefore I neither know what it is in them that uses to be punished, nor how far the inquiry concerning them uses to be carried.” Pliny’s office, as proconsul obliged him to preside in the trials of the Christians, as soon as he arrived in Bithynia; or at least immediately after he had, in obedience to the emperor’s orders, published the edict against hepteria, of which he speaks towards the conclusion of his letter. Wherefore the proceedings which he was not present at, must have been such as were carried on against the Christians by virtue of Domitian’s edict, during that part of his reign which followed his edict, the reign of his successor Nerva, and the beginning of the reign of Trajan. 3. From the various doubts which Pliny in his letter expresses concerning the method of carrying on the proceedings against the Christians, we learn that in the period above mentioned these proceedings had been managed with great violence and injustice. Moreover, I hesitated not a little whether there was not some distinction of ages to be made; whether the weakest suffer in guilt from the more robust; whether pardon may be granted to the penitent; or, if it ought to be no advantage to him who was really a Christian, to have left off being so: withal, whether
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whether the name itself, without any other crimes, or crimes going along with the name, ought to be punished." It seems, the former governors in the trials of the Christians had made no distinction of ages. The weakness of sex or understanding in the criminals had not been considered by them. Pardon had never been granted to the penitent: it was even no advantage to a man to have renounced Christianity several years before any prosecution was commenced against him. The name alone, without any other crime, had exposed every one, inevitably and without distinction, to the utmost rigours of law. The enemies of the Christians without doubt represented to the proconsul, that by these rules the proceedings against the Christians had been carried on formerly. What else but these representations violently urged on the one hand, and his own good senes and inclination to justice on the other, could reduce Pliny to any doubtfulness on this head. We may therefore hold it as certain, that even in their trials the Christians were greatly injured. Besides, Pliny himself tells us, that he perjured many on an anonymous libel. So that, under this best of governors, the most virtuous citizens might be brought to a trial for their lives and fortunes, without any accuser appearing to make good the charge against them. 4. The severe methods used in detecting and punishing the Christians in former reigns, did not, it seems, hinder the spreading of their religion. Or it may be, by the humanity of some of the governors, the rigour of the persecution in certain provinces was relaxed. Therefore Trajan, though famed for justice and humanity, published a new edict, whereby the severities against the Christians were revived. This emperor, not sufficiently sensible of the absurdity of the commonly received worship, and being altogether ignorant of the true nature of the Christian religion, certainly imagined that he consulted the good of the state, when by persecution he endeavoured to hinder the spreading of opinions, which by all the Heathens were looked upon as no better than Atheism. In Bythynia indeed and other countries, where almost all the people of every order were Christians, we may suppose the magistrates would proceed according to law in the execution of the emperor's edict. But in countries where the abettors of the old religion were more numerous, we may believe that not only numbers were put to death by law, but that many likewise fell by the rage of popular fury, as the ecclesiastical historians inform us. 5. The most humane and equitable magistrates, who prefided at the trials of the Christians, accounted their refusing to worship the Gods an unreasonable obstinacy, which without any other fault merited death. Pliny himself was of this sentiment. "Those who persevered, I ordered to be led away to execution; for whatever that was which they confessed, I did not doubt that their contumacy and inflexible obstinacy ought to be punished." If the resolution wherewith the Christians persevered in refusing to worship false Gods, was punished in this manner by one of Pliny's good sense and moderation, what favour had they to expect from governors more ignorant and brutal?

Pliny's
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Pliny's letter, together with the informations which the emperor received from other governors of provinces, particularly from Tiberianus governor of Palestine, prevailed with Trajan to relax the rigour of the persecution so far that he did not allow the magistrates as formerly to make search after the Christians. They were only to punish them when accused and convicted. And in trying them, the rules of justice were to be more carefully observed. For this purpose, when he came to Antioch in his eastern expedition, he wrote to Pliny as follows*. "Trajan to Pliny. You have, my Secundus, followed the method which you ought, in discussing the causes of those who were delated to you as Christians. Not indeed is it possible in general to determine any thing which may have the appearance of a certain rule in this matter. These men are not to be searched after by you. If they are accused and convicted, they are to be punished: yet so, that if any denies himself to be a Christian, and makes the same manifest in fact, namely, by worshipping our Gods, although he may have been suspected formerly, let him obtain pardon on account of his repentance. But anonymous libels preferred ought to have no weight in any criminal trial, for it is a very bad precedent, and by no means belonging to this age."

The only observation I shall make upon Trajan's answer to Pliny, is, that it relaxed the rigour of the persecution but a very little. This will appear by considering what the emperor wrote, as an answer to the question which Pliny proposed to him. Pliny had asked, how far the inquiry after the Christians was to be carried? whether any distinction of age or sex was to be made in their prosecution and punishment? whether, if any one renounced Christianity, he was to be pardoned? whether the name itself, without any other crime, was to be punished, or only such crimes as were found accompanying the name? At the same time he told him, that he had already prosecuted many upon an anonymous libel, and proposed, as the most effectual means of making the defolated temples to be frequented, that place for repentance should be allowed to the Christians. In answer to these questions, Trajan wrote that "the Christians were not to be searched after," he meant by the governor and inferior magistrates; for he added, "That those who were accused and convicted of being Christians were to be punished, Yet if any one said he was not a Christian, and proved it by worshipping the Gods, he was to be pardoned." Farther, the proconfus and the other magistrates were to pay no regard to anonymous libels in any criminal trial, because it was a bad precedent, and

*"Trajanus Plinio.

"Allum quem debuisti, mi Secunde, in ex cogendi causa eorum qui Christiani ad te delati fuerant, secutus es. Neque enim in universum aliquid, quod quasi certam formam habeas, concludere poteas. Conquiriendi non sunt: si deferentur & arguerunt, puniendi sunt; ita tamen, ut qui negaverit se Christianum esse, idque re ipsa manifestum fecerit, id esse suppellet, dixit nostri, quamvis suppellet in prateritum fuerit, veritatem ex propinquitate implet. Sine auctoritate vero propositi libelli, nullam crimine locum habere debent: nam & pullimi exempli est, nec nostri seculi est."
and not agreeable to the emperor's character. All these regulations were according to justice. However, they screened the Christians neither from prosecution nor punishment. For the emperor expressly declared it to be his pleasure, that "if any Christian was convicted, he was to be punished." And none was to be pardoned on any condition, but "his formally renouncing Christianity, by openly "worshipping idols in the court." And being silent with respect to the proposal which Pliny had made, of punishing the Christians only for such crimes as they were found guilty of, and of dividing between them according to their ages, sexes, and understandings, he thereby intimated that it was his pleasure the Christians should "be punished merely for the same without any other crime, "and that in punishing them, no distinction of age, or sex, or under- "standing, was to be made." To conclude, as the proconsul and the magistrates under him were obliged to prosecute the Christians at the instance of any informer who appeared, informers were encouraged to accuse them; and the rather that no penalty was inflicted on the informer, in case he did not make good his charge.—The emperor's pleasure being thus made known, and the rules for the prosecution of the Christians ascertained, is it to be supposed that informers and prosecutors would be wanting, in countries where there were so many idol priests with their retainers, whose very office was annihilated, and whose livings were destroyed by the prevalence of Christianity?—Thus it appears that the persecution under Trajan must have been very severe, even after he is said to have relaxed it. Accordingly we find that in this reign, Ignatius bishop of Antioch was carried prisoner from Syria to Rome, for being a Christian. The fact he tells us himself, Epist. ad Ephel. sub initio. "For "hearing that I came bound from Syria for the common name and "hope, trusting through your prayers to fight with beasts at Rome, "that so by suffering I may become indeed the disciple of him who "gave himself to God an offering and sacrifice for us, ye hastened to "see me," Whitton's translation. And Eusebius informs us, that he suffered martyrdom in the tenth year of Trajan. These things being so, Mr. Voltaire has done great violence to truth in numbering Trajan among the emperors who did not persecute the Christians.

IV. The fourth general persecution began A. D. 126, in the 9th year of Adrian's reign, that is, about the 90th year after our Lord's ascension, and was continued under the emperor Antoninus Pius, who succeeded to the empire A. D. 138.—While Adrian tarried at Athens, happening to be initiated into the Eleusinian mysteries, he expressed such zeal about the Heathen superstition, that many put the former edicts against the Christians in execution. By this means, the persecution became so hot, that they were obliged to remonstrate, particularly Quadratus bishop of Athens, and Apollinaris a philosopher in that city, who prefented Apologies to Adrian, wherein they defended the Christian religion against the objections of its adversaries.
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...and in confirmation of its divine original, strenuously urged our Lord's miracles, particularly his curing diseases, and his raising the dead. These apologies, which are now lost, together with letters from Serenius Granianus, representing the injustice of the procedure against the Christians; greatly afflued the emperor's zeal, and made him write to the governors of the provinces, and particularly to Minucius Fundanus, proconful of Asia Minor, commanding "that no Christian should be disturbed on account of his religion; "and that whosoever accused them without alleging any other crime "against them should be punished." Euseb. Eccl.Hist. lib. 4. c. 8.9.

—Adrian, having thus begun to entertain a favourable notion of the Christians, did not stop here. He caused a great many temples to be built without images. These Lampridius, a heathen writer, tells us, he designed to dedicate unto Christ, intending to receive him among the Gods: which temples remained in Lampridius's time, and from Adrian were called Adriani. (See the passage quoted and translated sect. 7. of this chap. art. 8.)—Of Adrian's rescript, Justin Martyr, formerly a heathen philosopher, annexed a copy to the apology which he addressed to the emperor Antoninus Pius, under whom the perfection begun by Adrian was continued. For about the year of our Lord 140, that is, in the second or third of Antoninus Pius, the Christians began to be much harassed in several parts of the empire, by reason that the edicts of former emperors were put in execution against them. On this occasion, Justin Martyr composed that which is entitled his Second Apology, but which in reality was his first; inscribing it to the emperor Antoninus Pius, to his adopted sons, to the senate, and to the whole people of Rome. This apology, with the copy of Adrian's rescript annexed, and the informations sent him from different parts of the empire, so impressed Antoninus Pius, who was naturally of a merciful disposition, that he published a letter or reinspect in behalf of the Christians, wherein we are told he inquired that they got the better of their opposers by laying down their lives in support of their cause, and ordered, "that no Christian, "without being guilty of a crime against the government, should be "disturbed." Euseb. Eccel. Hist. lib. 4. c. 13. But the emperor, finding that his reinspect did not restrain the malice of the enemies of the Christians, gave an edict to be published at Ephesus in the hearing of the conful of Asia, ordering among other things as follows: "If "any shall still proceed to create trouble to one that is a Christian, or "to accuse him of crimes merely because he is a Christian, let him "who is indicted be discharged, though he is found to be a Chris- "tian, and let the informer himself undergo the punishment." Eue- "bius, Ecclel. Hist. lib. 4. c. 26. pag. 190. Edit. Reading, informs us, that Antoninus Pius sent his reinspects in favour of the Christians to the following cities by name, Larissa, Thessalonica, Athens, and in general through all Greece. Hence we may collect, that in these places more especially, the Christians were numerous, and the perpe- "tuation is violent.

V. The
All the Actions recorded in the Gospel are probable.

V. The fifth persecution began in the second year of the reign of the emperor Marcus Aurelius Antoninus Philosopher, about 128 years after our Lord's ascension, A.D. 162. In the first year of this persecution, Justin Martyr published that which is commonly called his First Apology, though in reality it was his Second. In this Apology, Justin intimated that he expected Cæsars the Cynic, with whom he had been engaged in a dispute concerning the Christian religion, would seize him, and have him condemned to death. Eusebius says, Justin actually presented this apology to Marcus Aurelius. But it neither saved his own life, nor stemmed the persecution. For many suffered martyrdom at Rome, and among the rest Justin himself, A.D. 164. However, the sufferings of the Christians did not become general till the seventh year of Antoninus's reign, A.D. 168, when the persecution is commonly dated. The edicts against the Christians, by which they were at this time oppressed, the admirers of Antoninus charge wholly upon his colleague Verus. But others with better reason blame Antoninus himself, who was prompted to persecute the Christians, by his superstitious zeal for Gentilism, his desire to placate the Gods, and his anxiety to remove the great miseries under which the empire groaned by reason of the plagues and wars. “In the seventeenth year of the reign of this prince,” says Eusebius (Ecceles. Hist. lib. 5. proem.), “the persecution against us raged with great violence in several parts of the world; thro’ the enmity of the people in the cities. What vast multitudes of martyrs there were throughout the whole empire, may be well concluded from what happened in one nation.” He means France, where the persecution was particularly violent; especially at Lyons and the neighbouring country; the Christians there being put to death in great numbers, and by the most exquisite tortures. At Lyons and Vienne they are celebrated for bearing their sufferings with admirable constancy: and among the rest, Pothinus bishop of Lyons, then about ninety years old, who, having suffered many indignities, died in prison. Of the sufferings of their martyrs, the churches of Lyons and Vienne sent a relation to the churches of Asia and Phrygia, the greatest part of which letter still remains, being preferred by Eusebius in his Ecclesiastical History. See B. III. C. I. sect. 3. art. VI. —This persecution raged likewise in the opposite extremity of the empire. For in the year of our Lord 169, Polycarp bishop of Smyrna was put to death. Of his martyrdom the church at Smyrna published an account, for the information and edification of other churches. This relation, having been published immediately after the matter happened, is a very ancient writing. From it we learn that many of the Christians were by the proconsul's orders thrown to the wild beasts. See B. III. C. I. sect. 3. art. I. pag. —Celsus now lived. The sufferings of the Christians in this and the other persecutions he beheld; for they were so general, that every body had an opportunity to be an eye-witness of them. Accordingly Celsus in two different passages has attested them. The first is, Apud Origen contr. Celsum, lib. 8. p. 409. “Are not these now some of
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"of your absurdities, to with and hope concerning the body, the very same shall be raised; as if nothing were better, or of value to you; and on the other hand, to throw the same into torments, as something vile"—ibid. pag. 423. Speaking the temporal blessings which the Christians expected God would flow on them and their profelytes, Celsus says, "You see how good he has done to them and to you. To them, instead of coming lords of the whole earth, there is not left remaining country or habitation. And if any one of you wanders as and even hides himself, he is searched out, and made to suffer punishment of death."—At length, Melito and Apollinaris addressed the emperor Marcus Aurelius by their apologies, many governors of provinces having wrote to him favourably on Christians, he put a stop to the persecution, after it had raged 168 years. Some are of opinion, that the two reftcripts attributed to Eusebius to Antoninus Pius, and of which we have already given an account, were issued by Marcus Aurelius. But about this we not anxiously dispute. Certain we are, that after a while he put a stop to the horrid cruelties, which for several years had been inflicted towards the Christians in all parts of the empire.

VI. The sixth persecution happened in the reign of Severus, 168 years after our Lord's ascension, A.D. 203. While Se was absent in the East, his favourite Plautian, an African, governed the city in his absence, put many Christians to death.
moved Tertullian to publish an apology in which the senate magistrates of the Roman empire. About this time a variety of crimes were charged upon the Christians: such as, that they spied the Gods whom the emperors themselves worshipped, and had raised the empire to such a pitch of greatness; that they profanated many calamities upon the world; that they worshipped the head of an as, &c. In his Apology, Tertullian monstrated the falsehood of these and all the other crimes of which the Christians were accused, and shewed both the foundness of faith, and the vanity of their lives. The effect of this Apology that the persecution was relaxed, especially at the return of the emperor, who had not countenanced these severities. However long after this, Severus himself became very cruel towards the Christians. For in the 10th year of his reign, A.D. 203, he published an edict against us, in which the Jews likewise were comprehended. His pretence for persecuting the Christians was, that they were pious perfons, who defigned nothing but rebellion against the emperor's edicts were executed with such inhumanity, the Christians believed the times of Antichrist were really come. Among many who fell in this persecution, were Victor bishop of Rome, Ireneus bishop of Lyons in Gaul, Leonidas the sable Origen. He was beheaded at Alexandria in Egypt. Potamian illustrious virgin, and her mother, who after various torments destroyed by the flames; as was Basilides, an officer who assisted their execution.
VII. The seventh perfections was raised by the emperor Maximi-

nus, about 200 years after our Lord's ascension, A. D. 236. Maxi-

minus was a person of a cruel disposition. This he shewed, as by

many things, so by his perfections of the Christians, who were ob-

noxious to him, chiefly because they supported his rivals the Gor-

dians. The bishops and ministers were the chief objects of Maxi-

minus's fury; for he looked upon them as the great propagators of

Christianity. These severities caused Origem to write his book upon

martyrdom. They were of short duration, however, and not so

violent as the former perfections, raging principally in the pro-

vinces where Maximinus reigned. We are told that, a little before

his death, Maximinus himself put a stop to the perfections by his

scriptures, in which were the following remarkable words: "Whereas

of a long time it hath been found, that the Christians can by no

means be reclaimed from their obstinacy, therefore the governors

of cities are hereby discharged from persecuting that defign any

longer," viz. the defign of reclaiming them by perfections.—

About this time, or perhaps a little before, Domitius Ulpius the

celebrated Roman lawyer, who flourished in the beginning of the

third century, collected in seven books all the imperial edicts which

before his time had been made against the Christians. So Laclan-

tius informs us, Institut. Lib. v. C. xi. fine. "Domitius de of-

icio proconfusis, libris septem (other MSS. have it libro septimo)

scripta principum nefaria collegit, ut doceret quibus paens affici

operaret, eos qui fe cultores Dei confiderentur.—Domitianus, in his

seventh book concerning the office of a proconsul, has collected

all the wicked scriptures of the emperors, that he might teach with

what punishments they who profess themselves the worshippers of

God should be punished."

VIII. The eighth perfection was raised by the emperor Decius,
immediately on his obtaining the purple, A. D. 251, about 216
years after our Lord's ascension. This was the sharpest perfection
that had hitherto afflicted the Christian church. Zealous for the
cause of declining paganism, Decius with grief beheld it undermined
by the progreas of Christianity, and resolved, if possible, to destroy
that rival worship. Befides, he hated the Christians, out of spite to
his predecessor Philip, who was so great a favourer of them, that by
some he is believed to have been a Christian. The storm raged violently
all the time of this short reign, and there was no part of the empire
which did not feel its dreadful effects. The Christians were every
where driven from their houses, stripped of their estates, and tor-
mented in their bodies. The instruments of torture made use of
against them were racks, wild beasts, scalding wax, sharp flakes, and
burning pincers. And now, the laws of nature and humanity being
utterly neglected, friend betrayed friend, and brother the brother;
many children delivered up their parents; so that multitudes were swept
away by the public executioners, and among the rest the bishops of
the more noted cities, who, being remarkable for their station and
influence among the Christians, were generally the first in all the

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persecutions who suffered. Cyprian, bishop of Carthage, speaking of
this persecution, says, "Deo chari, domo privabantur, patrimonio
spoliabantur, catenis premebantur, carcerebus includedebantur, be-
tis objiciebantur, ignibus puniebantur.—God's saints were by
nighed from their houses, were stripped of their estates, were loaded
with chains, were shut up in prisons, were thrown to the wild beasts,
were burnt alive." And Nicephorus affirms it easier to count the
sands of the sea shore, than to reckon up all the martyrs who suf-
fered in this persecution. Great multitudes therefore betook them-
selves to exile, choosing to be exposed to the danger of wild beasts
and famine in the deserts, rather than trust the mercy of men who
seemed to have divested themselves of humanity. Among the rest,
one Paul of Thebais, a youth 14 years old, withdrew into the desert
of Aegypt, and took up his residence in a cavern or rock, where he
lived 98 years a solitary life, and became the father of the Anchor-
ites or Hermits, and of all such as afterwards resigned themselves
to a solitary mortified life."

IX. The ninth persecution was raised by the emperor Valerian,
A.D. 258, about 223 years after our Lord's ascension. The for-
mer part of this reign was acceptable to all persons, and among the
sept of the Christians, who received many favours from the empe-
or; but, about the fourth year of his reign, Valerian was seduced
by an Egyptian magician, who represented, that to render public af-
fairs prosperous, nothing was more necessary than to supprese the
Christian worship, so hateful to the Gods, and to restore the ancient
religion. To persuade the emperor and his counsellors to this mea-
sure, was not difficult. The Roman commonwealth, they thought,
had acquired its greatness under the protection of the Gods. They
observed, that no stop had been put to their conquests till Christi-
anity began to prevail. In proportion to the spreading of their faith,
the calamities of the empire had multiplied. They therefore referred
the whole greatness of their state to the favour of the Gods anciently
worshipped, and all its misfortunes to the neglect of the primitive
religion, and the prevalence of Christianitj. By order therefore of
Valerian and his son, the Christians were instantly treated with the
utmost barbarity every where. But so far were these severities from
having the effect which the impotant had promised, that Al-
mighty God, greatly displeased with the unprompted sufferings of his
servants, sent more terrible scourges upon the empire from the north
than ever. In these calamities the emperor was the principal sufferer;
for, after making some resistance, he was obliged to turn his arms
against Sapor, king of Persia, who, before they came to a battle, took

* In process of time, these hermits came to be divided into four sorts. First, the Ca-
nobles, who lived in society among themselves, whilst they separated themselves from all
the rest of mankind. Secondly, the Anchorites, who, aspiring after greater perfection, lived
in absolute solitude. Thirdly, those who associated in small companies of threes or fours,
without any head. Fourthly, those who went through different countries on pilgrimages to
visit holy cities, or persons of singular piety. There were others called Inclyt or Recluses,
who lived shut up in cells, whether in cities or in deserts. All these lived by the labour of
their hands, and for the most part gave their goods to the poor.
him prisoner. From this time forth Valerian was in great misery, Sapor's treated him with the utmost indignity, making use of him as a footstool in mounting his horse. At length, after seven years confinement, he made him blind, and put him to death.—Galenus, Valerian's son, had concurred with his father in the edicts against the Christians: but the misfortunes of his father, the pestilences, inundations, famines, and other calamities, which afflicted the empire in his reign, so wrought upon him, that, hoping to appease the Divinity, he departed from the maxims of former emperors in the like circumstances: he relaxed the persecution against the Christians, setting forth edicts in their favour.

X. The tenth persecution was begun by the emperor Diocletian, A.D. 303, about 267 years after our Lord's ascension. Diocletian, during the course of a prosperous reign, had favoured the Christians for the space of twenty years. But coming to the city of Nicomedia in Bithynia, Caesar Galerius, who hated the Christians, prevailed on him, A.D. 303, to give orders for demolishing the cathedral church of Nicomedia, built opposite to the imperial palace. A Christian publicly tore the edict, and was punished. A few days after, part of Galerius's palace was consumed by fire, and the Christians were supposed to be the incendiaries. Upon this, Diocletian published an edict, commanding the Christian churches to be pulled down, their bibles to be burnt, those who had obtained any office in the magistracy to be degraded, and the meaner fort to be fold as slaves. But these were only the beginnings of the persecution: for, soon after, Diocletian, with the consent of his colleague Maximian, published an edict, ordering the Christian bishops to be bound with chains, and to be forced by all manner of torture to sacrifice to idols. This edict was so rigorously executed, that in the space of one month only, it is said, seventeen thousand Christians were put to death, not to speak of the multitudes that were banished.—In the second year of the persecution, A.D. 304, the emperors Diocletian and Maximian reigned the purple; the former in Nicomedia, where he named Galerius his successor; the latter at Milan, after having substituted Constantius Chlorus in his place. The new emperors divided the provinces between them. Constantius took Spain, Gaul, Britain, and Germany: Galerius had all the east. Galerius, finding the government of so many provinces too heavy for him, named Caesars, Maximinus, his own nephew by his sister, and Severus. To Severus he gave the government of Rome, Italy, and Africa; to Maximus, that of the eastern provinces, referring to himself the management only of the provinces which belonged to Illyricum and Greece. Constantius in the West relaxed the persecution against the Christians by his edicts; but Galerius and the Caesars continued it in the east. A while after this, Severus happening to be absent from Italy, Maxentius, son of Maximian the former emperor, was himself proclaimed emperor at Rome by the senate and people. He relaxed the persecution in the eighth year thereof. Severus marched against him; but when under the walls of Rome, being deserted by his soldiers, he was taken and killed. Galerius next marched into Italy;
but his troops beginning in like manner to desert, he was obliged to return. About two years after this, Galerius falling sick, published an edict in his own name, and in that of Constantine, Constantius's son, whom he had kept as a hostage for the good behaviour of his father. In this edict he ordered, "That the Christians from thenceforth should be spared, and their churches and meetings allowed to them:" in treating, at the same time, "That they would put up public prayers for the emperor." Galerius, on the death of Severus, had declared Licinius, Augustus, and by so doing had pointed him out as his successor. Wherefore when Galerius died, Licinius was generally acknowledged emperor. Soon after this, Constantine, who had escaped from the East, and whose father was now dead, being invited by the senate and the people into Italy, marched against Maxentius, whom they had formerly made emperor, and defeated him. After the victory, Constantine declared himself a Christian. This circumstance induced Licinius to allow the Christians in his part of the empire considerable privileges. But Maximinus Cæsar, who governed in the East as his lieutenant, thinking his station inferior to his merit, proclaimed himself emperor, and revoked the privileges which Licinius had granted to the Christians. Licinius defeated him in a great pitched battle. Upon this, Maximinus allowed the Christians their former privileges, resolving to try his fortune anew. But he was cut off by death before he could execute his designs. Maximinus being now out of the way, Licinius began to alter his behaviour towards the Christians. Openly espousing the cause of heathenism, he prohibited the bishops from visiting in the houses of the Gentiles, lest in their conversation they might propagate their principles; and soon after he raised a most violent persecution against the whole church in those parts. So that, as Eusebius observes, the East and West looked like night and day, a dreadful darkness overspreading the former, while the latter enjoyed all the happy sunshine of prosperity. But Licinius's cruelty against the Christians, as well as his treacherous practices with relation to Constantine, brought that prince out of the West against him with a great army. Licinius was defeated, taken, and after some time put to death.

Constantine, being now in possession of the whole empire, put a final period to this long persecution, which, as it was the last, so it was the most severe of them all, being the utmost effort of a dying enemy. It continued no less than twenty years; and the infinite multitude of Christians who perished in it, made the persecutors imagine they had completed their work. For in an inscription they say, they had abolished the name and superstition of the Christians, and had restored the worship of the Gods: but they were mistaken; for this persecution really hastened the destruction of Gentilism, the soldiers, who were generally Christians, supporting or deserting the emperors according as they opposed or favoured their religion. And, to say the truth, a very little attention to the history of those times, will suffice to shew that the emperors, and such as aimed at the imperial dignity, were successful in their enterprises, according as
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As they regulated their conduct towards the Christians; than which no plainer proof of the prevalency of this religion needs not be desired.

For Constantine's conversion to Christianity, we have the authority of the Heathen as well as of the Christian historians. It is related by Zosimus, who informs us that he was the first emperor who declared himself of this religion, lib. ii. p. 102. By express laws, Constantine allowed to all men liberty of conscience; but at the same time he distinguished the Christian religion with particular marks of his favour. Euseb. Hist. Eccles. lib. x. c. 5. And whereas the first day of the week was universally observed by Christians as a festival in memory of the Resurrection of Jesus (Euseb. in vita Constantini, lib. iv. c. 18.), he commanded that on that day throughout the Roman dominions no court of justice should be opened, and no work of business of any kind be done, except that of agriculture. This law is still extant. C. lib. 3. De feris, tit. 12.

XI. Julian, who succeeded Constantius, the son of Constantine, in the empire, did not follow the footsteps of his two predecessors. He revived Paganism, wrote in defence of it, set an example of the worship of the Gods, heroes, heavens, earth, sea, fountains, rivers: and by solicitations and bribes he endeavoured to gain profylytes. Such gentle means, Libanius tells us, "the emperor made use of, not only from his apprehending that men's confidences cannot be forced, but from his being sensible that the cruelties which before his time had been exercised, had rather furthered than hindered the progress of Christianity." Parental. In Julian. c. 144. We have therefore Libanius's testimony, that in the reigns before Constantine, the Christians had been tortured and put to death for their religion, whereof he gives some instances, c. 58, 59, 81.—To the same purpose have Julian's own testimony concerning the former persecutions of the Christians: Apud Cyril. lib. vi. p. 205. His words are, "If you emulate their wrath and bitterness by overturning their temples and altars, and you put to death," &c. (See the whole passage above, B. II. C. IV. § 2. No. 4.) Nevertheless, though Julian put no Christian to death, he persecuted them violently. So Eutropius and Ammianus Marcellinus, both of them heathen historians, affere us. The former served Julian in the expedition wherein he left his life, and wrote an abridgment of the Roman history. In the 10th book of that abridgment, 16th chapter, speaking of Julian, he says, "Nimius religiosis Christianis infestator, pereinde tamen ut cruo abstineret.—He was too great a persecutor of the Christian religion, yet so as he abetted from shedding of blood:" The particulars we learn from Ammianus, lib. 22. p. 450. "Illud autem inclemens obruendum perenni silentio, quod arcebat docere magistros rhetoricos et grammaticos ritus Christiani cultores.—But that act of cruelty ought to be buried in perpetual silence, namely, his prohibiting such matters of rhetoric and grammar from teaching such as were of the Christian persuasion.

Upon the whole, the grievous persecutions which the disciples of Jesus were exposed to on account of their religion, from the beginning, being thus attacked by many writers, as well Heathen as Chris-
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tian, who have likewise related a number of circumstances attending them, we have the same evidence for these persecutions, as for any historical fact whatever: only the attestations concerning them, contrary to what ordinarily happens, are clearest and most authentic in behalf of the more ancient persecutions. This circumstance merits attention, because the argument for the truth of the gospel-history, taken from the sufferings of the Christians in ancient times, chiefly depends on the evils to which the witnesses of the apostles miracles exposed themselves by receiving the gospel-history. The miracles they saw the apostles perform, and which they were enabled to perform themselves, left them no room to doubt of the truth of what the apostles reported concerning the Lord Jesus. The evils to which they exposed themselves by their belief of these reports, and the sufferings which they actually underwent rather than renounce this their belief, ought to convince us, that the miracles by which they were persuaded were neither illusions nor forgeries. But to illustrate this more fully, shall be the purpose of the following section.

S E C T. III.

The truth of the Gospel-history proved from the conversion of the world to Christianity.

THE Christian records tell us, that the Apostles and Evangelists, who went about into all countries preaching the history of Jesus, addressed the inhabitants of every country immediately upon their first arrival, being enabled so to do by the gift of tongues which their Master conferred upon them. The same records assure us, that these men proved the truth of their reports concerning Jesus, by performing every where many miracles, and by speaking all manner of languages without having previously learned them. They inform us also of a fact still more extraordinary; namely, that the Apostles, according to their Master's promise, communicated to those who believed, a power of working the like miracles with themselves, and of speaking with tongues; than which a greater or more illustrious proof both of their own and of their Master's miracles, and of the truth of Christianity in general, could not be wished for; a proof which, were it offered to the most obstinate opposers of Christianity now-a-days, they will acknowledge they could not possibly refute. —Of the miraculous evidence wherewith the Gospel-history is said in the Christian records to have been attended, we have clear proofs in the letters of the Apostles to the particular churches; for there we find the many wonderful things which these men performed, in presence of their converts, and the miraculous gifts which they had conferred on them, openly appealed to, as matters universally known and acknowledged. For instance, Paul, writing to the Romans, says, chap. i. 11. "For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end you may be efta-
All the actions recorded in the Gospel are probable.

blished."—So likewise to the church at Corinth: 2 Cor. xii. 12. Truly the signs of an Apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs and wonders and mighty deeds. 13. For what is it wherein ye were inferior to other churches?"—And to the churches of Galatia: Gal. iii. 2. "Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?—5. He therefore that ministreth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" These are express appeals to the miracles which Paul wrought in the presence of his converts, and to the miraculous gifts which he bestowed upon them. If the reader desires farther satisfaction on this head, let him look into the twelfth and fourteenth chapters of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, which are wholly pent in giving directions about the exercise of the gifts bestowed on that church by Paul. Nor were the miraculous gifts peculiar to the Corinthians. All the churches without exception enjoyed them; for he declares, 1 Cor. xiv. 23, that he gave to all the churches the same rules for the exercise of them. If these things were wholly fictitious; if the churches had seen no miracles performed by the Apostles; if they received from them no gifts of the Holy Ghost; would these men have had the impudence thus to have addressed their converts every where? Or though no such addressees had been made personally, would the letters, which asserted that they actually were made, have gained the least credit? A proof of this kind, which contains in it so many others, must certainly be superior to all suspicion. Indeed, if we shall treat the miracles, whereof each church was the witness, as fables, it is not the testimony of the Apostles alone that we reject, but the depositions, so to speak, of the whole world.

But my design at present is to prove the truth of the Gospel-history, and of the miraculous evidence wherewith it was accompanied by the reception which this history met with in the first ages. It was so sooner preached, that Jesus of Nazareth arose from the dead, than thousands every where believed the wonderful relation; notwithstanding by so doing they exposed themselves to all manner of personal sufferings, as well as to the loss of their goods. Now we affirm, that to entertain a belief of this kind, which drew along with it such consequences, mankind could not possibly have been persuaded by any arguments inferior to those above mentioned. My meaning is, the Heathens in Greece, Italy, Asia Minor, and other countries, never would have believed the reports concerning the miracles of Jesus, and concerning his resurrection from the dead, unless the men who told them these things had wrought in their presence miracles equal to those which they reported of their Master, and had communicated to their converts the power of working the like miracles. By the conversion of the world, therefore, the miracles which the Apostles wrought, and the miraculous powers which they bestowed upon their converts, and of consequence the truth of the Gospel-history, is raised above all exception. Now, though this argument
be quite conclusive, even in the general manner wherein I have stated it, its importance makes it worthy of a nearer consideration: and the rather that, as we approach, the conversion of the world shews itself a much grander object than it appeared at a distance. It consists of a variety of parts: these parts are adorned with numerous circumstances: and the whole unite in presenting a conclusion of general view of the most striking kind; a conclusion which cannot fail to leave a lasting impression; a conclusion, therefore, which must produce such a belief of the Gospel-history as nothing can efface.

To form, however, a proper judgment of the conversion of the world, and of its circumstances, considered as an argument for proving the truth of the miracles of the Apostles, and by consequence the truth of the whole gospel-history, the following particulars must be carefully weighed in the balance of unprejudiced reason.

r. When the Gospel was proposed to mankind, they were not without religion, as was the case when the different forms of Gentilism were first introduced. I mention this to shew, that the ready reception which Christianiry met with in all countries did not proceed from its being the first religion that was offered to rude and uncultivated nations; so that the passion for religion natural to the human mind, having no other object at hand, readily embraced this, and for its sake men received the strange history on which it was founded, without any examination. In every country, there was already a religion established by law, patronised by the rulers, and practised by the people. In many places, but especially in the Leffer Asia, Greece, and Italy, Gentilism was exquisitely adapted to the taste of the vulgar, by the magnificence of its temples and the splendor of the ceremonies. Judaism too gloried in the same advantages; not to mention that it in particular really enjoyed the great honour which many of the others falsely claimed, namely, of being a religion from heaven. Moreover, in Heathenism there was nothing that could have the least influence to prepare the minds of its votaries for the reception of Christianity, but rather every thing to alienate them from it. For it is well known, that there was the most direct opposition between all the different forms of Heathenism and the Gospel. Judaism indeed ought to have paved the way for the Christian religion, as being the preparatory dispensation: yet in fact it was otherwise. For the Jews, being possessed with the belief of the eternal obligation of the Mosaic institutions, were filled with the most violent enmity against the Gospel, which taught the abrogation of the law. It is evident therefore, from the nature of things, that the introduction of the Gospel upon the ruins of the established religion, must in all countries have been effected in opposition to the sword of the magistrate, the craft of priests, the pride of philosophers, and the humours, passions, and prejudices of the people, all closely combined in support of the national worship, and
and to crush the Christian faith, which aimed at the subversion of Heathenism.

2. It deserves attention, that in the conversion of the world, the method whereby absurd systems have sometimes been successfully established, was not used. For the life and doctrine of Christ was not a story privately whispered among the Christians themselves, or communicated to the few who were disposed to be of their party. It was not propagated in the dark, by people who stole about from house to house, with an intention to deceive the credulous. It was not delivered out in parcels, so as to make one doctrine pave the way for another. It did not insinuate itself into the belief of mankind, by slow and insensible steps. These indeed were the arts whereby the Romish faith crept into the world, which, if it had been offered openly and all at once, would have been rejected with abhorrence as monstrous. Instead of this, the history of Jesus and the most offensive doctrines of Christianity were preached publicly, first in Jerusalem, the scene of these wonderful transactions, in the synagogues there, in the temple itself, nay, before the Jewish Sanhedrim. Next it was preached through all the Heathen countries. At those sermons any one who had a mind might be present. The history and doctrines above mentioned were proposed in their true native original colours, without any disguise or softening; as is evident from the sermons of the Apostles still on record. They were proposed all at once; I mean, the great and essential articles of the Gospel, which, however disagreeable they might be to men's natural turn of thinking or to their passions, were delivered by the Apostles with the greatest openness in every sermon. If the sermons we appeal to, as examples of the Apostles manner of preaching, are thought not to have been publicly delivered, their being recorded in the Acts of the Apostles is of equal importance in the present argument; seeing that writing came abroad while the Apostles were alive. But why do we insist on this fort of proof? The Gospels and Epistles, containing the whole of Christianity, were published in the first age, were offered to the world entire as we have them at present, were quickly dispersed into many countries; and in no subsequent age has any doctrine or matter of fact been universally received, as an essential part of Christianity, which is not plainly contained in those writings. It is therefore indubitable, that all who anciently embraced Christianity, had opportunity to examine the whole scheme before they formed any resolution of becoming the disciples of Jesus. No one was cheated into this belief by any artful dealing of the first preachers of the Gospel.

3. There is a third circumstance, which, with judicious persons, will render the conversion of the world to Christianity a most striking proof of our Lord's history, and that is, the belief of the doctrine and miracles of Jesus, which in so short a time became general through the world, began in the country which had been the scene of his ministry, and particularly in the capital city thereof, where he had been publicly tried, condemned, and put to death, by

the
the senate of Israel, as a deceiver. For, on the 50th day after his crucifixion, there were no less than three thousand converted in Jerusalem by a single sermon of one of the Apostles, wherein he insisted upon the miracles performed by Jesus as things known to all present (Acts ii. 41), a topic which the Apostles in every sermon failed not to urge. See Acts x. 38. A few weeks after this, 5000 who believed are said to have been present at another sermon preached in Jerusalem by the same Apostle, Acts iv. 4.—In the second year after our Lord’s ascension, “the number of the disciples multiplied greatly, and a great company of the priests,” the most violent enemies of this novel religion, “became obedient to the faith,” Acts vi. 7.—In the third year they multiplied so exceedingly, that “there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem, and they were all scattered abroad throughout the region of Judea and Samaria, except the Apostles,” Acts viii. 1.—In the third or fourth year, the spreading of the Christian faith was so remarkable, even in the remotest provinces of Palestine, that the high priest and council of Jerusalem, in order to put a stop to it, sent forth persecutors as far as Damascus. Of these, the ringleader was a zealous young man named Saul, who in this very journey was converted by Jesus appearing to him at noon-day; so that he became forthwith an earnest preacher of the faith which he was going to destroy, Acts ix. 1—20.—About eight or ten years after our Lord’s death, the disciples were so numerous in Jerusalem and the country about, that they became the object of the jealousy of Herod himself. For, at the instigation of the chief priests, he carried on the persecution against them, by putting to death one of the Apostles, and by imprisoning another, whom he intended likewise to slay, Acts xii. 1.—In the twenty-second year after the crucifixion, the disciples in Judea are said to have been many myriads, Acts xxii. 20. Σωτήρ αὐτοῦ, ποιήσας μισράεις τοῖς θεσσαλονίκιοι. In this manner did the conversion of the Jews advance in their own country; than which a nobler proof of the truth of the Gospels, as books of history, cannot be desired. For if the things therein told had been false, would such numbers, upon the spot where they were said to be done, and at the very time too in which they happened, have given such credit to them, as on their account to have exposed themselves to the most grievous persecution?

4. The success of the Gospel, however, was by no means confined to Judea. Being preached in all the different provinces of the Roman empire, numbers of the Heathens, as well as of the Jews, believed. It seems, the evidence accompanying our Lord’s miracles was so strong, that it failed not to make an impression upon the minds of those to whom it was proposed, whatsoever nation they were of.—The conversion of the Gentiles is so much the more remarkable, that almost the very first triumphs of the Christian religion were in the heart of Greece itself, the nursery of learning and the polite arts; for churches were very early planted at Corinth, at Ephesus, at Beræa, at Thessalonica, at Philippi, as is plain from the
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6. The conversations produced by the sermons of the Apostles, happened in an age justly celebrated for the height to which learning and the polite arts were carried by the Greeks and Romans, the renowned masters of the sciences. The nations of Europe, Asia, and Africa, heretofore barbarous, were at this time remarkably civilized. In most countries knowledge was farther diffused and more universal than it had been in any former period. In short, it must be acknowledged, that there never was a more learned, more philosophical, or more discerning age, than that in which the Christian religion was proposed to mankind. Besides, the world under the protection of the Roman government enjoying then especially profound peace, men of a speculative turn were everywhere at leisure to examine the matter with care; and as the different nations of the world were now united in one great empire, they had easy communication with one another, and with the city of Rome, the centre of intelligence and correspondence. So that every sensible person, who would take the trouble, had access to inform himself of the things said to have been transacted in any part of the empire. It is therefore undeniable, that, when the Gospel was first proposed, all ranks of men in all countries were as well secured as possible from being imposed upon by false pretences of any kind. This circumstance renders the conversion of the world, notwithstanding it began with that of the common people, a strong presumption of the truth of the Gospel-history.

6. Though, in the eyes of human wisdom, the mean condition of the generality of the first converts may seem dishonourable to the Christian cause, in reality it adds great weight to the evidence of the Gospel-history. Accordingly, Jesus himself rejoiced in it, and more than once solemnly returned thanks for it. Luke x. 21. "At that time Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." The Apostle Paul likewise gloried in the mean condition of the first converts. 1 Cor. i. 26. "You see your calling, Brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh are called.—But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God has chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which
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which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things
which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are
not, to bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory
in his presence.” Our Lord and his Apostles thus rejoiced in
the conversion of the common people, upon the first publication
of the Gospel, because they knew this circumstance above all others
would prove the truth of their miracles, and render the doctrines and
facts, for the confirmation of which they performed them, highly
credible in all succeeding ages. It is well known, that the bulk of
mankind are incapable of comprehending any long train of reasoning,
and therefore in vain are they persuaded to relinquish the opinions in
which they have been educated, by such arguments, however just
and conclusive they may be. Proofs addressed to their senses are
what strike them most. Hence no arguments so efficacious for im-
pressing the minds of the populace, as great and evident miracles.
These alone have force to make them lay aside religious notions early
imbibed, or counteract their strongest inclinations. Nor, in fact, has
any other evidence ever been found sufficient to change men’s opi-
nions and practices in these particulars. Wherefore, seeing the
common people were converted immediately on the first publication
of the Gospel-history, without being influenced by the previous con-
version of the great men, it is a shining proof of the truth of the
miracles which the first preachers of the Gospel are said to have per-
formed, in confirmation of their sermons: because, by mere reason-
ing, the vulgar never could have been brought, in any considerable
number, to forsake their native religions. And we may believe the
wisdom of God ordained their conversion to precede that of their
rulers, on purpose to give credibility in after-times to the miracles
which from the beginning were wrought in support of the Christian
cause. Perhaps likewise, in ordering the conversion of the common
people to precede that of their rulers, God intended to manifest his
justice and goodness, as well as his wisdom. For as they had been
at first seduced, and were all along upheld in their superstition by
the policy of their governors, it was both just and good in God,
early to put them in the way of gaining the happiness of immortality.
Accordingly these men, having hitherto lived in deplorable ignorance
of God, every where joyfully embraced the doctrines of the Gospel,
which enlightened and comforted them under the manifold afflictions
of this life: and so being drawn off in great numbers from Gentile-
lifem, that horrid superstructure of impiety and folly, which the
falsemen in all countries had reared on the foundation of the cre-
dulity of the multitude, fell to the ground at once, and by its fall
astonished the rulers themselves, who could no longer resist the evi-
dence and influence of truth.

7. But though the generality of the first converts to Christianity
in all countries were people in the middle and lower stations of life,
it ought not to be forgotten, that from the very beginning there
were not wanting some of the better sort every where, whose con-
version
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version added both lufft and dignity to the Gospel triumphs. Thus, among the first converts of the Jewish nation, we find persons of no less rank than Nicodemus, and Joseph of Arimathea, noblemen and members of the senate of Israel; Jairus, a ruler of the synagogue that was at Capernaum, a nobleman living in the same town, whose son Jesus recovered out of a fever; Manaen, Herod the Tetrarch’s foster-brother; Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod’s steward; Zaccheus, chief of the publicans at Jericho; Mary Magdalene, a woman of note; Apollos, remarkable for eloquence; Paul, learned in the Jewish law; together with many of the chief rulers, who did not confess him because of the Pharisees (John xii. 42.); and a great company of the priests in Jerusalem, who became obedient to the faith (Acts vi. 7.), and whose office and literature rendered them conspicuous.—Among the Gentile converts we find no less a person than a Roman proconsul, Sergius Paulus by name, who governed the island of Cyprus at the time of his conversion, and in honour of whom it is thought the Apostle, who converted him, took the name of Paul. At Ephesus, certain of the scribes or magistrates are said to have been Paul’s friends, having no doubt conceived a good opinion of the cause wherein he was engaged. Cornelius likewise, a Roman captain of great reputation for virtue, was an early disciple of Jesus. Dionyfius too, a judge and senator of the Areopagus at Athens: Damaris, and others of note, in the same city. Klausius, treasurer of Corinth; Tyrannus, a teacher of grammar and rhetoric in Corinth; Publius, a nobleman, and probably the governor of the island of Malta; Philemon, a man of considerable quality at Colosse; Simon, a magician in Samaria; Zenas, a lawyer; nau, and the domestics of the emperor himself; all of them persons whose education qualified them to judge of an affair of this kind, and whose office and station rendered them conspicuous in the countries where they lived. The above are all mentioned in the sacred records of the Christians. But there may have been, and no doubt were, others of the like station converted, whose names are not taken notice of there. Even the Heathen historians mention some persons of great note who were early converted; for instance, Flavius Clemens, the confus, with his wife Domitilla, both of their relations of the emperor Domitian; M. Acilius Glabrio likewise, who was confus at Rome with Trajan. Moreover, we know that many of the Heathen philosophers were among the first disciples; such as Justin Martyr, who, even after his conversion, continued the habit and profession of philosophy; Quadratus, Aristides, and Athenagoras, philosophers of Athens; and in Alexandria, Dionysius, Clemens, Ammonius, Arnobius, and Anatolius. In process of time, it was not a single person of figure in this city, or in that nation, who obeyed the Gospel, but multitudes of the wife, the learned, the noble, and the mighty, in every country. These, being all fully convinced of the truth of our Lord’s pretensions, and impressed with the deepest sense of his dignity, gave the most solid evidence of their conviction, both by their worshipping
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him as God, notwithstanding he had been punished with the ignominious death of a malefactor, and by making public profession of religion, although they had been educated in the belief of other religions far more agreeable to the corrupt inclinations of the human heart, to desert which they had not the smallest temptation from honour or interest. On the contrary, by becoming Christians they exposed themselves to all manner of sufferings in their persons, reputations, and their fortunes.

8. This leads me to a consideration which adds weight to all the rest, and which therefore merits particular attention; namely, the belief of Christianity was followed with no worldly advantage whatever, by which men could be swayed to renounce their own religions, and embrace a form of worship different from that which was then practised. On the contrary, by becoming Christians the Heathens denied themselves many sensual gratifications, which their own religions indulged them in; particularly fornication and drunkenness, which they considered as branches of the worship of God. Also, by becoming Christians, these men subjected themselves to a course of life rigid and severe, very different from that which they had been accustomed to, and which is so agreeable to their nature. For at their baptism they bound themselves to renounce the world with its pleasures, as a sacrifice necessary in such times of seduction, and to mortify the strongest inclinations of their nature. By renouncing their religion, the Heathens likewise lost the affections of their relations, who perished in their ancient errors; they separated themselves from their acquaintances, particularly in their sacerdotal levities, which would be more grievous to them, as these were a nature fit to strike their imagination and engage their passions, more than anything else among us. In short, by the profession of Christianity they denied themselves all those sensual pleasures which in every country are derived from the concurrence of the community, and to which a relict is given by the participation of friends. Yet, they even lost most of the private social satisfactions of life; having quite estranged themselves from their friends, and banished themselves from their families. — Nor is this all; by embracing our faith, the Heathens exposed themselves to more terrible evils still. From the very beginning, the profession of Christianity was attended with the continual hazard of all manner of personal sufferings; and in proportion as this religion increased, the evils which followed the profession of it multiplied. It is well known, that the Christians were not only soon excluded from all public offices and honours, but they were infamed and abused by the rabble, who looked upon them as Epicureans, Atheists, and most flagitious men; and as such often executed punishment on them with their own hands. By the magistrates they were subjected to heavy fines, their goods were confiscated, they were made to suffer a variety of ignominious punishments, which to generous minds are more grievous than death. They were imprisoned and prostrated.
hey were banished, they were condemned to work in the mines, they were made to fight with wild beasts in the theatres for the diversion of the people (1 Cor. xv. 32), they were put to the torture, they were placed in red-hot iron chairs, they were crucified, impaled, burnt alive; in a word, they were made to undergo all the torments which cruelty and barbarity inflamed by rage could invent; torments the bare mention of which excites horror in the human mind. Now all these being things most grievous to nature, it follows, that whoever was the cause of them, would be received with the utmost reluctance and difficulty. Wherefore nothing but overbearing evidence, evidence such as they could not by any means resist, was able to make men in those circumstances acknowledge the truth of the Gospel-history, and receive a religion founded thereon, which plunged them into such terrible misfortunes.

9. But the sufferings of the first Christians may be viewed likewise in the light wherein Mr. Addison has placed them; namely, as a standing miracle for proving the truth of Christianity. "Treatise of the Christian religion," § vii. 4. "Under this head I cannot omit that which appears to me a standing miracle in the three first centuries; I mean, that amazing and supernatural courage and patience which was shown by innumerable multitudes of martyrs, in those floods and painful torments that were inflicted on them. I cannot conceive a man placed in the burning iron chair at Lyons, amidst the insults and mockeries of a crowded amphitheatre, and still keeping his seat; or stretched upon a grate of iron over coals of fire, and breathing out his soul among the exquisite sufferings of such a tedious execution, rather than renounce his religion, or blaspheme his Saviour. Such trials seem to me above the strength of human nature, and able to overbear duty, reason, faith, conviction, nay and the most absolute certainty of a future state. Humanity, unalloyed in an extraordinary manner, must have shaken off the present prejudice, and have delivered itself out of such a dreadful distress by any means that could have been suggested to it. We can easily imagine that many perfections, in so good a cause, might have laid down their lives at the gibbet, the stake, or the block; but to expire leisurely among the most exquisite tortures, when they might come out of them, even by a mental reservation, or any hypocrisy which was not without a possibility of being followed by repentance and forgiveness, has something in it so far beyond the force and natural strength of mortals, that one cannot but think there was some miraculous power to support the sufferers. 5. We find the church of Smyrna, in that admirable letter which gives an account of the death of Polycarp, their beloved bishop, mentioning the cruel torments of other early martyrs for Christianity, are of opinion, that our Saviour stood by them in a vision, and personally conversed with them, to give them strength and comfort during the bitterness of their long continued agonies: and we have the story of a young man, who, having suffered many tortures, escaped with life, and
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told his fellow Christians of an angel who stood by him, and
wiped off the tears and sweat which ran down his face while
lay under his sufferings. We are assured at least, that the sren
martyr for Christianity was encouraged, in his last moments, by
vision of that divine person for whom he suffered; and into what
preference he was then hastening. 6. Let any man lay his hand
calmly upon his heart, and after reading those terrible confes-
in which the ancient martyrs and confessors were engaged, when
they passed through such new inventions and varieties of pain
that their tormentors; and ask himself, however zealous and suc-
he is in his religion, whether under such acute and lingering su-
tures he could still have held fast his integrity, and have professed
his faith to the last, without a supernatural assistance of some kind
or other. For my part, when I consider that it was not an as-
accountable obstinacy in a single man, or in any particular set of
men, in some extraordinary juncture; but that there were multi-
tudes of each sex, of every age, of different countries and condi-
tions, who for near 300 years together made this glorious confes-
sion of their faith in the midst of torments and in the hour of deat
I must conclude, that they were either of another make than we
are at present, or that they had such miraculous supports as were
peculiar to those times of Christianity, when without them per-
haps the very name of it might have been extinguished. 7. It is
certain, that the deaths and sufferings of the primitive Christians
had a great share in the conversion of those learned Pagans who
lived in the ages of persecution, which, with some intervals and
abatements, lasted near 300 years after our Saviour. Justin Martyr,
Tertullian, Lucian, Arnobius, and others, tell us, that the
first of all alarmed their curiosity, roused their attention, and made
them seriously inquisitive into the nature of that religion which
could endure the mind with so much strength, and overcome the
fear of death, nay raise an earnest desire of it, though it appears
in all its terrors. This they found had not been effected by all the
doctrines of those philosophers whom they had thoroughly flu-
died, and who had been labouring at this great point. The thoughts
these dying and tormented martyrs engaged them to search into
the history and doctrines of him for whom they suffered. The
more they searched, the more they were convinced, till their con-
viction grew so strong, that they themselves embraced the same
truths, and either actually laid down their lives, or were always
willed to do it, rather than depart from them.

10. It is worthy of consideration likewise, that the before-men-
tioned persons, of all characters, ages and sexes, in every country
were induced to renounce their native religions and to embrace
the Gospel, not by the force of arms, the influence of authority,
the refinements of policy, or the power of great examples. Those
were prevailed on to change their faith, merely by the preaching
of a few illiterate mechanics and their assistants, who were whole-
definitu
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The advantages of birth, education, and fortune, and who, by condemning the established worship of all countries, were everywhere looked upon as the most flagitious of men. Of such importance in the present argument is this circumstance, that our Lord and his Apostles have laid a particular stress upon it. For it they who direct us to consider the illiterate character and low estimation of the first preachers of the gospel, as a proof that in the conversion of the world they acted by the power of truth, and with the assistance of God, 1 Cor. iv. 7. "We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." But the force of this argument will best appear, if we consider the conversion of the world, First, simply, as implying a change of men's religious opinions: Secondly, as attended with a thorough reformation of their manners: and, Thirdly, as exposing them to unspeakable sufferings in their persons, reputations, and fortunes. The conversion of the world, viewed in these lights, shews itself an effect infinitely superior to any human labour or persuasion, whatever, and therefore beyond expression, superior to all the powers which a handful of the lowest of the people from so desppicable a country as Judea can be supposed to havepolemized.

First, The conversion of the world, considered as a change of men's religious principles effected merely by the power of persuasion, supposes that every convert was scourged the absurdity of his former faith, and was brought to see that the faith now offered him was both rational and well founded. In order to this, if the persons who converted the world were not assisted by God, they had the prodigious labour to undergo. 1. Of learning the languages of all the nations, whether barbarous or civilized, to whom they went, before they could speak a word to them, either concerning their ancient belief, or concerning the new faith they were come to offer to them. This itself was an obstacle which must have absolutely marred their design; and therefore this single consideration demonstrates, that in prevailing with multitudes in all countries to change their religious belief, the Apostles were inspired by God with the gift of tongues, as the Christian records affirm. — 2. Allowing that, by any means you please to fancy, these men attained the knowledge of all languages in such perfection, that they could speak them fluently; to inculcate knowledge effectually into the minds of the vulgar, was a matter of immense labour, requiring particular and frequent applications to every individual. If so, how can we suppose twelve men sufficient for converting nations? Were they capable of addressing all the individuals of those vast multitudes, who in the different countries of Europe, Asia, and Africa, were brought to serve the living God by their ministry? No: such particular addresses were impossible; and therefore the conversion of the Gentiles could not be produced by them. An event so stupendous must have been accomplished by means more effectual; means capable of swaying great numbers at once; namely, undeniable miracles wrought openly in proof of the doctrines which the Apostles taught. — 3. To instruct the multi-

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All the Actions recorded in the Gospel are probable: tude is not only a matter of great labour, but of infinite difficulty, especially when their minds are prepoeffed with contrary notions, which they have been taught to consider as divine. This was the case, not only with the Jews, but with all the idolatrous nations to whom the Apostles offered the doctrines of the gospel. The religions, in the belief of which the vulgar had been educated, were considered by them as of divine original. Besides, these religions conpired with their passions, were connected with their interests, and in the practice of them the vulgar were confirmed by the countenance, authority, and example of the great men. The religions of the better fort, properly speaking, were the schemes of philosophy which they adopted. The peculiar tenets of these schemes they espoused with the same strength of faith whereby Christians now-a-days embrace their several creeds and confessions; and they defended them with the same intemperate warmth. To bring the ignorant and the learned off from objects of this fort, was impossible by means merely human. For the ignorant would not attend to discourses which flatly contradicted their favourite notions, and robbed them of their pleasures; and as for the philosophers, they would detest a religion which overturned their several systems at once, discovered their ignorance, mortified their pride, and ruined their credit. Or if the philosophers were not so highly provoked with this religion, they would at least despise it, and laugh at the persons who taught it: as we find the Athenians did, Acts xvii. 18, 32. It is therefore certain, that the sermons of the Apostles, which made the Heathens renounce their religions, must have been accompanied with a divine power, before which all opposition vanished. Accordingly one of these men tells his converts, 2 Cor. x. 4, 5. "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds. Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."

Secondly, The conversion of the world being attended with a great and wonderful reformation of manners in the Heathens who obeyed the gospel, is likewise a demonstration that in spreading Christianity the Apostles were expressly assisted by God. For however difficult it might be to alter the religious sentiments of mankind, it was an easy matter, in comparison of the other task which the Apostles undertook and accomplished so successfully. To persuade the wicked to reform their lives, included in it many impossibilities under one. The manners of men in those days were beyond measure corrupt. The picture, which the Apostle has drawn of them in the first chapter of his epistle to the Romans however shocking, is but too just. The vices to which they were addicted were the effects of lusts and passions rendered unconquerable by long habits of indulgence. In the commision of these acts, they were authorised by the laws and disciplin
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Sir country. Some of the foulest vices were permitted them in the opinion of their philosophers. And in all they were strengthened by the power of example, especially the example of their s, by the allurements of pleasure, or by confidations of interest. To persuade great numbers of mankind in those circumstances to forswear their vices, that is, to act contrary to nature, to example, to interest, and to pleasure, what human force was sufficient? Or if human eloquence was sufficient to move them, whence, I pray, were the converts to derive the power of changing, or at least of subduing their passions, and erasing the whole and current of their nature? Whence, ower of becoming pious, just, charitable, chaste, temperate, humble, heavenly-minded, amid an infinity of powerful actions, and after having been unjust, uncharitable, intemperate, and worldly-minded, to a great degree? The Pagan converts elves looked on the sudden and surprising change of manners, ght on thousands of the most profligate, as something miraculous. Origen in particular compares it to the curing of the lame man, and to the cleansing of lepers. Accordingly, this in the Christian religion, whereby it produced effects so great, recommended it not a little to the virtuous and inquisitive g the Heathens, who examined its evidences. By the consent of all prudent men, it was ridiculous to the last degree, to that the Apostles, by means merely human, produced this great in the manners of such multitudes, formerly enslaved to their and fold under sin.

Thirdly, That which is most astonishing in this matter, and which clearly shews the conversion of the world to be the effect, not y human power or persuasion, far less the effect of the persuasian of a handful of people who were looked upon as the offscourings of earth, is this: by forswearing their native religions, and eming Christianity, the Heathens not only made shipwreck of all oods of this life, but exposed their persons to sufferings, to e, and to death. But of this enough has been said in the fore articles. I therefore infer, upon the jupest principles, that by instrumens as the Christian Apostles, and in such circumstances rection as the profession of the gospel brought men into inly ages, the world could not have been converted, if the facts ined in the gospels were false, and particularly if the Apostles ift preachers of Christianity wrought no miracles in confirm of their reports concerning their Matter.

The argument for the truth of the gospel-history, drawn from the conversion of the world to Christianity, is rendered com by this consideration. That our religion has subsisted through surfe of seventeen centuries in full vigour, notwithstanding its enemies

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enemies have strenuously attacked it both with arguments and arms. Its standing the test of inquiry, especially in its infancy, is a circumstantial which does great honour to the gospel. For the space of 300 years, when the Christian religion had no protection from the magistrate, all men were at liberty, nay were encouraged to argue against it with the greatest boldness. In later times, indeed, Infidels are not allowed this liberty in certain countries where Christianity prevails; but in others they may speak their minds freely, and have done it without the least difidence to our cause. If the gospel-history were a forgery, and the Christian religion a delusion, how comes it that, in the course of so many ages of free debate, neither of them has been detected? Other false religions have made progress in the world, by favour of ignorance, by the force of novelty, by the countenance of civil authority, by the power of the sword, in short, by any lucky concurrence of circumstances you please to name; but they have flourished only for a while. No sooner have the caues ceased by which they obtained, than they have vanished. The ravings of enthusiasm too have suddenly intoxicated multitudes. But by raging and spreading, this fire hath always spent itself. Men have returned to a solid way of thinking, without any pains taken to convince them, but by the names of those sects sublith at this day; whereas Christianity has continued for the space of seventeen hundred years, in spite of all opposition. Moreover, being at present the prevailing religion in many countries, it is as likely to continue now as ever. Wherefore the truth of the gospel-history is firmly supported, as by many buttresses, so by the stability and permanency of the Christian religion itself; and the rather that the founder of Christianity foretold expressly, that his religion and church would continue to the end of time. "Upon this rock will I build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." See B. III. C. V. § 2. We therefore his disciples, who with joy have seen in part the wonderful accomplishment of our Master’s prediction, are willing to risk the whole cause on this single event. And putting on such a footing, the longer that Christianity continues in the world, though men are the farther removed from the age in which its miracles were wrought, yet the stronger does the evidence of its divinity become.

Let us now join together the different particulars comprehended under the conversion of the world. — The Christian religion was introduced everywhere, in opposition to the sword of the magistrate, the craft of the priests, the pride of the philosophers, the passions and prejudices of the people. What do you think was capable of surmounting all these difficulties, other than the power of truth and of miracles united? — This religion was not propagated in the dark, nor delivered out by parcels, according to the usual method in which impostures are made to succeed; but was fully laid before men all at once, that they might judge of the whole under one view. Therefore mankind were not cheated into the belief of it,
received it upon proper examination and conviction.—The
narrative was first preached and first believed by multitudes in
the countries where Jesus exercised his ministry, and where every
individually had access to know whether the things told of him were
matters of fact. In this country, surely, his history never would
have been received, unless it was true, and known to be so by all.
Moreover, the history of Jesus was preached and believed, in
most noted countries and cities of the world, in the very age
when he is said to have lived. In that age certainly men, whose
judges were improved by the most perfect state of social life, were
determined to ascertain the evidence offered in support of the facts in
the history: especially as it is well known, that the age wherein
apostles went about preaching the history of Jesus, was remark-
ably for those improvements whereby the human faculties are strength-
ed; remarkable likewise for the communication which subsisted be-
neath all countries; so that wise men could not only judge of such
ordinary things as happened, but could impart to one another
the sense of those matters. In so enlightened an age, if the things
of the Lord Jesus had been false, they would instantly have been
seen to be so. And the confusion of them would quickly
have spread from one country to another, to the utter confusion of the
men who endeavoured to propagate the belief of them.—It is true,
generality of the first converts were men in the middle and lower
circles of life. But even therefore, in an age of such knowledge and
reasonable, were sufficiently secured against false pretensions of any
kind. Or if you suppose their minds not sufficiently tainted with
falsehood, you should consider, that in proportion to their ignorance
attachment to their first religious notions would be strong;
that to bring persons of this character and rank to change their
views, no arguments would be sufficient but evident miracles.
erefore this class of men being converted in such numbers, and so,
is an absolute demonstration that many and great miracles
were every where wrought by the first preachers of the gospel.—But
wanted not also among the first converts to Christianity, even
in the earliest age, a number of men remarkable for their station,
genius, education, and fortune, who were well qualified to
propagate our religion. The conversion of such persons adds great
strength to the triumphs of the gospel. Its evidences approved them-
ns, not only to the multitude, but to men of the most refined sense
of the greatest abilities.—However, that which makes the fore-
ground circumstances of more weighty consideration is, that the pro-
on of Christianity led all without exception to renounce the
id, and exposed them to the most terrible sufferings; sufferings,
are the mention of which is shocking to human
no does not see that such numbers of men, of
different characters have been persuaded, of
these circumstances and at that time, to embrace the Christian re-
less they had had the clearest evidence...
truth of the gospel-history? namely, the agreeing attestations of a sufficient number of eye-witnesses, qualified to judge and report the matters which they testified, and who at the same time verified the attestations, by performing in the presence of the world miracles equal to, if not greater than those they ascribed to their master, particularly by communicating to those who received their testimony concerning him, the power of working the like miracles. This condition is strengthened by the consideration of the character of the persons who persuaded mankind to change their belief. They were a handful of the meanest of the people, from a nation despised on account of the ill-will which they bare towards the rest of mankind. Moreover, in all countries where they preached, they were absolute strangers, of whose veracity no one had any knowledge. (See the last paragraph of the following section). Yet these men, in a very short space, prevailed with thousands everywhere to change their belief, and to reform their lives, however vicious they had been formerly. Does not every one see, that to make themselves understood in all countries, these strangers must have been endowed by God with the gift of tongues; that, to procure themselves credit, they must have wrought many evident miracles; and that, to make their sermons have the desired effect in reforming mankind, they must have been accompanied with the power and grace of God?—Lastly, the Christian religion, thus introduced by the power of God and of truth, hath been supported in the world by the same powers, through a course of many ages, amidst the shocks of arms and a thousand other accidents sufficient to have destroyed it, if the divine protection had been wanting. Moreover, it will be continued in the world to the end of time; nay, and will prevail universally in spite of all opposition, to the utter destruction of idol-worship and false religion of every kind. From all which, the conclusion is manifest and certain; that such a great and lasting change in the opinions and practices of so many nations, as has been accomplished by the preaching of a few of the lowest of the people from Judea, could never have been effected, especially under persecution, unless the Gospel which they preached had been verified to the conviction of all by great evident and numerous miracles,

S E C T. IV.
Of the arguments by which our adversaries endeavour to elude the force of the proof resulting from the conversion of the world to Christianity.

I. It is pretended, that neither the truth of the gospel-history in general, nor of the apostles miracles in particular, is established by the conversion of the world to Christianity; because this may have been effected, merely by the reasonableness of the Christian doctrines and precepts, approving themselves so fully to the judgement and consciences of all men, that they could not fail to be received everywhere.

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All the actions recorded in the Gospel are probable.

1. To this I answer, that though the Christian religion be beyond comparison the best system of theology and morality that ever was proposed to the world, it cannot be refused that many of its doctrines and precepts are such as to the Heathens would appear mere foolishness. Of the doctrines the following may be mentioned as examples. The incarnation of the Son of God: his miraculous conception: his being constituted judge of the quick and the dead: and his having a right to the same honour with the Father: all which the Gentiles would look upon as downright absurdities, considering the meaner of his condition, the perfections which he underwent, and the ignominy of his death. And that they actually considered them as absurdities, is evident from Celsus's books, the greatest part of which was taken up in ridiculing the Christians, for pretending that the author of their religion is God, and came down from heaven. Moreover, to the philosophers nothing could appear more ridiculous than the doctrine of salvation through a crucified Saviour, which yet the apostles preached with such earnestness and diligence, that it may be said to have been their principal topic everywhere. Nor must the resurrection of the body be omitted in mentioning the doctrines of Christianity, which to human wisdom would appear liable to manifold objections. Even the precepts of the gospel were not altogether free from exception in the eyes of men devoted to pleasure, as the Gentiles generally were. In this number we may reckon the precepts concerning self-denial, humility, forgiveness of injuries, abstinence from evil desires, and the like, so often and so earnestly inculcated in the gospels. Moreover, the many prohibitions of fornication and drunkenness, given by the Apostles in their sermons and epistles, would appear to the Heathens unreasonable severities; and the rather, that, instead of being reckoned vices, both the one and the other was authorized by the laws and customs of many states, both made part of the worship of their gods, and both were patronized by the opinions and practices of the philosophers.

It is evident, therefore, that the doctrines and precepts just now mentioned, instead of conciliating favour

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* Thus Porphyry tells of Socrates, Ap. Cyrill. contr. Julian. lib. VI. p. 186. "That he was moderate in venereal matters, yet without injury to any one. For his mother made use of his wife, or of common whores." As to what Lactantius often affirms of Socrates in his Dialogues, that he was addicted to the vice common among the Greeks, the love of boys, I cannot tell whether it is to be believed.—What opinion Cicero and the rest had of fornication, may be learned from the following passage of his oration, Pro M. Caio, cap. xvi. "Si quis eit qui etiam meritissimi amoribus interdictum juventutis putet e ille qui..." dem valore severius, negare non possim; sed absurredi non modo ab hujus seculi licentia, verum etiam a majorum consuetudine, atque concellibus. Quando enim hoc non factum est? Quando reprehensum? Quando non permittemus? Quando denique invi, ut, quod licet, non licet?" On this head let us hear the philosophers also. Epicteti. Enchir. c. 47. Nec agrestem, nec ordure, nec quacumque in tabernis aut in ecclesiis, aut apud portas. Libid. lib. I, cap. 79, 80, 81. quarum etiam ratio plura. Valer. Maxim. lib. II. cap. 6. "Sic enim in tamen Veneris, in quod se matronae cons.-ferebant: atque inde procedentes ad quaedam dotes, corporis injuria, contrahebant; hoc neffo animorum tum in honore vinculo, conjungo junctu;" --Julin. lib. XXII. c. 3. "Leucippeo, non consensit, ut die fehio Veneris virginitas suas proficerent?"
your to the Christian religion, must, in the beginning at least, have greatly alienated the minds of the Gentiles from it.

2. Let it be granted, for argument's sake, that every doctrine and precept of the gospel was such as at first sight would recommend it to mankind; it will not follow that, by the force of this circumstance alone, Christianity has made its way in the world. To begin with the Jews, they believed the divinity of their religion. They believed this upon the credit of miracles. To bring them off from a religion thus confirmed, to another which abrogated its institutions, and which quite unhinged the constitution of their state, would the mere reasonableness of doctrines and precepts alone suffice, without any other proof? No. Both religions were on the same footing in this respect; and therefore the argument could not so much as be offered to the Jews. Or, though the Christian religion had been greatly superior to the Jewish in its doctrines and precepts, it is well known that the stubbornness of the Jews was not to be bended by such an argument. Nothing but signs and wonders would do with them, as one of the apostles, who had often preached to them, expressly declares, 1 Cor. i. 22. It is plain, therefore, that if our Lord had not proved his mission by inconceivable miracles, and if the apostles had not proved the truth of their testimony concerning his miracles, by working miracles themselves, and by communicating to their converts the power of miracles, they never would have proselyted so much as one Jew to the Christian religion.—And as for the Gentiles, it is no less certain, that the reasonableness of the doctrines and precepts of the gospel, supposing this to have been ever so little subject to doubt, would not alone have brought about a general conversion of the Heathens. Some few thinking men among them, who had leisure to consider the matter, might perhaps have embraced our faith on account of its excellency. But the bulk of the people, who in all countries and at all times are incapable of abstract reasoning, would still have remained attached to their ancient errors. Of this we have an unquestionable proof in the labours of the philosophers, who, if just argumentation could have reformed the opinions and practices of mankind, would have been sufficient instructors to the world in several essential points. Nevertheless it is certain, that notwithstanding they possessed the arts of reasoning and eloquence in the greatest perfection, and in their writings professed many beautiful notions concerning the Supreme Being, and the worship that is due to him; yet none of them ever brought over any one nation or city, far less did they bring over many nations, to a compliance with their institutions. Their doctrines and precepts were relished only by a few. The bulk of the people, and even some whole sects, continued in Polytheism and Idolatry. The worship of the gods consisted often of the most abominable impurities. Human sacrifices were not uncommon. Many of the temples were places of avowed prostitution. (See the note, p. 247.) Fornication and drunkenness were looked upon as innocent. In short, the laws and discipline of all countries were exceedingly
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exceedingly corrupt, and the practice of mankind every where scan-
dulous beyond belief.—Nor was this the state of barbarous countries
only. Even Greece itself was in the same condition, although the
arts and sciences flourished there, and the minds of men were greatly
improved by culture. So much do men's passions and prejudices get
the better of their reason. Having this example before our eyes, to
pretend that the excellency of the Christian doctrines and precepts was
sufficient to destroy all false religions, and to convert the world, with-
out the aid of miracles, is absurd. In short, he must be ignorant of
mankind, who can imagine that the mere reasonableness of any reli-
gion, or the credible testimony of other men concerning the facts on
which it is founded, will prostrate people to the belief thereof; espe-
cially if it is diametrically opposite to their strongest passions and pre-
judices, and altogether inconsistent with their interests. I must there-
fore repeat it, that the speedy conversion of the world to Christianity,
is the strongest proof imaginable of the truth of the gospel-histories;
and particularly of the reality of the miracles, therein said to have
been performed by Jesus and his apostles, in confirmation of their
mission from God.

II. Constrained by the evidence of the above arguments, some of
our adversaries are so candid as to acknowledge, that the prevalence
of the Christian religion was certainly at the first owing to an opini-
on of the miracles performed by its preachers. In the mean time,
they pretend, that the general persuasion which prevailed concerning
the Christian miracles, arose, not from their reality, but from the
passion for the marvellous, by which at all times the vulgar every
where have been distinguished. Men, say they, always reject things
credible in an ordinary degree: but they readily enough admit things
utterly absurd, the rather upon account of that very circumstance
which ought to destroy their authority. For the passion for the
marvellous excited by miracles strongly inclines them to believe
and relate things, from which so agreeable an emotion is derived.
But to this the answer is easy: make the pleasure which men have
in hearing and relating marvellous stories as great as you please, still
you ought to remember, that the belief of the Christian religion,
about which the dispute is, was not a matter of mere speculation.
It was followed with the most important consequences. It led men
to renounce the religion in which they had been educated. It made
them act contrary to their strongest prejudices. It deprived them of
all the satisfactions of life. It exposed them to the most terrible
sufferings. How ridiculous, therefore, must it be for any one to
affirm, that in the early ages the miraculous story of an obscure
person, the native of a far distant country, told by the lowest class of
a vagabond nation, was greedily swallowed by great numbers of
sensible people of all ranks in every country, without the least proof,
and for no reason whatever, but the pleasure which accompanies the
belief and relation of marvellous stories. As if, for the sake of that,
men would renounce the religion of their forefathers, throw off
opinions riveted in their minds by education, cross their strongest
inclinations.
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inclinations, set themselves at variance with their own relations, deliberately throw away their possessions, go calmly to torture, and willingly submit to the most painful and ignominious deaths. I appeal to every rational and unprejudiced man, if this be not marvellous indeed? For it supposes, that, when the gospel was first preached, the essential principles of human nature, and the invariable rules of human conduct, were entirely superseded in all those who anciently gave credit to the gospel.

If, notwithstanding all we have said, it is still pretended that the Heathens somehow or other may have been converted, without having had proper evidences of the truth of the gospel-history laid before them, I would have our adversaries to consider the case as it actually stood. The apostles, who preached the Christian religion, were most despicable in the eyes of all the Gentiles, by reason both of their country and their religion; they were strangers of the lowest class of mankind, whose honesty they could have no assurance of; their cloaths were often old and ragged, for the great apostle of the Gentiles mentions his own nakednees among his sufferings, 1 Cor. iv. 11. They told stories of miracles done at a great distance, which would appear to every one utterly incredible; and they required the world to yield divine honours to a man, who by their own confession was rejected by their countrymen, and crucified as a deceiver of the people. In such circumstances, is it to be supposed that any person in his right wits would give them credit upon their own simple report; especially as they took no pains to conceal the great and immediate dangers which attended the belief of these things? No: mankind could never have been engaged to give the least heed to their strange story, unless they had seen them work evident miracles, such as the Christian records assure us they did perform. Without this kind of proof, it would have been a greater miracle than any that is ascribed to the apostles, if mankind in every country had given them credit in an affair so extraordinary. Here therefore the firsts of the matter is justly placed by the friends of Christianity. And it is with the highest reason they believe the proof of miracles to have been given every where, in support of the gospel-history, by the first preachers thereof; because without this proof, together with the concurring influence of the grace of God upon the minds of the Gentiles, the latter could never have been prevailed upon in such numbers to embrace the gospel under persecution. This all must acknowledge without hesitation, who know any thing of the influence which men's lufts, passions, prejudices, and interests, have over their wills; and how great a strength of conviction is requisite to overcome the united force of this influence joined in one and the same person; as was the case with all in the first ages who embraced the gospel.

S E C T. V.
T H E belief of the gospel history, which the men of genius and education both among the Jews and Gentiles were impressed with, who in the first ages embraced Christianity, is an argument for the truth of the gospel history so illustrious, that it well deserves a separate consideration. These men embraced Christianity after having duly examined its evidences. Their character and education qualified them to judge of an affair of this sort. Their conversion was attended with no worldly advantage whatever, but with all manner of disadvantages. It is therefore beyond dispute, that they were fully convinced of the reality of those facts, for the belief of which they made shipwreck of life and its joys. Moreover, their character for wisdom and learning leaves no room to doubt that they examined the proofs of the facts they received with that accuracy which the importance of their consequences demanded, and that they yielded not until constrained by the dint of irrefutable evidence.

I. Among the learned Jews converted to Christianity in the first age, “the great company of the priests who became obedient to the faith,” Acts vi. 7, may justly be mentioned. But the instance which merits most attention, is the conversion of Saul, afterwards called Paul. This person, in the Christian record, Acts xxvi. is said to have given an account of himself and of his conversion, to King Agrippa, and to Queen Berenice, in the hearing of Portius Festus the Roman governor of Judea, of his chief captains, of the principal men of the city of Caesarea, of the Jews who had come from Jerusalem to accuse him, and of a great concourse of people assembled, as is usual, to witness such transactions. The history of the Acts, which narrates this solemn public transaction, came abroad at the time when, and in the country where, it is said to have happened. We must allow, therefore, that this transaction is no fiction of the historian. Saul actually made the defence which is ascribed to him. And he made it in the presence of Agrippa, Festus, and the chief. This point fixed, we are sure that the account which Saul gave of himself in the hearing of this great assembly is agreeable to truth; because, if any particular mentioned by him before persons of the first rank, and others from all parts of Judea, had been false, he might easily have been detected. Besides, his accusers were present, among whom perhaps were some of his former associates, who, being enraged at his apostacy, appeared now as his prosecutors. These, being well acquainted with his history, must have immediately contradicted and confuted him, to the utter ruin of his cause, if he had in the least departed from truth in the account which he gave of himself. To conclude, Saul on this occasion openly affirmed, that his character and conduct from his youth up were known to most of the principal
principal people in Jerusalem, who could attest the truth of what he said, more especially concerning his persecuting the disciples of Jesus, a particular relation of which he now gave in the hearing of the whole assembly, Acts xxvi. 4. "My manner of life from my youth, which was at the first among mine own nation at Jerusalem, know all the Jews. 5. Which knew me from the beginning, (if they would testify) that after the most straitest sect of our religion, I lived a Pharisee. ... 9. I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. 10. Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them. 11. And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities." See likewise chap. xxii. 5. where on the stairs of the castle Antonia, in the hearing of the multitude, he openly appealed, for the truth of his having persecuted the Christians, to the high priest and all the estate of the elders from whom he received his commission.—It is certain, therefore, that in his younger years Saul was a violent persecutor of the Christians; that he punished them oft in every synagogue; and that his zeal carried him so far as to make him persecute them even in strange cities. And as it is certain that Saul in his younger years was a furious persecutor of the Christians, it is equally certain that afterwards he became a zealous preacher of the faith which he once destroyed. It was for the preaching of this faith, that he was now in chains, had suffered a long imprisonment, and was to be judged by Caesar at Rome. An alteration of conduct so extraordinary, in a person of Saul's sense and learning, can be accounted for only by one of three suppositions. Either, first, He was hurried into it by some unaccountable enthusiasm wherewithal he was seized. Or, 2. Knowing the whole to be a fraud, he became a preacher of Christianity for the sake of some advantage which he proposed to himself from that way; so that his conversion was a downright cheat. Or, 3. We must receive the account which he himself gave of his apostleship. His enmity against Christianity and its disciples was disarmed by Jesus appearing to him from heaven, and giving him a commission to preach the gospel. Now of these suppositions in their order, And, 1. We are sure that Saul's conversion was not the effect of enthusiasm. For, first of all, the pretended visions, revelations, and divine communications wherein enthusiasts deal, are all known to be the effects of their own imagination heated with intense meditation on subjects which they have perverted themselves into the belief of, without any reason at all. Now so far was this from being the case with Saul, in what happened to him on the road to Damascus, that, instead of having persuaded himself into the belief
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The resurrection of Jesus, and hearing his imagination with inward meditation thereon, he looked upon it as a downright cheat; took Jesus himself for a deceiver; he hated the Christians as devil enthusiasts, or as bold impostors, and therefore he persecuted them to the death. To suppose that one in this temper was converted by the power of enthusiasm, which produced in his impered brain a vision of one whose resurrection he denied, is to radicct the whole current of human experience. In the second place, it ought to be remembered, that Saul was not the only person who saw this vision. There were others in the company equally disposed to the Christian cause with himself, and who therefore were disposed to form any visionary scene in favour thereof, whether it be a vision of the sun at noon-day, Acts ix. 3, and who were so filled with the vision, that they stood speechless, hearing a voice, though not the words spoken, Acts xxii. 9. If this vision proceeded from Saul's enthusiasm, how came the imaginations of the whole company to be seized with precisely the same phrensy? Or how, if they be seized with it at the same instant? That there was the least difference, either in the matter or the time of their visions, is truly wonderful. In the third place, if we believe that the appearance of Jesus to Saul on the road to Damascus was the pure effect of his own enthusiasm, we must affirm that the commission which he received from Christ at that time, with all its consequences, was in like manner the effect of enthusiasm; particularly, the miracles by which he converted the Gentiles, existed not but in his own imagination; that all the converts every one, who believed in Jesus, because they thought they saw his miracle work miracles, were enthusiasts; that the power of working miracles and speaking with tongues, which the converted Gentiles received from this apostle, were mere fallacies; that the sicks whom they healed by virtue of this power, the lame whose members they restored, and the persons out of whom they cast devils, deluded into the belief of cures, while no cure was wrought. We must affirm, that the doctrine and precepts which he taught were the pure effects of his own enthusiasm, notwithstanding they are diametrically opposite to all his former principles and practices of a proud self-righteous Pharisee. In short, if we fancy Saul was enthusiastic in his conversion, we must believe that every thing he did, said, or did, as an apostle of Jesus, was the effect of distraction; that all who gave the least heed to him were infected with the madness; and that whole nations to whom he preached, and who believed that he wrought miracles, were under the power of the self-delusion; suppositions sufficiently extravagant to demonstrate their own absurdity. Lastly, I might here shew that all the arguments, by which the other apostles are cleared from the charge of enthusiasm, conspire with double force to prove that Saul was no enthusiast. But I shall only observe in general, that if, in the opinion of
of Lord Shaftesbury and the Deists, Socrates stands vindicated from the charge of enthusiasm by "his penetration, his wonderful good sense and extent of judgment, the command he had of his thoughts and sentiments, the substantial truths, the noble instructions he proposed to mankind, his address and infusation, his constant cheerfulness of mind, the universal rectitude of his manners." Saul is much more effectually cleared from the same charge by these qualities. For the Christian apostle far excelled the philosophical patriarch in them all; as every judicious person must acknowledge, who compares the writings and conduct of Saul with the laboured accounts given of Socrates by his disciples, who have studied to enrich their matter, by adding to his doctrines and discoveries whatever the fund of their own imagination and eloquence was capable of supplying.

2. You must acknowledge that Saul's conversion was not a matter of imposture, if you consider that in taking up the office of an apostle no advantage was to be reaped by him, unless you reckon as gain that certain lots of all worldly goods, and those heavy perfections to which the apostles, as the ringleaders of the sect of the Nazarenes, were especially exposed. Besides, in Saul's case the evils attending the change of his sentiments and conduct were particularly bitter. For he could not but foresee, that by his former associates he would be detected as an apostate; and that their rage would prompt them by all means to compass the discovery and punishment of his imposture. Nor is this all: there are particular circumstances attending Saul's conversion, which clearly prove his integrity, and which for that reason must not be overlooked. Such as,—First, if he had acted the impostor when he took the resolution of becoming a Christian preacher, he would have conferred with the chiefs in the confederacy before he publicly assumed that character, in order to learn from them the things he was to preach, left his story and theirs had been inconsistent. Or, if he saw it necessary to assume the character of an apostle before he converted with the others, common prudence would have directed him to feign his conversion as happening in Jerusalem, that he might have the authors of the fraud at hand to confer with privately. Or, if he was so foolish as to be converted in a distant country, and immediately to publish the story of his conversion, necessity must have obliged him to go forthwith to Jerusalem, where alone he could learn the secrets of the imposture he was preparing himself to propagate. Yet none of these courses did this man take. For, notwithstanding his knowledge of Christiannity could be no other than superficial, his conversion, according to his own account of it, happened near to Damascus, at the distance of many miles from Jerusalem, and where all the Christians, knowing the errand on which he was come, shunned him with the utmost care. Moreover, after his conversion he conferred neither with one nor other, as he himself tells the Galatians, chap. i. 16. "Immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood:"

17. Neither went I up to Jerusalem, to them that were apostles before.
before me; but I went unto Arabia, and returned again to Damascus. At his return to Damascus, he immediately commenced for t. 20. Straightway he preached Christ in the synagogue, that he is the Son of God; to the astonishment of all who heard him, ut especially of those who knew on what errand he had come to Damascus. But Saul increased the more in strength, and con founded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is the very Christ. And the zeal wherewith he acted in his new character so enraged the Jews, that they would have killed him, if he had not escaped out of the city. The fact is, Saul did not go to Jerusalem till three years after his conversion, Gal. i. 18. And even then he abode only fifteen days, and conversed with none of the apostles, save Peter and James. At this visit he received no addition to his knowledge in the Christian scheme from the two apostles, notwithstanding they were pillars. He had farther insight into the design of the gospel than they. His commission taught him that repentance and remission of sins were to be preached to the Gentiles. He entertained the design of doing it himself, but spake nothing of his design to the two apostles, perceiving that they had no idea of the reception of the Gentiles into the church. He went away, therefore, and spent fourteen years in distant countries, converting great numbers. Then he returned to Jerusalem, and communicated to the apostles privately the gospel which he preached; and, in the conference which ensued on this subject, he found that even those who seemed chiefs added nothing to his knowledge, Gal. ii. 6. All these things plainly shew, that in the matter of his conversion Saul did not act the cheat. He received instruction from no man; yet his gospel was the same with that taught by all the apostles, except in the article relating to the Gentiles, which the rest acceded to afterwards. Such a perfect agreement could not have happened, unless Saul had derived his knowledge of Christianness from revelation. secondly, if Saul's conversion had been the effect of imposture, the manner in which he has told it, expos'd him to an easy confutation. He was on the road to Damascus, accompanied by persons who had the same intention with himself of persecuting the Christians, and who perhaps were appointed his assistants in the commission which he had received from the chief priests. As he and they drew near to Damascus, Jesus appeared to him from heaven, and appointed him one of his apostles, Acts xxvi. 12. Whereupon as I went to Damascus, with authority and commission from the chief priests; 13. At mid-day, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me, and them which journeyed with me. 14. And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. 15. And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest. 16. But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee
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... theee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; 17. Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles unto whom now I send thee." His companions, he tells us; saw the light, and heard the voice which spake to him. But they saw no man, Acts ix. 7. probably because they immediately fell with their faces to the ground. Moreover, by this light Saul was struck blind, and his companions led him by the hand into Damascus. All this happened but seventeen years before he made his defence at Cæarea. His companions, therefore, very probably were alive; as were the chief priests likewise, from whom he said he had received the commission. If the matter was a forgery, how could it, in the circumstances mentioned, escape being detected? Especially as he was now on a trial for his life, the ground of which was his attachment to Christiannity. Thus, according to the account which Saul himself gave of his conversion, it comprehended facts and circumstances incompatible with imposture. Therefore it is unreasonable to entertain any suspicion, that in this matter he acted the deceiver.

3. Saul being neither an enthusiast nor an impostor, it follows that his conversion was produced by the miraculous appearing of Jesus to him, not far from Damascus, as he himself affirmed. For if you think any other cause sufficient to produce this effect, such as the confederation of the miracles of Jesus, and the application which the apostles made of the prophecies of the Old Testament to him, you ought to consider what Saul's general character was, together with the particular temper of mind he was in at the time of his conversion. "After the most straitest sect of their religion he lived as a Pharisee." By education therefore he was zealous of the law. Moreover, being of a warm temper, his zeal was not confined within ordinary bounds. Because the Chriftians were suppos'd to make void the institutions of Moses, he shewed his zeal by perfected them to death. How came this fury of passion to be overcome, and to be turned into burning zeal for the cause against which it had exerted itself so keenly? How came it to be thus changed in an instant? But especially, how came it to be changed at the time it was in its greatest height; having pulled Saul to undertake so long a journey as from Jerufalem to Damascus, that he might punish the Chriftians? This strange and sudden alteration of passions, principles, and conduct, could not be produced by the influence of the miracles of Jesus and his apostles; nor by any effect which the confederation of the prophecies of the Old Testament can be suppos'd to have had upon him. With these Saul was acquainted from the beginning. If they had been to operate his conversion, it must have happened long before this. His passions and prejudices were such, that he was not capable of weighing impartially the miracles and prophecies by which our Lord's pretensions were supported, nor even of attending to them. Neither was he reconciled to the Chriftians and their cause, by any admiration which he entertained.
of the holiness and innocence of their lives. His zeal for the Jewish religion made him regard the Christians, who taught "that Jesus of Nazareth would destroy the temple, and change the customs which Moses delivered" (Acts vi. 14.), as blasphemers against the temple and the law, and filled him with enmity towards them.

4. It is therefore a matter subject to no doubt, that Saul the persecutor of the Christians was converted by the appearing of Jesus to him as he went to Damasæus. I proceed now to observe, that his being converted in this manner is a strong confirmation of the truth of the Gospel-history. Saul was educated in Jerusalem, under the most noted masters. While Jesus exercised his minisiry, he attended the school of Gamaliel. Christ's miracles and pretensions making a great noise, Saul, though young, had zeal sufficient to make him range himself on the side of the chief priests and doctors, who apprehended Jesus and put him to death. Withal, no sooner was it preached that Jesus of Nazareth was risen from the dead, than Saul's zeal prompted him to become one of the most violent persecutors of the witnesses of his resurrection. To overthrow the pretensions of these men, the most direct and obvious method was to detect the falsehood of the reports which they published concerning the miracles and other transactions of their master's life, but especially concerning his resurrection from the dead. The propriety and efficacy of this method of confutation, a person of Saul's good sense must have clearly seen. Wherefore, if the matters which the Apostles told concerning their matter were not to universally known as to render all inquiry into them needless, we may be sure the first thing this champion for Judaism did, was to search with the greatest diligence and care into the truth of them. For an inquiry of this sort, Saul was qualified beyond many. His profession was that of literature. He studied under the most renowned masters. He profited above his equals. He was therefore not only a man of learning, but of genius. His zeal in behalf of the law was uncommon. His industry was equal to his zeal. The journey which he took to Damascus, to perpende the Christians, shews what pains he took in this affair. He lived in the country where Jesus exercised his minisiry. His principal residence was in Jerusalem, the center of intelligence for Judea. Moreover, the sermons and miracles of Jesus, which he set himself to examine, were the transactions of his own time. These things considered, it can neither be doubted that Saul inquired into the truth of the reports which passed concerning the Lord Jesus, nor that he was well qualified for a business of this nature. What the issue of the pains which he took was, his conversion demonstrates: for if the history of Jesus, as the fame was publicly preached by the Apostles, had been condemned by the general sense of the Jewish nation at that time; or if, upon the inquiry which Saul and others of his party made into the particular miracles of Jesus, these were found to be false in fact; it is as certain as any mathematical demonstration, that no appearance or vision from heaven could prove them to be true, or make any sensible person who knew their falsehood alter.
his conduct either with relation to the facts themselves, or to the people who reported them. In a case of this nature, no man of common understanding would change his conduct, till he changed his opinion; that is, till he believed those things to be true, which by the clearest evidence of reason and experience he knew to be false. But, I pray, what vision was able to produce a belief of this sort, in one not absolutely mad? It is therefore certain, that unless Saul had previously been convinced of the truth of the things told concerning Jesus, the vision on the road to Damascus, instead of making him commence believer and preacher, would not have had so much influence with him as to make him lay aside, even for a moment, his design of persecuting the Christians. From these things, the conclusion is both obvious and certain; namely, that Saul’s conversion necessarily presupposes his knowledge and conviction of the particulars reported by the Apostles concerning their Master. The truth is, his age and his abode in Jerusalem gave him opportunity to know the whole matter. He may have heard Jesus preach in Jerusalem and its neighbourhood, during the festivals. He may have been one of those who went to see Lazarus after his resurrection. He may even have accompanied the Scribes and Pharisees, who often went from Jerusalem to Galilee, to watch Jesus. For his exceeding zeal would naturally lead him to mix in affairs of this sort. Or, though he was neither present at any of our Lord’s miracles, nor converted with the subjects of them, it was not possible for him to shut his ear against the universal reports and affirmations of all mankind, who, whether they believed in Jesus of Nazareth or not, were constrained to agree in this, that he did many great and evident miracles. Accordingly Paul, in the defence which he made for himself before king Agrippa and all the Jews at Caesarea, having mentioned Christ’s resurrection, affirms that it was a matter which nobody pretended to doubt of, and appeals to the king himself, as knowing the truth of it, Acts xxvi. 26. “For the king knoweth of these things, before whom I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him; for this thing was not done in a corner.” However, though Saul before his conversion was fully convinced of the truth of Christ’s miracles, he eluded the force of them, as the other learned Jews of his party did, by ascribing them to Beelzebub. None of Christ’s enemies denied his miracles, neither did they pervert his principles for believing and preaching them. The single point upon which they founded their persecution of the Apostles of Jesus, was their preaching publicly that Jesus of Nazareth, whom the rulers had crucified, was risen from the dead, and from his resurrection inferring that he was the Son of God. Now these facts were demonstrated to Saul by Christ’s personal appearance to him; and indeed they were the only points that could be proved to him by such a miracle. If Saul never saw Jesus before, his zeal certainly would lead him to be present at his trial and punishment. He may therefore have been so well acquainted with his form and voice, as to know him when he named himself. For that he saw Jesus distinctly, is certain from his own testimony,
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and from the effect which the sight had upon him. It struck him blind; a misfortune which his companions escaped, because, though they saw the light which surrounded Jesus, and heard his voice, they did not continue looking till they saw his person. Nay, though Saul had not been so well acquainted with Jesus as to know his voice and form, he could be in no doubt of the truth of his appearing, after the miraculous recovery that was granted him from his blindness, and after he experienced that along with the commission to preach to the Gentiles, his mind was filled all at once with the knowledge of the Gospel scheme, that the power of miracles was bestowed upon him, and that the gift of tongues was infused into him. Accordingly, being fully convinced, he went forth straightway, and boldly preached the facts, of which he had such certain assurance; namely, that Jesus was risen from the dead, and that by his resurrection he was declared to be the Son of God with power, Acts ix. 20, 22.

Thus Saul's confirmation remains an illustrious confirmation of the truth of all the facts in the Gospel-history. Because, if any of the things told concerning the Lord Jesus had been false, in the circumstances wherein Saul was placed, with the abilities which he possessed, and by favour of the opportunities for discovery which he enjoyed, he must have come to the certain knowledge that they were so. And having arrived at this conclusion, no miraculous appearance whatever could have had any influence to prove them true, or to make him believe them. In one word, Saul's conversion by the appearing of Jesus to him presupposes his knowledge and conviction of the truth of our Lord's history. But if Saul, while he was an enemy of Christ, and a persecutor of his disciples, acknowledged the truth of his miracles, we may rest assured that they were real matters of fact. Because nothing but their evident reality could have forced the belief of so violent an enemy.—I shall finish my reflections on this subject with observing, that the argument for the truth of the Gospel-history, drawn from Saul's conversion, is equally conclusive on the supposition that he was converted by an enthusiastic dream or vision; because such a vision could have had no influence to make him change his conduct, except he previously knew and acknowledged the truth of the things which concerned Jesus. In short, the conversion of this Apostle, viewed in any light you please, is a shining monument of the truth of the Gospel-history.

II. Among those learned Gentiles whose conversion from Heathenism adds lustre to the evidences of the Gospel-history, the following respectable names are devoutly mentioned. Quadratus, Aristides, Justin Martyr, Tatian, Irenæus, Athenagoras, all Greek philosophers of note, who, after their conversion, wrote in defence of Christianity, and suffered for their belief of it. Now common sense dictates, that pervers of their learning and prudence would not, along with their religion, have renounced all the views of ambition by which they were animated, and have subjected them-
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selves to sufferings innumerable, unless they had believed the Gospel-history, whereon the new religion embraced by them was founded. But the Gospel-history men of this character would not have believed, unless they had had sufficient means of examining the truth thereof, and unless upon examination they had found the evidence accompanying it undoubted.

With respect to the means which the learned Heathens enjoyed of examining the truth of the Gospel-history, they must be acknowledged more than sufficient. Besides the twelve Apostles, there were many eye-witnesses of our Lord's miracles and resurrection, who made it the only business of their life to go up and down the world preaching his history. Those witnesses were so numerous, and used such diligence in spreading the Gospel, that the learned Gentiles in all countries had opportunity to hear, converse with, and examine them. The effect which their preaching had in turning the multitude from the established worship, could not fail to excite the curiosity of the better sort. Men of taste would give them a patient hearing, on account of their numbers. The perfect and constant agreement observable in the reports of these witnesses, however numerous they were, or at whatever distance of time or place they told their story, rendered the things which they told highly probable. But the circumstance which above all others procured them credit was, that in every country they openly performed many and great miracles, to the conviction of all beholders. Nay, they communicated to the Gentiles who believed, the power of working miracles, and of speaking with tongues. Proofs of this kind, every capable judge must be sensible, were sufficient foundations for the most scrupulous to build their faith upon; and proofs of this kind every where abounded. For who could doubt that Jesus of Nazareth healed the sick and raised the dead, when they saw so many of his disciples do the very same things? Or rather, who could doubt of the truth of the miracles, whether of the Master or of the disciples, when they themselves received from these men the power of miracles? Wherefore, the learned Heathens, who were contemporary with the Apostles, had each in his own country the fullest and clearest evidence laid before him of the truth of the Gospel-history, and believed it upon the surest foundation.—In the age likewise which followed that of the Apostles, the learned Heathens had sufficient means of informing themselves of the truth of the Gospel-history. For, in all places, those who believed the reports of the eye-witnesses were formed into churches, over which the most knowing, pious, and prudent, were appointed to preside as bishops, whose office it was faithfully to teach, both in public and private, the things which they had heard from the mouth of the Apostles concerning the Lord. These reports were confirmed by the other members of the church, who had also heard the Apostles preach, and seen them work miracles. And to their testimony, the bishops and first disciples procured ready faith from all, by exercising before all the gifts of the spirit, which they had received from the Apostles. They wrought
and spake with tongues, and by so doing put it beyond even the possibility of doubt, that the Apostles and other eye-witnesses of Christ’s ministry performed miracles in confirmation of their reports concerning his life, death, and resurrection. Farther, the successors of the apostolical converts in the third generation, related the miracles which they saw these converts perform. And, though they wrought no miracles themselves in support of their testimony, they rendered it indubitable by laying down their life in the cause. The bishops of many churches in this manner sealed the truth of the Gospel-histroy with their blood; for in all the persecutions they generally were the first who fell. They were not, however, the only witnesses, who thus attested the miracles of the Apostles and their immediate disciples. Thousands, and ten thousands of the people, who had beheld these miracles, suffered death rather than renounce their belief of Christli-animity, and by so doing, showed in the most convincing manner the truth of the Apostles miracles, and of the miracles of their immediate disciples, whereby they had been converted. In this age likewise, the learned Heathens might see and converse with One, upon whom our Lord himself had performed miracles of healing. For that some such survived the Apostles, and were seen by persons who lived in the second century, we learn from Quadratus in the only passage of his apology now remaining, and which the reader will find in the note below.  

"The persons in the fourth succession, who were present at the execution of the witnesses last mentioned," had in their sufferings the fullest evidence which human testimony could afford, for believing the truth of the miracles of the Apostles and their disciples. Accordingly, in their turn, they demonstrated how fully they believed these things by suffering any torments, however severe, rather than renounce the belief of them. By their sufferings, therefore, they

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* The passage, in the Apology of Quadratus mentioned above, is preserved by Eusebius in his Ecclesiastical History, Lib. IV. C. 3. who has quoted it in the following manner: "More over, the same Quadratus shews his own antiquity by what he says in the following passage: "Our Saviour’s work was of a lasting nature, for they were true; such as persons healed of diseases, persons raised from the dead. These persons were seen, not only when they were healed and raised, but long afterwards; and that not only during the time our Saviour was on earth, but for a considerable time after his departure; so that some of them reached to our days. Such a person then was he. See also Lib. XI. C. 39. where Eusebius speaks of Quadratus as contemporary with the daughters of Philip the Evangelist, and as an immediate successor of the Apostles.

The above Apology, Eusebius says, was presented to the emperor Adrian. Adrian began his reign A. D. 117. In that year Quadratus would be no more than 57 years old, if he was born A. D. 60. Jairus’s daughter was raised when she was about 12 years of age. Of the same age we may suppose the widow of Nain’s son to have been, when he obtained the like favour. For though in our translation he is called a dead man, the expression in the original is, ευναμοστηκας, one dead. Besides, the circumstances mentioned in the history of this miracle, show that he was a boy, or at most a youth. Jairus’s daughter then, and the widow of Nain’s son, A. D. 60, when Quadratus was born, were only 38 years old. Wherefore Quadratus, and all of the same age with him, may have converted with and taken particular notice of these persons, on account of their having been raised by Jesus from the dead. For when Quadratus and his contemporaries were 20 years old, Jairus’s daughter and the widow of Nain’s son were no more than 38. Quadratus and his contemporaries may even have seen and converted with Lazarus, if at his resurrection Lazarus was no older than Jesus himself. For on that supposition, when Quadratus was 20, Lazarus, if he was then alive, would be no more than 60.
they in like manner confirmed their successors in the faith of Christ. Thus the memory of the great articles of the evangelical history was handed down from age to age, surrounded with the brightest lattice of evidence. Because vast numbers of sensible and virtuous men could not be supposed so entirely void of the fear of God and of all concern for their own salvation, as with their dying breath to maintain a parcel of forgeries, whether of their own invention or of the invention of their predecessors; or though they had actually engaged in a fraud of this nature, without regarding the consequences; could any reasonable person fancy their own fortitude was sufficient to carry them through such heat trials, in support of downright falsehoods? No. Suppositions of this kind plainly exceed all the capacities of mortality: and therefore they are to be treated as mere chimeras. The truth is, it must be acknowledged, that the learned Heathens, in the first ages, had every where opportunity of examining the proofs of the Gospel-history; that they did examine them with care; that upon examination they found this history attended with irrefutable evidence; and that they embraced it with the firmest persuasion. For they quitted their native religion, they bade adieu to the pursuit of ambition, they stripped themselves of all the advantages of the present time, they subjected themselves to the heaviest sufferings, and most of them ended their lives in torment. Wherefore, though these men lived at a great distance from Judea, the scene of our Lord's ministry, the testimony which they have borne to the truth of the Gospel-history by their conversion, ought to have great weight with us, especially as their integrity in this testimony is beyond exception.

To the above indeed it is objected, that, from the conversion of the learned Heathens, no argument can be drawn in behalf of the Gospel-history, because in their writings we meet with such ridiculous notions, such childish reasonings, and such credulity, as bespeak them to have been men of shallow capacities, whose judgment in a matter so important as the evidences of the Gospel-history is by no means to be relied on. But,

1. With respect to the absurd opinions for which some of the Fathers are defiled, it ought to be considered that these were the relics of their heathenish prejudices, which even with the assistance of Gospel light they were not able wholly to shackle off. Nor will this seem strange to those who consider how deeply the notions they receive from education, remain imprinted in our minds through the whole of life.—The wise of the Heathens, not excepting the philosophers themselves, believed that the gods had intercourse with women. Hence sprang the race of the heroes. If any doubt concerning the prevalence of this fancy is entertained, Pausanias and Plutarch, philosophers of great reputation, may be cited, reasoning gravely on the subject. Even Celsus and Porphyry, after they had read the Gospels, did not relinquish this notion. But the most striking proof of the prevalence of this opinion, we have in the story told by Josephus, Ant. xviii. 4. of Mundus and Paulina. This Roman lady, it seems, was greatly devoted to the worship of
2. With regard to the childish reasonings found in the writings of the Fathers, it is more than probable they were led into them by that branch of their education called rhetoric. This art taught people to declaim upon all subjects, and to reason plausibly on both sides of any question. Hence, in those declamations, the great matter was to argue, not only from solid topics, but to advance every thing which in such a cause could be made to have the shew of probability. This kind of discourses therefore admitted of figurative fenses, forced allusions, and allegorical interpretations. The latter especially were greatly in vogue, taking their rise from the gross absurdities of the commonly received theology. For the philosophers, especially after the introduction of Christianity, being ashamed of such things, explained them allegorically, and drew from them the mysteries both of natural philosophy and morality. Hence the humour of allegorizing, which made so great a figure in the Pagan theology, passed into all other subjects, and allegorical fenses ingeniously elicited were esteemed weighty arguments. Wherefore when we find Justin, from the four pillars of a house, the four quarters of the world, and the cherubim proving that there ought to be four Gospels; or when we find him, with great affectation, declaiming upon the crofs of Christ, and making it by strained comparisons to be represented by every thing almost in nature, we ought not to attribute these things to any weaknesses of judgment in the man, but should look upon them merely as the effect of his education, and as a compliance with the prevailing mode of the times; there being in reasoning a fashion, as in every thing else.

3. As for the credulity of the Fathers, we ought to remember that these men having embraced Christianity at the expence of every thing dear in life, it was no wonder they were vehemently enamoured of it. Moreover, knowing it to be the will of God, that it should be established in the world, they were animated with the most fervent zeal for its support and propagation. In such circumstances, it was
natural for them eagerly to embrace every opportunity of promoting its interests, and every argument which had the least tendency, whether real or apparent, to support it. For their zeal, however commendable in itself, made them rash and impatient of enquiry. Hence, without much examination, they took up with all the arguments and facts which seemed to favour Christianness, though in reality many of them tended to impair the reputation of the Gospel. For example: the arguments which Justin drew from the pretended statue of Simon Magus, the forged Sibylline oracles, the miraculous composition of the Septuagint version of the Hebrew Scriptures, and such like matters, are altogether ridiculous, and, instead of doing service to the Christian cause, they hurt it greatly.—But, however credulous the primitive fathers may have been after their conversion in matters which favoured the cause they had espoused, no man can imagine that the like credulity brought them over at first to the Christian profession; because, in making the change, they had to combat with this very warmth of temper, from whence their credulity sprang, operating strongly in behalf of Heathenism; for, in embracing Christianness, they acted in a direct opposition to the united force of their strongest prejudices, to the full current of their most violent passions, and to every possible consideration of interest. In such circumstances, their aversion to believe the facts contained in the Gospels must have been as great as their propensity to believe every thing favourable to the Christian cause could possibly be after their conversion; and therefore nothing could determine them to profess themselves Christians, but the clearest evidence appearing on the side of the facts recorded in the Gospels, which are the foundations of the Christian religion.

Upon the whole, whatever caution is necessary to be used in reading the writings of the primitive fathers, where they explain the speculative doctrines of Christianness in conformity to their ancient philosophical notions, or argue in behalf of the Gospels by topics drawn from that rhetoric which in their younger years they had been taught to admire, or declare their belief of the facts which confis with their zeal for propagating their religion, we may safely trust to the judgment which before their conversion they palled upon the general evidence of Christianness. In this part, the conclusion was forced upon them merely by the power of truth, not in conformity with, but in opposition to their strongest passions, prejudices, and interests. Moreover, the particular absurd sentiments which they entertained through the prejudices of education, or the trifling arguments which they urged according to the established mode, or their credulity with respect to such matters as flattered their favourite passions after their conversion, ought no more to invalidate their testimony in points where they were under no such influence, than the absurd opinions or weak arguments of the most renowned philosophers can discredit their testimony and judgment in matters where they were under no bias. In all cases of this kind no more is requisite, but to take notice of the tendency of
of a man's peculiarities, and to beware of hastily receiving his reports concerning such matters as, from his known prejudices, without any evidence, may have appeared to him certain and indubitable.

Having so many testimonies furnished even by the Heathens themselves, especially by such of them as lived in the age when Christianity commenced, it cannot be doubted that our religion is as ancient as we suppose; that it began in Judea, the country where our Lord preached, wrought miracles, was put to death, and rose again from the dead; that multitudes there believed on him soon after his resurrection; that from Judea the Christian faith quickly spread itself into all the noted countries and cities of the Roman empire; that in these countries and cities numerous churches were early planted, more especially in Asia Minor, Greece, and Italy: in short, that the number of the disciples daily increased every where, till at length the whole Roman empire became Christians.—It is equally certain, that from the very beginning the profession of Christianity exposed men to the severest persecution, first from the rabble, afterwards from the magistrates, who, it seems, found it necessary to interpose, in order to hinder the spreading of the Christian faith: that Claudius, who succeeded to the empire about seven years after our Lord's death, began the persecution of the Christians, by banishing them from Rome and Italy; that Nero, about thirty years after Christ's death, carried matters to a much greater length, putting vast multitudes of them to death, not in Rome only, but in the provinces; that the succeeding emperors imitated his example, issuing edicts against the Christians in all parts of the empire, so that they were exposed to every evil which human nature can sustain. Finally, that in this state matters continued for the space of three hundred years, till Constantine, after the defeat of his rival Licinius, declared himself of the Christian faith, and abrogated the laws of the former emperors against the disciples of Jesus. From these known and undoubted facts it follows, that the particulars told of the Founder of Christianity in the Gospels must be true, and that mankind had clear proofs laid before them of their truth; namely, the attestations of many credible eye-witnesses, all concouring in the fame reports, and who verified their testimony in that part which was most liable to exception, by performing miracles equal to those which they ascribed to their master, and by communicating to their converts the power of working miracles. The apostolical converts exercising this power, with the other gifts of the spirit, openly, became in all countries unquestionable vouchers of the truth of the Gospel-history, offering proofs thereof, which no reasonable person who attended to them could refuse. Without such arguments as these, it is impossible to conceive how a few strangers in the lowest stations of life, coming from a far distant despised nation, could have persuaded multitudes of the Heathens everywhere to forfake the religions of their country, which were admirably adapted to gratify their sensual inclinations, for the sake of another which brought along with it no temporal advantage whatever, but bound them up
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from all the sensual indulgences to which they had been accustomed, taught them to mortify their passions, let them at variance with their nearest relations, and exposed them to all manner of profound sufferings. Without the divine power going along with their sermons, it is still more impossible to conceive how these men should have prevailed upon the Heathens in such numbers to reform their manners, after having long lived in habits of vice and sensuality. The reasonableness of the Christian doctrines and precepts alone could never produce such astonishing effects. Many of these, instead of appearing reasonable, were downright stumbling-blocks both to Jews and Gentiles. Salvation through a crucified Saviour, the fundamental article of the Christian faith, was such to the philosophers or men of reason; and the mortification of their lusts and passions would infallibly appear no other to men of pleasure. A vain opinion of miracles, performed by the preachers of the Gospel, could as little convert and reform the world in the circumstances mentioned, if no miracles were really performed; because, however willing men may be, for the sake of amusement, to believe and repeat things marvellous, it never yet was found that any man, for the pleasure of believing and telling marvellous stories, would part with his estate, his liberty, his life. The very supposition of such madness is madness itself. In short, the world could not have been converted under persecution, unless the Christian miracles, whereby the credibility of the Gospel-history was demonstrated, had been beheld in all countries; because the performance of miracles in Asia could never have convinced mankind in Greece, or Italy, or Spain. Wherever the Gospel was received, it made its way by force of the miracles which the Apostles and their disciples performed in that very country, and by the influence of the spirit of God accompanying their sermons. Withal, as the age in which the Apostles convinced mankind of the truth of the Gospel-history, was remarkable for the height to which learning and the polite arts were carried, the faculties of men in that age must have been greatly improved by culture; wherefore, though in all countries the common people were first converted, they were well secured from being imposed upon by false pretensions of any kind, and could judge of the miracles which the Apostles wrought in support of their testimony concerning Jesus. But there were many likewise of better station converted to Christianity, proconsuls, senators, courtiers, magistrates, philosophers, priests, whose education and character qualified them to examine with accuracy, and judge with certainty of the evidences of the Gospel-history. I must therefore repeat it, that the conversion of so many thousands in Judea, where our Lord exercised his ministry, and that immediately after his death, joined with the numerous early conversions of persons of all ranks among the Heathens, is an argument for the truth of the Gospel-history from fact, which it is not possible to gainsay: especially as both Jews and Gentiles were converted in an enlightened age, and by their conversion exposed themselves to persecution. And though in the
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...ings of some of the Heathen philosophers, converted to Christi-
... certain absurd opinions, childish reasonings, and marks of cre-
... are found, these things do not in the least derogate from the
... story which by their conversion they bare to the facts in the Gof-
... The imperfections of which we speak flowed from the
... indices of their education, or from the servency of their seal for
... Christian cause; neither of which could have any place in the
... or of their conversion. For it is certain, that when the philoso-
... renounced Gentilism and embraced the Gospel, they acted in
... opposition to every weight whereby men's judgments can be
... ed. If so, nothing could determine these men but the fullest,
... left, and most undoubted evidence both of sense and reason. The
... vision of the world, therefore, viewed in its various parts, exhi-
... very grand and striking proof of the truth of the facts recorded
... the Gospel-history.
D I S S E R T A T I O N
C O N C E R N I N G
T H E  M A N  O F  S I N
2 T H E S S.  ii. 1—12.

In a former dissertation, the apostasy of intelligent creature from the kingdom of God was considered, in the most general view of it. At present, we are to enquire after an apostasy, which (though not so general) is a most signal and remarkable one.

St. Paul planted the Christian church at Thessalonica. After he had left them, the Christians of that place fell into a mistake concerning the coming of the day of the Lord; imagining that the Apostle thought it to be just at hand. He suspected the mistake to have arisen from some persons affirming that he had said so, misinterpreting his former Epistle, or forging an Epistle under his name. To rectify that mistake, seems to have been his principal view in writing his second Epistle to them: in which he repeats what he had formerly taught them, concerning a grand apostasy, which would, before that day, arise in the Christian church; and, therefore, that great day must be at some considerable distance.

That this day of Christ cannot refer to his coming to the destruction of Jerusalem and of the Jewish nation, will be plain and evident, if we examine into the rise and progress of this affair, as it now appears in these two epistles. 1 Thess. iv. 13, &c. the Apostle had admonished the Christians at Thessalonica, not to lament over their deceased friends as they had done, when they were Heathens. To prevent which, for the future, he puts them in mind of the Christian promise of a glorious resurrection to endless life and happiness. When that resurrection will be, he also informed them; viz. at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Then such of the Christians as shall be found alive on this earth, shall be transformed; the dead raised; and the righteous admitted to complete and everlasting felicity. Having mentioned "that coming of the Lord," or "of the "day of the Lord," he goes on with his discourse, 1 Thess. v. 1, &c. assuring them, that it would come suddenly and surprisingly. And, as the particular time is unknown, men ought always to be prepared.—Now, if that day, "and the day (or coming) of the Lord," 1 Thess. iv. 13, &c. and v. 1, &c. ought to be understood of the day of judgment, that remarkable day, when Jesus Christ shall descend from heaven, with the voice of the archangel and the trumpet of
Dissertation concerning the Man of Sin.

of God; when the dead shall be raised, and the living transformed; I think it evident, that it ought to be so understood in this place. For, of the same day, and of the same "coming of the Lord," St. Paul appears plainly to be speaking in both these Epistles. And what may further confirm this is, that these phrases "[that day, "the day, or the coming of the Lord,]" do, in other places of the New Testament, generally signify his coming to judge the world at the last day. [See on 2 Thess. ii. 2.] As, therefore, this is the usual signification of these phrases in other places of the New Testament, and the most evident meaning of them in these two Epistles to the Thessalonians, we have no occasion upon that account to look for "the man of sin," and "the "grand apostasy," before the "destruction of Jerusalem;" as they are obliged to do, who understand this "coming of the Lord" to refer to his coming to the destruction of that city and the Jewish nation.

None of the seven following interpretations of this prophecy appear to me to be well-grounded.

I. Grotius would persuade us, that Caius Caligula, the Roman emperor, was "the man of sin" here prophesied of. —Whereas, according to the best chronologers, this Epistle was written about twelve years after the death of that emperor. [See the history prefixed to this Epistle.] This, therefore, could not be a prophecy of the folly and wickedness of Caligula.

II. Dr. Hammond would have Simon Magus and the Gnostics to be here intended. —But Simon Magus had already shewed himself to be an enemy to Christianity at Samaria; and, therefore, was not yet to be revealed. And, as to his conflict with St. Peter, at Rome, and many of the doctor's stories about the Gnostics, they seem to be built upon too fancy a foundation to deserve much regard. Mr. Baxter, Dr. Whitby, Mr. Le Clerc, Dr. Wall, and Mr. John Alphonus Turretin, have abundantly confuted that interpretation.

Grotius's introducing Simon Magus, ver. 8, 9. seems to be as groundless. For the Apostle does there evidently continue to speak of the same person which he had begun with, ver. 3, 4. And, if the whole prophecy could not agree, either to Caligula, or to Simon Magus and his deluded followers, Grotius ought not, in his interpretation, to have referred any part of it to either of them.

III. Others take the unbelieving Jews, who persecuted the Christians, before the destruction of Jerusalem, and made many of them apostatize to Judaism, to be "the man of sin," &c. +

Answer.] Though the unbelieving Jews persecuted the Christians, yet they were not united under one single head or leader. They were never able to exalt themselves above all that is called a God, or even

* See this interpretation of Grotius more largely confuted in Dr. H. More's "Mystery of Iniquity," p. 445, &c. And by John Alphonus Turretin, in his "Commentary on this Epistle." Basil. 1739.

† See Mr. La Roche's New Memoir of Literature for September, 1726.
even the imperial dignity, And I do not know that they ever at-
tented universal monarchy. Neither had they, after this, any one
person among them, who answered the character here described.
"of one, who as a God, sitting in the temple of God, shewing
himself to be a God." Nor does St. Paul, by any means, appear
to be "the person who obstructed," ver. 6, 7. For the unbelieving
Jews persecuted the Christians after his conversion, as well as be
fore it. Nor could be prevent the apostasy of the Jewish Christi-
ans, though he earnestly desired and attempted it. But his principal la-
bor was among the Gentiles.

Besides; according to the prophecy of St. Paul, the apostasy was
(in a great degree at least) to precede the revelation of the man of sin.
Whereas the persecuting, antichristian spirit of unbelieving Jews was
revealed, or manifested, before the apostasy of the Jewish Christians.
And, finally; it is a grand objection with me, against that interpre-
tation, that, by the man of sin's appearing, and being revealed, its
understanding, his perishing, or destruction. In as much as St. Paul
has clearly distinguished his coming, and the continuance of his pow-
er, from the punishment and perdition which will at last be inflicted
on him by the Lord.

IV. Others, again, would have the unbelieving Jews, who re-
volted from the Romans, together with the Jewish converts who
apostatized from the Christian to the Jewish religion, to be the very
persons here prophesied of.—Whereas the Apostle is here speaking
of one fort of apostasy only; that is, an apostasy from the true reli-
gion. So the word ἀποστασία is used in other texts of scripture.
And what may lead us to understand it so in this place is, that the
Apostle is treating about matters of religion, and intimates that this
apostasy would be carried on, and supported, by shams, miracles, and
all the deceit of unrighteousness; and that it would prevail only
among vicious persons, such as refuted not truth and goodness, but
loved a lie, and took pleasure in unrighteousness.—The unbelieving
Jews could not apostatize from the Christian religion, because they
had never embraced it. And the Jewish Christians, who did apost-
atize, had no eminent head, or leader, that deferred the name of the
man of sin," &c.—Dr. Whitby, who is the most considerable ad-
vocate for this interpretation, plays between the two, and brings in
the unbelieving Jews revolting from the Romans, or the Jewish
Christians apostatizing from Christianitv, just as may best help out his
hypothesis. But the prophecy itself is uniform, and describes one
fort of an apostasy quite throughout.

The above-mentioned Turrettin very justly objects various things
against Dr. Whitby's hypothesis. (1.) That by the man of sin
must be understood one man, or a series of men of the same rank and
order, and not a whole nation. (2.) When it is said, "that
wicked one was to be revealed," it did not well suit that nation,
which had now existed a long time, which had for some ages mani-
feated great wickedness, and daily manifested it. (3.) Though the
Scribes and Pharisees did arrogate to themselves a divine authority,
and therefore might, in some sense, be said "to sit in the temple of God;" yet the Apostle could not foretell that, as a future event. They did so already; and, for some time, had done so. Indeed, Dr. Whitby alludes, that the Apostle does not here foretell what would be, but speaks of what was already, as to that particular, the man of Sin's sitting in the temple of God.—But the series of the prophecy will not bear that interpretation; for, though he sometimes speaks in the present, he is all along to be understood in the future, tense: as we find the apostles and prophets often using the present for the future tense, in their predictions.

V. As Mahomet did never profess the Christian religion, he could not be called an apostate. However, as he caused many Christians to apostatize, and built his religion partly upon the ruin and corruption of Christianity, some have thought that he might, in some sense, be said "to sit in the temple of God." He was likewise "a man of sin," or a very wicked man. And, though he pretended to be a prophet, yet he shewed himself to be in reality no prophet, but a temporal potentate. And, finally, he arose after the downfall of the Roman empire; which I take to have been that which lasted, or obstructed, the appearance of the man of sin.—All these things may be said in favour of that interpretation which represents this as a prophecy of Mahomet.—But then, on the other hand, suppose St. John and St. Paul prophesied of the same event (as, I think, they did), it is evident that Rome must be the seat of the grand impostor; that is, the city which stood upon seven hills.—To this it is objected, "Constantinople stands upon seven hills; and therefore Mahomet might be intended; for his successor, the Grand Turk, refides at Constantinople." To which it may be easily and justly answered, that, suppose Constantinople does stand upon seven hills, it is notorious that ancient Rome did fo likewise. And Constantinople is not the city which, in St. John's time, "reigned over the kings of the earth." Whereas these two marks were both united in St. John's prophetic description of spiritual Babylon, the seat of that tyrannical power; where idolatry, perfecution, and various sorts of wickedness, should abound. Rev. xvii. 9. 18. 2. It is a sufficient argument against applying this prophecy to Mahomet, that "the man of fin" was "to come after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders;" that is, with open and great pretensions to miracles. Whereas, though several miracles are ascribed to him, by the fabulous and legendary writers among the Mahometans, yet their learned men renounce them all. Nor does Mahomet himself, in his Koran, lay any claim to miracles*.

VI. Though heathen Rome opposed Christianity very much, and the emperors exalted themselves above all the kings and potentates upon earth; yet this their exaltation was not a thing then to be revealed;

* See Dr. Prideaux's "Life of Mahomet, p. 31;" and Mr. Sale's: "Translation of Al Koran," p. 103, 236, 473.
vealed; neither did they apostatize from Christianity, nor fit in the temple of God, nor attempt to establishment their power by miracles.

VII. Some of the Papists interpret this apostasy to be "the fall away of the Protestants from the church of Rome." And to, by strange legendaries, the Protestants are to be "the man of sin," his forerunners at least. Whereas it does not appear that there was a Christian church at Rome, when St. Paul wrote "this see Epistle to the Thessalonians." Nor are the Protestants united under one common and visible head upon earth; nor do they pretend establishment their doctrine by miracles. — Thefe and many other things plainly shew, that it is ridiculous to apply this prophecy to "Reformation from Popery."

As we have rejected these misinterpretations, the next thing is to point out the Apostle's meaning. And, however difficult it may be, upon a transient reading, we may venture to say, "that no phcey could have been more exactly accomplished, than this been, in the bishop of Rome, and his adherents." And theretofore it describes them, and the whole of it suits them, and that is the greatest reason to think it was intended to represent them especially as it is a remarkable and uncommon event, the to which never happened before, and, most probably, never will happen again.

But let us go over the several parts of this prophecy.

Ver. 3. Before the coming of the day of the Lord, the Apostle foretold, that there would be "a falling away," or an apostasy; and, accordingly, what an amazing apostasy from the true Christian worship, doctrine, and practice, has happened in the church of Rome, and is to this day supported in and by that church! stead of worshipping God in spirit and in truth, they have it ordained external pomp and numberless ceremonies, which strike the senses, and serve for amusement, without making better the life and the life.—Instead of worshipping God, through Jesus Christ only mediator between God and man, they have substituted doctrine of demons, that is, of the spirits of men departed on this life; who, as they pretend, intercede with God for us. they invoke the Virgin Mary, and their other saints, more plentifully than God himself. — They have not only succeeded Heathen, in the seat of empire, but have also apostatized to imagery and idolatry, though they have disguised it with new and different pretensions.

Instead of the Christian doctrine, they have apostatized from faith; and, in many countries, have taken from the common pe the free use of the Holy Scriptures, in their own mother-tongue, that they might with the more ease propagate their delusions.

* See "Dr. Middleton's Letter from Rome," with which compare "Roma and recent: Or the Conformity of ancient and modern ceremonies; shewing, from putative testimonies, that the ceremonies of the Church of Rome are borrowed in Pagans. Written in French before 1666, translated into English by James D' Lard. 1752." — See also "Sir Isaac Newton's book on the Prophecies of Daniel: Apocalypse," p. 204.
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They are against the Scriptures, because they are conscious the Scriptures are against them. They have substituted human power and authority, instead of reason and argument; and, in a forcible manner, restrained the liberty of private judgment; and then they have, with less difficulty, substituted, instead of the most excellent doctrine of the Gospel, their own articles of faith, and the forged traditions and lying legends of their church. And, not content barely to promote ignorance, they have dared most impudently to commend it, by openly asserting it to be "the mother of devotion."—Their encouraging the apostasy in practice will be taken notice of when we come to explain the sentences which follow.

The grand apostasy was to proceed gradually to its height. But, when it was come to such a pitch, then was to be revealed one, who should deservedly be called "the man of sin," because of his very great wickedness; and "the son of perdition," because of the great and exemplary punishment which should at last befall him.

Though that phrase, "the man of sin," is in the singular number, yer it may denote a succession of persons, though but one at a time. So we say, "the king of Great Britain, the king of France, "the emperor of Germany," &c. meaning thereby any one in the succession of those princes. So the Papists themselves speak of "the Pope," meaning thereby any one of the Popes. So the ancients spoke of "the king of Egypt," and of "the king of Babylon." And so the Jews that used that phrase, "the king of Israel," meaning thereby any one in the succession of their kings. [See Deut. xvii. 14—20. 1 Sam. viii. 11.] In exactly the same manner, the Jewish High-priest is spoken of as one person; though any one of the High-priests, in their succession, was thereby plainly intended. [See Lev. xxii. 10. Numb. xxxv. 25—28. Josh. xx. 6. Heb. ix. 7—25. and xiii. 11.]

And to whom can the title of "the man of sin" be more pertinently applied, than to the succession of the bishops of Rome, for many, many ages! There have been among them some of the vilest of mankind, notorious for their fraud and treachery, cruelty and dishonesty, insolvency and debauchery, simony and covetousness, and intolerable pride and ambition.

But, besides their own personal vices, by their indulgences, pardons, and dispensations, which they claim a power from Christ of granting, and which they have sold in so infamous a manner, they have encouraged all manner of vile and wicked practices. Instead of teaching men the necessity of an holy temper and practice, they have countenanced all manner of wickedness; having contrived numberless methods to render an holy life needleless, and to afflame the most abandoned of mankind of salvation, without a thorough repentance and amendment, provided they will sufficiently pay the priests for their abolution.

* See Platina, Baronius, and Mr. Bower's Lives of the Popes.
† I have had the perusal of "Lawrence Bancroft's Taxa S. Cancellaria Romanae, i.e. The tax of the sacred Roman chancery." And Mr. Boyle (in his Dictionary, under the words Vol. V. The
The form of indulgences, a little before the Reformation, was so ample, that rich men were unconcerned what fins they committed; as knowing that they could, living or dead, purchase a pardon. For, supposing they neglected it during their lives, it was but leaving so much money, by their wills, after their deaths, for masses and indulgences, and they were assured that all would be forgiven them.—Can such notorious wickedness always escape, without an eminent perdition?

Banck, Laurence) hath given us the history of that remarkable book. In which there is a very particular account, how much money was paid into the Apostolic or Pope's chamber. For instance: "If he had been convicted of his mother, sister, or other relation, either in consanguinity or affinity, is taxed at 5 gns. The abjuration of him who has deflowered a virgin, 6 gns. The abjuration of him who has murdered his father, mother, sister, wife, or 7 gns. The abjuration and pardon of all sorts of fornication committed by any of the clergy, in what manner soever, whether it be with a nun, within or without the limits of the nunneries, or with his relations in consanguinity or affinity, or with his god-daughters, or with any other woman whatsoever; and whether also the said abjuration be given in the name of the cleric himself only, or of him jointly with his wives, with a dispensation to enable him to take and hold his orders and ecclesiastical benefices, and with a clause also of inhibition, costs 36 tournois, and 9, or 3 ducats.—And if, besides the above, he receives abjuration from sodomy, or bestiality, with the dispensation and clause of inhibition, as before, he must pay 90 tournois, 26 ducats, and 6 carlins. But, if he receives abjuration from sodomy, or bestiality only, with the dispensation or clause of inhibition, he pays only 36 tournois, and 9 ducats.

A nun, having committed fornication several times, within and without the bounds of the nunneries, shall be abjured, and enabled to hold all the dignities of her order, even through of Abbesses, by paying 36 tournois and 9 ducats.

The sentence of the president of Tournai, 1556, against the former of these editions, was, that the Papists, who had not a word to say against the authority of the edition of Rome, or that of Paris, are under great prosperity. However, since the Papists have made so great a handle of this book, the Popish pretend that, though some of the Popes have been guilty of such infamous practices, and suffered such books to appear, yet the church of Rome in general abhors them. [A fine proof of the infallibility of their Popes!]

But the church of Rome has never shown, by the suppression of these taxes, that she has had them in abstinence. They have been printed, as has been already observed, twice at Paris, twice at Cologne, and twice at Venice. And some of these editions have been published since Claude d'Espenciy, a Papist doctor, exclaimed publicly against the enormities of this book. —The Inquisition of Spain, and that of Rome, have condemned the book, only as they pretend it to have been corrupted by heretics.

I must add, that the fornication of such a work in not a sure sign of disapproving the rules which it contains. This may only signify that they repented of the publication of it, as it gave to fair a handle for the Protestant to reproach the court of Rome, and to wound the church of Rome through the sides of the Pope. —These ought to be esteemed mysteries of State, "ac sera imperito," not fit to be divulged.
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How justly may present Rome, for her persecution, idolatry, and other notorious wickedness, be called "mythical Babylon," and be spiritually (or figuratively) flyed "Sodom and Egypt," (the place where wickedness has arisen to a most amazing height, and the people of God have been under a long and cruel bondage), "the mother of "fornications, and of the abominations of the earth!" Rev. xi. 8. and xvii. 5.

Ver. 4. "Who sets himself in opposition to, and exalts himself
"above, every one that is called a God, or even the imperial dig-
"nity; so that he sitteth in the temple of God, as it were a God;
"shewing himself that he is a God."

θεός, without the article, signifies a God. And here it is evi-
dently distinguished from, and opposed to, θεός, "the Supreme
"Deity, the one true God," in whose temple, it is prophesied, the
man of sin would place himself.

Princes and magistrates are, in Scripture, called Gods. And, in
the Apostle's days, θεός was the Greek name or title for the Ro-
man emperor. If, therefore, we understand, by θεόσυγιον, the im-
perial dignity, then the Apostle rises in his discourse, and prophesies,
that the man of sin would exalt himself, not only above every one
that is commonly called a God upon earth, but even above the
majesty and dignity of Caesar, the Roman emperor himself, the
highest of all earthly Gods. And, as θεόσυγιον is connected with
every one that is called a God, it is most natural to understand it of
the imperial dignity.

It was the opinion of several of the ancients, that by the temple of
God, where this tyrannical power would fix his feet of empire, is
meant, not the temple at Jerusalem, but the Christian church. And,
to confirm this interpretation, it may be observed, that, in other
texts of the New Testament, the Christian church is called "the
"temple of God," or compared to a temple. This prophetic intima-
tion, that he would fit in the Christian church, may lead us to sup-
pose, that he would profess himself a Christian.

Now it is extremely easy to point out facts, which will fully an-
swer this description. For how proudly has the bishop of Rome
thus exalted himself, and been flyed, by his flatterers and abject
dependents, "A God, who ought not to be called to an account;
"the supreme deity on earth; king of kings, and lord of lords; by
"whom princes reign, and upon whom the right of kings depends!"
Nay, the glossator upon the canon law hath given him the high
and blasphemous title of "our Lord God, the Pope." And the
Popes have acted accordingly; absolving subjects from their allegiance
to their lawful princes, somenting and raising rebellions, depo-
murdering rightful princes, and, at pleasure, setting up others
in their stead. With what pride and haughtiness have they called
emperors, their vassals! and even obliged some of them to hold the
bridle, till his holiness, the Pope, has mounted his horse! or to

* Vid. canon. Dict. 56. c. 56. etatis evidenter.
bear up his train after him, when his holiness has been pleased to walk in a pompous procession! With what amazing insolence have the Roman priests, with the approbation and encouragement of the Pope, fiercely opposed, and even whipt, sovereign kings and princes! And the Pope has set his foot upon an emperor's neck.—He has claimed the sole right of nominating, investing, or confirming, the princes and rulers of the earth.—If this be not to "exalt himself above every one that is called a God," or even the emperor himself, there can be no event to answer this, or any prophecy whatever.

I am persuaded that συνάγως was intended to denote the imperial dignity. But, if we should understand it (as some do) of the objects of, or things pertaining to, religious worship, the prophecy would, in that sense, be verified by correspondent events. For does not the bishop of Rome claim the sole power of ordaining sacraments, consecrating altars and images, canonizing saints, and appointing what sort of religious worship shall be paid, as well as to whom? Otherwise, how comes it to pass, that the Virgin Mary is more frequently invoked than the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ?—Is not this evidently a religious tyranny, founded in, and still supported by, a pretence to religion? Other potentates have sometimes called in religion for a pretence; and laid aside that pretence, when their purpose has been served: but no tyranny, besides this, has been entirely founded in, and all along carried on, merely by a pretence to religion.—And how exactly has the Apostle expressed this, when he foretold "that the man of sin would fit in the "temple of God, as a God?" i.e. under a religious pretence, he would lay claim to the power of a temporal monarch. Under pretence of being the head of the catholick church, and (in ordine ad spiritualia) as having all spiritual power, he would thus exalt himself.—And I need not say that, under this colour, the bishop of Rome has claimed a most exorbitant power; and that herein "his kingdom is diverse from all kingdoms." Dan. vii. 23. For other princes rule, in their own dominions, by their temporal power. But, under the notion of spiritual power, the Pope claims dominion in kingdoms and countries, where a foreign, temporal prince could have no claim. So that, though he does not pretend to be a God, or a mere temporal prince, yet he shews himself to be one, and has been, in reality, possessed of equal, or greater, power.

From the Protestants saying "that, by the temple of God, in this "prophecy, is meant the Christian church," Bellarmine would infer, "that then the church of Rome must be the church of God; "because there the Pope sitteth upon his throne." But the argument is vain and frivolous. And no more will Thence follow, than that the church of Rome may be called the church of God, in the same sense as "an adulterous woman" may be called a wife: [see Rev. xvii,
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xvii. 1. &c.]: or Jerusalem, in our Saviour's days, might be called the holy city, [Matt. iv. 5.]: or, as the greatest corruptions may retain the names which were given in times of the greatest simplicity and purity; so, among the ancient prophets, nothing was more usual than to call the children of Israel, even when they were grievously revolted from God, by the name of "the people of God." [Isa. i. 3. and iii. 12. Jer. ii. 13. and vi. 27, 28. and ix. 1–7. and xv. 7. and xviii. 15. Ezek. xiii. 10, 19. and xxii. 12. Hos. iv. 6. Amos vii. 8. Mic. vi. 2. 3. 5. Zeph. ii. 10.]: "the faithful city," [Isa. i. 21.]; "the vineyard of the Lord," [Isa. v. 7.]; "the servant of God," [Isa. xli. 9.]; "the holy seed," [Isa. vi. 13. and xli. 9.]; "the chosen or elect people of God," [Isa. xli. 8, 9. and xlii. 20, 21. and xliv. 45. and lxv. 9. 22. Jer. xxxiii. 24.]; "the beloved," [Jer. xi. 15.]; "the Lord's house, and heritage, the dearly beloved of his soul, and his portion," [Jer. xii. 7–10.]; "the flock and pasture of the Lord," [Jer. xxiii. 17. and xxv. 1–3, &c.]

Ver. 5. "Do you not remember, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?" This prophecy was diligently inculcated upon the ancients. St. Paul did not devile it to serve a turn: neither was it a new discovery at the time of writing this epistle. But he had taught it, to the Thessalonians, among the first and most important truths of Christianity. And now he repeats it to them, to satisfy them that this day of the Lord was not just at hand.

Ver. 6. "And you know what now obstruecteth, that he might be revealed in his own proper season." From St. Paul's cautious and covert manner of speaking, left he should offend the then reigning powers, as well as from other arguments, it is highly probable that the Roman emperor was the obstruecting power. And it is remarkable that, upon that very account, the primitive Christians ufed to pray for the continuance of the Roman empire.

Tertullian, who flourished about the conclusion of the second century, says, "Even now the mystery of iniquity is working: only he, who obstruecteth, will obstruect, until he be taken out of the way. Who is this, but the Roman empire, whose division into so many kingdoms will bring on Antichrist? And then shall that wicked one be revealed," &c. Jerome [on Daniel] says, "It was the general opinion, that towards the end of the world, ten kings should share the Roman empire; and that Antichrist should be the eleventh, and overcome all." And, when he heard that Rome was taken by Alaric the Goth, he shewed plainly that he expected the appearance of Antichrist, upon the removal of the Roman empire; and wondered that it was not more speedy. "For
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(fays he) he that hindered, is taken out of the way; and yet we do not understand that Antichrist approaches."—Almost all the fathers of the Christian church were of this opinion, viz. that the Roman empire was the obstructing power*. And we may easily conceive how the ancients came by this interpretation; even though they lived so long before the accomplishment. St. Paul had told it to the Thessalonians; and would (no doubt) as freely tell it to other Christian churches. And, when any of the Christians, in the neighbourhood of Thessalonica, read this epistle (if they did not know it before), they would, out of a very natural and innocent curiosity, enquire of the Thessalonians, what was intended by the obstructing power? And the Thessalonians would as readily impart the knowledge thereof to them.—St. John also did afterwards [Rev. thirteenth and seventeenth chapters], confirm this opinion. And, from these things, very probably, it spread, till it became (as Jerome calls it) the general opinion among the Christians.

Ver. 7. "For the mystery of iniquity is now working: only there is one, who obstructeth, until he be taken out of the way."

It is impossible for us to know more of the tendency towards this grand apostasy, in the days of the apostles, or primitive Christians, than they have mentioned in their writings. Hymenæus and Alexander subverted the Christians, by teaching false doctrines, Diotrephes aspired after the pre-eminence, Demas overloved this present world. Others were of a factious, schismatical spirit; separating themselves from true Christians; being contentious, not having the spirit. Others were with difficulty kept from opposing, the higher powers; being self-willed; despising government; and speaking evil of dignities. Some were condemned for making a gain of godliness; and preaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake. Others were for having Christians eat of meats offered to idols, and so encouraged some degree of idolatry. There were several false appearance of the apostles, and deceitful workers, who transformed themselves into the apostles of Christ. Some pretended to philosophy, and, by a vain deceit, would have exalted the traditions of men above the ordinances of Christ. Some, through a false humility, fell into will-worship, and particularly into the worship of angels. Some were for multiplying rites and ceremonies, and placed their religion very much in a distinction between meats and drinks; or between days and weeks, months and years; as if some were holy, others common, or unholy. Whereas "the Christian religion confiineth not in meats and drinks, but in righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit." There were some disposed to live in idleness, officiously meddling with the concerns of other persons, or families; and (like begging monks and friars) living upon the labour and industry of other people. Others inculcated a superstitious morti-
mortification of the body, forbidding of marriage, and enjoining
abstinence from several things which God allows us to make use of.
Doctrines were contrived to render an holy life needles; and or-
thodoxy, or faith without works, was represented as sufficient to
justify and save men. Others denied "that Christ had a real body,
"or really suffered and died; or that Jesus, who came in the flesh,
"was the Christ." From such corruptions of Christianity it was
that St. John declared, "There were, even then, many Antichrists."
And, finally, some pretended to prove things by oral tradition, or
letters forged under the names of the apostles, to spread their false
doctrine with greater success.—As we know what the apostasy is at
its height, it is easy to see how several of the corruptions in the primit-
ive church made way for it, or were somewhat of the spirit of the man
of sin, or the mystery of iniquity then working.—According to this
part of the prophecy, it is well known that they have not arrived to
their grand corruption but step by step, and at the first by flow and
smooff inoffensible degrees.

Ver. 8. "And then shall he be revealed that wicked one."—And it
is notoriously evident, that the removal of the Roman emperor did
make way for the advancement of the Bishop of Rome to his power
and grandeur. Then was that wicked one signally revealed.

ο ἰδιωτής, "that lawless person."] How proper a title for him
who has been declared "to be subject to no law! but that he can,
"by the plenitude of his power, make right wrong, and wrong
"right; virtue vice, and vice virtue that he can dispense with all
"laws, human and divine, and that he may do all things above law,
"without law, and against law."

And what amazing wickedness hath been committed under the
protection and encouragement of the Pope! Witness the infamous
Croisadores, and the cruel massacres of the Albigenous and Walden-
hes, of whom they are said to have slain a million. [See Mede's works,
p. 503]. In a little above thirty years from the first founding of
the order of Jesuits, above eight hundred thousand of the Pro-
teestants were put to death.—That cruel blood-hound, the duke of
Alva, boasted "that, by his means, in the Netherlands, thirty-fix
"thousand were slain by the hand of the executioner only." And,
beside those, great numbers perished several other ways. [See Mede's
works, p. 504]. The horrible and infernal court of inquisition has
consumed numberless multitudes of the best of mankind by various
kinds of torments; and still remains in Spain and Portugal, in some
parts of Italy, and in the East and West Indies; the invention of
carnate devils, an hell upon earth, the terror of human nature, to
hinder all free enquiry and examination, to keep mankind in the
most profound ignorance, and in the most filzish subjection to an
hierarchy of insolent, lazy, domineering, and debauched
priests.

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The
The cruel pursuing, imprisoning, torturing, and burning the martyrs, here in England, and the horrid and prodigious massacres in France and Ireland, cannot surely ever be forgotten. No benevolent person can read the account, at this distance of time, without weeping eyes and a bleeding heart.

Persecution is a distinguishing characteristic of that apostate. [See More's Mystery of Iniquity, p. 166, &c.] If to "wear out the "faints of the Most High," [Dan. vii. 25], and to "flay such as "are witnesses for true religion," [Rev. xi. 7, 8.], if "to make "war with the faints, and frequently to prevail against them, and "overcome them," [Rev. xiii. 4—7.]; "and to be drunk with the "blood of the faints, and of the martyrs of Jesus," [Rev. xvi. 6.]-if these things, I say, can possibly be accomplished; they have been, and still are, accomplished by the treacherous, cruel, and tyrannical church of Rome.

Ver. 8. ("Whom the Lord will consume, by the breath of his "mouth; and will destroy, by the brightness of his coming.") These words must be considered as thrown in by way of parenthesis; or, else his destruction, mentioned in this verse, will be placed before his coming and the manner of it, mentioned in the next verse.

And this account of his final destruction was very opportunely thrown in, to comfort the minds of the Thessalonians, and other Christians, under such a dark prospect, by alluring them, that this apostasy and tyranny should unquestionably come to an end, and truth and righteousness finally prevail and triumph.

As the last sentence was inferred by way of parenthesis, we may go on with the principal subject as if it had not been inferred.

Ver. 9—12. When the obstructing power is removed;—then shall be revealed that wicked one, whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and wonders of a lie; and with every unrighteous deceit, among those that perisli, because they have not entertained the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And, for this reason, will God send them the energy of error, that they might believe a lie; that they may all be condemned, who have not believed the truth, but have taken pleasure in unrighteousness."

The many pretences to miracles, in the church of Rome, have abundantly confirmed this. They have asserted that churches have "quisition," translated into English by Mr. Chandler; as also Isaac Martyr's and Mr. Crotch's account of their own sufferings in the Inquisition; and Dr. Geddes's "Brief ac count of the Inquisition," in his "Tracts."

Because we are free from such persecution, we are apt to fancy that Popery is now grown an innocent and harmless thing; but Mr. Archibald Bower, who is now here in England, writing "the Lives of the Popes," can inform us better. He was counsellor to the Inquisition at Maccrazi in Italy; there discerned the errors of Popery; was shocked with the instances of cruelty which his own eyes beheld; therupon determined to leave that faith, cruel, and perverting church; and, with difficulty, reached this land of liberty. Every new and well-attested account of their more than heathen cruelty would (one would hope) help to pull down that antichristian kingdom.

* See More's Mystery of Iniquity, p. 133, &c.
have been taken up in one place, and carried through the air into
litant countries; that images have nodded, smiled, frowned, or
spoken, upon occasion; that the first convert, which St. Gaul
made in Switzerland, was a bear;* that St. Anthony of Padua preached
to a vast assembly of fishes, which he had miraculously called to-
tgether, and which devoutly heard him preach the word of the Lord;+
it that St. Francis preached, with great success, to birds and beasts,
which he thought our Lord had commanded, when he ordered his
Apollines " to go into all the world, and to preach the Gospel to
" every creature."

Numberless have been the fictitious apparitions of the souls of dead
men, in order to prove such a state as purgatory. Nay, to prove
this, what have they not pretended to? voices from heaven or hell,
asures at the shrines of the saints, or by their bones or relics, to
which they have sometimes ascribed the power of raising persons from
the dead! All the legends and lying wonders, which the most diabo-
ical invention could contrive, have been made use of, to found or
support this notorious apothesy.
The church of Rome pretends, at this day, to the power of work-
ing miracles; and holds this to be one of the marks of the true church.
Whereas the pretense to miracles, now-a-days, is one mark of the
false church, or one reason for suspecting her to be that antichristian
faction which " would come after the working of Satan, with all
" power, and signs, and lying wonders, and with all the deceit of
" unrighteousness." &c.

Christianity was sufficiently attested by the miracles which were
worked when it was first planted in the world, and wants not mira-
ticles to be worked now, to prove and support it. Only allow men
full liberty to examine, and well-disposed persons will discern that
Christianity is of divine original. But false doctrines and an apothe-
ate church will for ever want new proofs and fresh supports.

Some have supposed that, by lying wonders, the Apostles meant
tue miracles, but worked in support of a lie. Others have un-
derstood them to be here called lying, or false miracles. And I
am much inclined to think that they are all lying miracles, which
are pretended to, in support of false doctrines or wicked practices.
For it is hard to suppose that God wold lett his Neil to a lie. And,
as to the miracles of the church of Rome, the fact has been, that,
where men have had liberty freely to examine them, they have been
detected as mere forgeries.||

And by all the deceit of unrighteousness, &c.] How remarkably

* See Addison's Travels, p. 234.
† See Augustin, de civ. Dei, L. 30. c. 19.
‡ See what Dr. Sykes has said, in his book on miracles, to shew that the magicians
of Egypt pretended to do, by their enchantments, was all artifice and delusion.
1 p. 25, &c.
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have they fulfilled this part of the prediction! They have appeared as the professed and bent friends of Christianity, and confidently asserted, "that theirs is the only true church"; whilst they have in reality been its greatest enemies*.—They have represented as martyrs, men and women who never had any existence; and canoized for saints, fictitious persons, Heathens, and the most flagitious of sinners. They have consecrated murders, assassinations, massacres, treasons, and rebellions; by promising their votaries, that they should not pass through the fire of purgatory, but have an immediate entrance into heaven, if they should be cut off in perpetrating such black and horrid crimes.

They have made great use of school-divinity; by spicious, sophistical argument, deceiving even the shallowest; and confounding the understandings of weak men by their subtleties; and arguing them out of their fенес. They have forged some books; and interpolated, or castrated, such books as are genuine; or done all in their power to suppress them, according as they have apprehended they have affected them, or their unrighteous cause. They have represented apocryphal books as canonical; and have either hindered the canonical books of scripture from being fairly translated, and freely read in the mother tongue; or they have made such translations as would befit serve their own purpose. They have left out the second commandment, because it condemns their idolatry. They have likewise done all they could to puzzle and confound the meaning of some texts; and have given false glosses and amazing interpretations of other texts.—They have conferred great riches, honors, and dignities, on those who have fallen-in with, and supported, their worldly views. And the terrors and cruelties which they have exercised upon such as opposed them, have been already taken notice of.

They have pretended to the power of the keys, or of binding and loosing. They have claimed full power and authority to pardon and absolve, or to confute and condemn, to open the gates of heaven to mankind, or to shut them against them, at their pleasure; and have represented Almighty God as bound to stand to their determinations.—In consequence thereof, they have pardoned and absolved some of the most flagrant villains; and have condemned to the pit of hell, some of the most innocent, most holy, and most excellent persons, that ever lived.

It would be endless to mention all their pious frauds, and spurious, astonishing methods, to increase their numbers, to draw in the worst of men, and to discourage the best, in order to gratify their exorbitant

* Laftant. L. 7. § 19. "Hic est atern, qui appellatur Antichristus, sed se ipse Christum mendicat, & contra verum dimiticit," &c. This is he who is called Antichrist; "but he will reign himself to be Christ, and will fight against him," &c. How remarkably applicable are these words to the bishop of Rome, who lays claim to the title of "the successor of St. Peter, the vicar of Christ upon earth!" and consequently, to be the head of the church, and the father and pastor of the faithful! See the Popish Censures, chap. the last.
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Exorbitant luft of riches and ambition, worldly dominion and grandeur. Well might the Apostle represent them as practising every unrighteous deceit.

But who must be their converts? That also the Apostle has plainly told us; viz. "Such as are lost [loft to all sense of virtue] and goodnes], who have not entertained the love of the truth, such as willingly believe and embrace a lie, and take pleasure in unrighteousness."—And among such, it is just with God to suffer the energy of error to be exerted, to let them take their own way, and to perish in their own delusion. For must not men have cast off the love of truth, and have lost all relish for it, who can delight in their fabulous traditions and lying legends; and tamely give up the scriptures, or speak of them with contempt?

Thus have I gone through every part of this prophecy, and shewn (I hope) that no prophecy can be more exactly accomplished.

Objection. It may possibly be thought, by some, to be an objection to this interpretation, "that St. Paul has taken no notice of this prophecy, in his epistle to the Romans, though Rome was the very place where the man of sin was to appear."

Answer. The church of Rome was not then planted.—However, St. Paul did afterwards evidently caution that church against apostasy; and acquaint them, if they apostatized, what their end would be. [Rom. xi. 17—22.] That was as much as he thought fit to say in that epistle; as he had not planted the Christian church there, nor ever been, at that time, in person among them.

But there are four particulars, which appear to me to afford a fair and full answer to this objection. (1.) When St. Paul wrote the epistle to the Romans, the Christians at Rome had not fallen into the mistake, concerning the speedy coming of the day of the Lord; and, therefore, there was not the same occasion of taking notice to them, that the man of sin would appear, and a grand apostasy happen before that day. (2.) The Apostle was cautious in describing the power which obstructed the revelation of the man of sin. He would not mention it, in writing to the Thessalonians; much less, surely, in writing to Rome, the very seat of empire, especially as he must have spoke out, in writing to Christians who had never seen him; or else they could not have understood him. Whereas, in writing to the Thessalonians, he could say, "Do not you remember that, when I was with you, I told you these things? And you know what now obtrudeth," &c. (3.) Though the apostolic epistles were written to some particular churches, and more exactly suited their case; yet they were spread among the other churches, and received, and publicly read by them, as containing matters of common concern. And of what moment was it, whether the Christians at Rome read this prophecy, in the
the second epistle to the Thessalonians, or in an epistle directed and sent, in the first place, to Rome? As the Apostle had published this prophecy, among the Christians, in the second epistle to the Thessalonians, before it appears that there was any Christian church at Rome, he had no occasion to write it, in a letter to that imperial city, afterwards. It was enough to send them a copy of the second epistle to the Thessalonians. (4.) When the Apostle came in person to Rome (as he did, once or twice, after writing his epistle to the Romans), he would as freely and readily impart this prophecy to the Christians there, as he had done to the Thessalonians, and to other churches.

Let us now conclude this dissertation, with mentioning some corollaries from what has been said.

I. The visible church may err, and fall into a dreadful apostasy.

So it did under the Old Testament, [1 Kings, eighteenth and following chapters; and particularly, 1 Kings xix. 10. 2 Kings xvi. 1, &c.]. And the prophets frequently upbraided the people of God, for their defection and revolt from God. [See 1sa. i. 3, &c. Jer. i. 16, &c. and many other places of the Old Testament]. And the Christian church is so far from being exempt, that a most grievous apostasy and defection therein is foretold expressly both here and elsewhere.

II. From what has been said, it is easy to judge concerning Popery and the Reformation.

It is not the largeness of a church, nor her external pomp and splendor, which makes her the true church; nor are they always the schismatics, who are the fewest in number. No! suppose most of the nations of the earth should agree together in maintaining absurd doctrines, superstitious worship, immoral and unreasonable practices, uncharitableness, and impositions; they would be the heretics, and schismatics. And let the number who separate from them, in defence of truth, virtue, liberty, and charity, be never so few, they would, in reality, be the true church; and, as such, be approved of God: whilst the other would deserve no other name, but that of a grand schism, or worldly faction, even though their party were as numerous, as that with the soles of their feet they could dry up rivers.

Holding the truth in love, is a mark of the true church; and such as forfake this, are apostates. Such is the schism, faction, and apostasy of the present church of Rome, that fruitful mother of idolatries and of the abominations of the earth. And reformation is a most glorious thing, when founded upon its right basis of reason and scripture, liberty and charity.

III. “How strong an argument may what has been said afford us, “for the truth of the Christian religion!”

Here was a signal event foretold, and that many ages before it came to pass; an event, the like to which had never happened, since

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* See the Appendix to the Puplit Catechism, § 2.
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Since the creation of the world; and, most probably, there never will happen such another. It was, therefore, an event which was out of the reach of all human conjecture, or foresight. And yet experience hath shewn that the prediction was exact. Neither enthusiasts nor impostors could possibly have guessed so agreeably to so uncommon an event. Nor can we, who have lived to see and know so much of the accomplishment, describe this apoapses in a more concise, just, or lively manner, than St. Paul hath here done, in a few verses; and St. John, more largely, in the Revelations. They therefore must have been true prophets, or else they never could have delivered such remarkable predictions, which time and fact have so amazingly verified.

Some other arguments for the truth of the Christian religion, though just and conclusive, may be of a more subtle and difficult nature. But the rise and progress of this apoapses is a fact; a plain, notorious, and well-known fact; an argument, which cannot easily be evaded; but must strike the virtuous and attentive!—All church-history, for several past centuries, is full of it. And we need only open our eyes, and we may behold too much of it. For the man of sin is even now upon his throne; exalting himself, as much as he can, above all the kings of the earth; and with such strong delusions seducing the nations, as to make many of them to believe a lie.

They may pretend, among us, that Popery is altered, and become a meek and harmless religion. They may misrepresent its tenets, and allege that they have now thrown off that persecuting spirit, which they have formerly discovered*. But is not transubstantiation one of her doctrines? and does not the hellsith court of inquisition still subsist in Spain, Portugal, Italy, and other Popish countries? And the repeated persecutions of the Protestants in France, Germany, and other places, are sufficient to convince us that the church of Rome, where she has power, is still the same persecuting church, and her religion the same bloody religion, as ever; and, though drest up in sheep’s clothing, she is no other than a ravenous wolf.

Our ancestors felt the tremendous effects of her persecuting power, and experienced her tender mercies to be the most dreadful cruelty. Nay, we ourselves are in imminent danger; but, by a very merciful interposition of the divine providence, the snare was broken, and we most happily escaped. Yet all pious and benevolent persons are daily mourning over this antichristian corruption and tyranny; and

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* Elias, in 1 John, v. 21. Having represented the danger there was, of the first Christians falling into some acts of idolatry, practised among their Heathen neighbours, adds,

*Nune (ah dolor!) nonnulli catholiccl, habitantes inter hereticos, rerum per diversas pro-

6. Concises potesties, interdum quodam deistant, ut dicunt, fidei catholicae, et infirmitatis
ecclesie, diftinctae." So that the Popish disputing and misinterpreting, in Protestant countries, the doctrines and practices of the Romish church, is no new thing; as is here plainly testified, and lamented, by one of their own communion.
and ready to say, "How long, O Lord, holy, just, and true, wilt thou not deliver thine elect, who cry unto thee, day and night?"

Christianity is a religion reasonable and excellent in itself, promotes the purest and most exalted virtue, was at first planted by inspiration and miracles; and here is a most remarkable prophecy, which, after so many hundred years, is exactly verified by a notorious event.—What evidences would be sufficient, where all these are rejected?

IV. We ought not to be shocked at the present state of the Christian church, because the Apostles of our blessed Lord prophesied that such it would be.

Though the best things are liable to corruption; yet one would hardly have thought it possible, that so great, so notorious a corruption could (by any pretence) have sprung out of the Christian religion. Look into the New Testament, which contains the religion of Jesus, and look into the doctrine, discipline, and worship, the whole polity and constitution, of the church of Rome; and you may easily perceive that light and darkness are not more opposite. The doctrine of Christianity is all rational, its worship free from superstition and idolatry, and its laws require the greatest virtue and purity. But the doctrine of the church of Rome is absurd, her worship over-run with superstition and idolatry. And that wicked church (which schismatically calls herself the catholic and only true church) hath invented so many arts to make men very religious, without any virtue or true goodnes, that (wherever it is established and prevails) it encourages almost all manner of wickedness and abominations.

Daniel prophesied *, that the God of heaven would erect a kingdom, which should be subject to the son of man. And we say "that this kingdom of righteousness was actually erected by our "Lord Jesus Christ." Now, upon looking abroad, into a great part of Christendom, it is natural to enquire, "Is this the kingdom which Daniel prophesied of?"—No! to prevent the anxiety and difficulties which might arise in the minds of true Christians, from such a dark and gloomy appearance, it was also prophesied that, out of this spiritual kingdom, there would arise one of the greatest apostasies and corruptions that ever appeared in the world; though true Christianity, as contained in the Scriptures, has all along been invariably the same.

V. "How ought we to rejoice; that this unrighteous and tyrannical power shall come to an end? and think ourselves obliged "(from a sense of duty to God, and of benevolence to mankind) "to do every thing in our power towards bringing about so happy "an event."

Blessed be God that we are delivered from this worse than Egyptian darkness and slavery. Particularly, let us reflect with gratitude, upon our narrow and almost miraculous escape, at the ever-memorable Revolution, under the auspicious conduct of the glorious prince

* Dan. ii. 44; viii. 13, 14.
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f Orange, King William, of immortal memory; which (by the
vow of a kind and watchful Providence) laid the foundation of a
ster escape; when by the contrivance of a persecuting, refleés, and
igoted faction, a Popish pretender was ready to ascend the throne.
Then it was, that King William's noble legacy took place, by the
oming-in of the illustrious House of Hanover; a family which were
mong the first Protesters against Popery, and who have ever since
ontinued Protestants: and (which has been, in a distinguisising
manner, the duty of that illustrious house, and attended with the
reateft and moft diffusive blessings) they have, upon many occasions,
en strenuous afferors of the liberties of mankind, both civil and
igious.

The happy effects of this they themselves saw and experienced
ing the rebellion, 1745, when their enemies were intimidated,
y the remarkable zeal and number of their friends, when persons
of all ranks and orders, and of almost all sects and parties, so zea-
oufly entered into associations against a Popish, abjured pretender,
nd his highland banditti; and in the support of our Protestant
oyal family in the possession of the British crown.—Blessed be God
for such a royal family; and let all the people say, Amen! May
hey and their descendants continue friends to mankind throughout
ll coming generations; and experience the joys and ample blessings
which attend the sincere love of truth, virtue, religion, and li-
erty!

It is said that this corrupt and persecuting religion gains ground
in this Protestant nation; and even in this day of light, liberty, and
freedom of inquiry. But, surely, this must proceed from some neg-
left among Protestants. And what madness must possess such as
would bring us back again into this spiritual Egypt, when all wise
men would carefully avoid her crimes, for fear of at last partaking in
her plagues!

It is the duty of parents and tutors, in the education of children;
and of ministers, in the instructions which they give to their people;
odigently to train them up in the true principles of the Protestant re-
igion. And it is the duty of all Protestants to give up whatever absurd
doctrines, or imposing principles, they may have hitherto mixed with
what is truly reasonable and Christian. Till these things be done, it
must be expected that Popery will always be thrashing in its cloven
foot among us.

Thanks be to God, that we have the Scriptures so common, not
only in the original, but in our own language; that we are allowed
the liberty of private judgment, and blessed with so many, and such
excellent helps to understand our Bible! that such a spirit of liberty
and free enquiry hath, in this last age, gone out into the land! May
kind Heaven diffuse this happy spirit every where, and grant it the
most lasting duration!

It is not three hundred years since our ancestors were required to
believe the grossest absurdities, and to practise the most flagrant su-
perfition and idolatry; and that upon pain of forfeiting all that was
dear to them in this world, and of being sentenced to eternal dam-
nation
nation in the world to come.—Though the first Reformers made a
noble stand, and went great lengths, in a little time; yet they could
not shake off one of the worst parts of Popery, viz. the spirit of in-
fallibility and perfection. And a race of tyrannical kings, supported
by covetous and ambitious priests, continued to practise upon their
fellow-protestants, that cruelty which all Protestants so much and
so justly exclaimed against, when practised by Papists upon them-
selves. By these means, it has come to pass that true liberty and
free enquiry are but of yester day, a blessing revered by Providence
for us!

The most acceptable way of testifying our gratitude to Almighty
God, for so great, so inestimable a blessing, is to study the Scrip-
tures with care and diligence; and to form our faith and worship, our
temper and practice, accordingly; freely to allow others that liberty
of private judgment, which we ourselves so ardently and reasonably
defire; to avoid uncharitableness towards such as differ from us; and
to shew our good-will even to the persons of the Papists, whilst we
so much and so justly abhor their religion. Let us do all we can
to carry on the reformation to greater purity and perfection; and
particularly take care to watch against a narrow, bigotted, perci-
cuting spirit, in all the branches and degrees of it. Let us lay the
stress in religion where reason and scripture have laid it (not in ab-
struse notions and unintelligible subtleties, not in forms and cer-
emonies of human invention, nor in an empty profession of the pure
and beft religion in the world; but) upon the sincere love of God
and of one another; upon a due government of our passions, affec-
tions, and appetites; and the habitual love and practice of universal
holines. For what avails it, what church any man belongs to, what
advantages he enjoys, or what profession of religion he makes, if he
does not love God and keep his commandments; if he abuseth his li-
berty to licentiousness; and, in the midst of such marvellous light,
manifests that he prefers darkness, by leading a wicked life; which,
of all others, is the blackest hereby, or the most flagrant and most no-
torious corruption and apostasy?

OSER-
OBSERVATIONS
UPON THE
HISTORY
OF THE
RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST, &c.

§ 1. JOHN, Chap. xx.

The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre. Then she runneth and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and faith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him. Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre. So they ran both together; and the other disciple did out-run Peter, and came first to the sepulchre; and he stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying, yet went he not in. Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie, and the napkin that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself. Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw and he believed; for as yet they knew not the scripture that he must rise again from the dead: Then the disciples went away again unto their own homes. But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping: and, as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre, and seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain; and they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She faileth unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him. And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus faileth unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, faileth unto him, Sir, if thou haft borne him hence, tell me where thou haft laid him, and I will take him away. Jesus faileth unto her, Mary! She turned herself, and faileth unto him, Rabboni! which is to say, Master. Jesus faileth unto her, Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended unto my Father: But go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your...
"your Father, and to my God and your God. Mary Magdalene "
came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that she "
had spoken these things unto her."

From this passage of the Gospel of St. John, it is evident, if, That Mary Magdalene had not seen any vision of angels before she ran to Peter; and consequently, that she was not of the number of those women who went into the sepulchre, and were there told by an angel that Jesus was risen: for had she, before she went to Peter, seen any angels, she would certainly have added to extraordinary circumstance to her account; and, had she been informed by an angel that Jesus was risen, she could not have persisted in lamenting at not being able to find the body; nor have enquired of him, whom she took to be the Gardener, where he had put it, that she might take it away. It is also farther observable, that, when after her return to the sepulchre with Peter and John, and their departure from thence, she saw a vision of angels, she was standing without, at the sepulchre, weeping:—that stooping down, and looking (not going) into the sepulchre, the saw two angels in white, "fitting the one at the head, the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain," who said no more to her than "Woman, "why weepest thou?" to which she answered, "Because they have "taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have lain him." From all which circumstances it appears, adly, that neither after her return to the sepulchre with Peter and John, was the with those women who went into the sepulchre, &c., that she had not heard any thing of Christ's being risen from the dead; and that therefore those women, who were told by an angel that he was risen, were not at the sepulchre when she returned thither with Peter and John. And indeed, from the whole tenor of the above-cited passagio of St. John's gospel, throughout which no mention is made of any other woman besides Mary Magdalene, it is more than probable she was alone, when she saw the angels, and when Christ appeared to her immediately after. That she was alone when Christ appeared to her, is plainly implied in what St. Mark * says, who tells us expressly, that Christ appeared first to Mary Magdalene, which, had the been accompanied by the other Women, could not have been spoken of her with any propriety of speech. In the 9d place, it is plain, from the above relation, that the angels were not always visible, but appeared and disappeared as they thought proper; for John and Peter, going into the sepulchre saw no angels; but Mary, after their departure, looking in, saw two, one sitting at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.

§ 2. L U K E, Chap. xxiv. 13.

"The same day two of them (the disciples) went to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about three-score fur- longs; and they talked together of all these things that had happened. "And it came to pass that, while they communed together, and "reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them; but
their eyes were holden, that they should not know him. And he said unto them, What manner of communications are these, that ye have one to another, as ye walk and are sad? And one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering, said unto him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days? And he said unto them, What things? And they said unto him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God, and all the people; and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him. But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and, besides all this, to-day is the third day since these things were done. Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulchre; and when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive; and certain of them which were with us, went to the sepulchre, and found it even so as the women had said; but him they saw not.

The latter part of this passage, which contains an abridgment of a report made by some women to the apostles before these two disciples had left Jerusalem, suggests the following observations: 1st, The angels seen by these women at the sepulchre told them, that Jesus was alive, whence it follows, that this report was not made by Mary Magdalene; for the angels, which the saw, said no such thing to her. 2dly, As there is no notice taken of any appearance of our Saviour to these women, it is also evident, that this report could not have been made by the other Mary and Salome, to whom, as they were going to tell the disciples the message of the angels which they had seen at the sepulchre, Jesus appeared, as I shall presently shew from St. Matthew. 3dly, There were therefore several reports made at different times to the apostles, and by different women. At different times; for the two disciples, who, before they left Jerusalem, had heard the report now under consideration, had not heard these of Mary Magdalene, of the other Mary and Salome.—By different women; for it having been just now proved that this report could not belong to either of the last-mentioned women, it must have been made by some other; and no other being named by any of the Evangelists but Joanna, it came in all likelihood from her, and those that attended her. 4thly, Some of the disciples, upon hearing this report, "went to the sepulchre, and found it even so as the women had said;" i. e. in the most obvious sense of these words. They saw the body was gone, and they saw some angels. But I shall not insist upon this interpretation; but only observe, that if Peter be supposed to have been one of those disciples who, upon this information of the women, went to the sepulchre, this must have been the second time of his going thither. That Peter went a second time to the sepulchre, I shall shew more at large, when I come to consider the former part of this chapter of St. Luke.

These several conclusions being admitted, I think it will be no difficult matter to defend the Evangelists against the imputation of U2...
Contradicting each other in the accounts they have given of what happened on the day of the resurrection. For unless authors, who relate different and independent parts of the same history, may, for that reason, be said to contradict each other, the Evangelists, I will be bold to say, stand as clear of that charge, at least in that part of their writings which we are now examining, as any of the most accurate historians, either ancient or modern; as I shall now endeavour to prove, by considering and comparing the several relations of this day’s events, in the Gospels of St. Matthew, St. Mark, St. Luke, and St. John. That written by St. John I have already produced, so that there will be no occasion for inferring it again this place; those of St. Matthew and St. Mark I shall produce and examine together, for reasons which will be evident hereafter.

§ 3. MAT T H. Chap. xxviii.

“In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn towards the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, to see the sepulchre: and behold, there was a great earthquake; for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it: his countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow; and for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men. And the angel answered and said unto the women: Fear not ye; for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified: he is not here; for he is risen, as he said; come see the place where the Lord lay; and go quickly and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and behold, he goeth before you into Galilee, there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you. And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy, and did run to bring his disciples word. And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail! And they all came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him. Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid: go tell my brethren, that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me. Now when they were going, behold, some of the watch came into the city, and drew unto the chief priests all the things that were done. And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers, saying, Say ye, his disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept. And if this come to the governor’s ears, we will persuade him, and secure you. So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day. Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted.”

MAR K, Chap. xvi.

“And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they
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they might come and anoint him; and very early in the morning,
the first day of the week, they came into the sepulchre at the rising
of the sun. And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us
away the stone from the door of the sepulchre? And when they
looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away, for it was very
great. And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man
sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment, and
they were affrighted. And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted:
ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen, he is
not here: behold the place where they laid him. But go ye out
and tell his disciples and Peter, that he goeth before you into Galilee:
there shall ye see him, as he said unto you. And they went out
quickly, and fled from the sepulchre; for they trembled and were
amazed; neither said they any thing to any man; for they were
afraid. Now when Jesus was risen, early in the first day of the
week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had
cast seven devils. And she went and told them that had been with
him, as they mourned and wept. And they, when they heard that
he was alive, and had been seen of her, believed not. After that,
he appeared in another form unto two of them, as they walked and
went into the country. And they went and told it unto the refi-
due; neither believed they them. Afterward, he appeared unto
the eleven, as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with unbelief,
and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had
seen him after he was risen.

I shall range the observations I intend to make upon the several particulars contained in these two passages, under three heads. 1st, Of such circumstances as are related by one of the Evangelists, but omitted by the other. The 2d, of such as they both agree in. And the 3d, of such as seem to clash and disagree with each other. 1st, The several particulars of the earthquake, the descent of the Angel from heaven, his rolling away the stone from the door of the sepulchre, and sitting upon it, and the terror of the soldiers who guarded the sepulchre, are related only by St. Matthew: as are likewise the appearances of our Saviour to the women, and to the eleven disciples in Galilee, and the sight of the guards into the city, and all that passed between them and the chief priests upon that occasion. On the other hand, St. Mark alone makes mention of the women's having bought spices, that they might come and anoint the body of our Saviour:—of Salome's being one of those women; of their entering into the sepulchre, and seeing there a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment:—of the appearance of Christ to Mary Magdalene,—to the two disci-
ple-s who were going into the country;—and, lastly, to the eleven as they sat at meat. As not one of all these circumstances can be proved to contradict or even disagree with any particular, which either of these Evangelists has thought fit to mention, no argument against the reality or credibility of them can be drawn from their not having been taken notice of by both; unless it can be made appear,
that a fact related by one historian, or one evidence, must therefore be false, because it is passed over in silence by another. St. Matthew wrote his gospel first, within a few years after the ascension of our Lord; this gospel, St. Mark, who wrote some years after, is said to have abridged; though this, I think, is said with very little propriety; for how can that book be styled an abridgment, which contains many particulars not mentioned in the original author? That St. Mark relates many circumstances not taken notice of by St. Matthew, will easily appear to any one who shall take the pains to compare them together; and of this, to go no farther, we have a plaininstance in the two passages before us.

St. Matthew wrote his gospel at the request of the Jewish converts, who, having lived in that country where the scene of this great history was laid, were doubtless acquainted with many particulars, which, for that reason, it was not necessary to mention. This will account for the conciseness and seeming defective ness of his narrations in many places, as well as for his omitting many circumstances which the other Evangelists thought proper to relate. St. Mark composed his for Christians of other nations, who, not having the same opportunities of being informed as their brethren of Judea, stood in need of some notes and comments, to enable them the better to understand the extract which St. Mark chose to give them out of the gospel written by St. Matthew. It was therefore necessary for St. Mark to infuse many particulars, which the purpose of St. Matthew, in writing his gospel, did not lead him to take notice of. Allowing these Evangelists to have had these two distinct views, let us see how they have pursued them in the passages now under consideration.

That the disciples of Jesus came by night and stole away the body while the guards slept, was commonly reported among the Jews, even so long after the ascension of our Lord as when St. Matthew wrote his gospel, as himself tells us. To furnish the Jewish converts with an answer to this absurd story, so industriously propagated among their unbelieving brethren, and supported by the authority of the chief priests and elders, this Evangelist relates at large the history of the guarding the sepulchre, &c. the earthquake, the decent of the angel, his rolling away the stone, and the fright of the soldiers at his appearance, who "shook and became as dead men."—And, indeed, by comparing this relation with the report given out by the soldiers, it will easily appear on which side the truth lay. For as there is nothing in the miraculous resurrection of our Lord, so repugnant to reason and probability, as that the disciples should be able to roll away the stone which closed up the mouth of the sepulchre, and carry off the body of Jesus, unperceived by the soldiers, who were set there on purpose to guard against such an attempt; so it is also evident, that the particulars of the soldiers report were founded upon the circumstances of this history. In this report three things are asserted, viz. that the disciples stole the body,—that they

* Chap. xxviii, ver. 15.
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they stole it in the night,—and that they stole it while the guards were asleep. That Jesus came out of the sepulchre before the rising of the sun, St. Matthew informs us, who says, that the earthquake &c. happened at the time when Mary Magdalene and the other Mary set out in order to take a view of the sepulchre, which was just as the day began to break. This fact was undoubtedly too notorious for the chief priests to venture at falsifying it, and was besides favourable to the two other articles; this therefore they admitted; and taking the hint from what the soldiers told them of their having been cast into a swoon or trance—(becoming like dead men) at the appearance of the angel, and consequently not having seen our Saviour come-out of the sepulchre, they forged the remaining parts of this story, that his disciples came and stole him away while they slept. They took the hint, I say, of framing these two last-mentioned articles from that circumstance related by St. Matthew, of the keepers shaking and becoming like dead men upon the sight of the angel; for throughout this whole history there was no other besides this upon which they could prevaricate and dispute. The stone was rolled away from the sepulchre, and the body was gone; this the chief priests were to account for, without allowing that Jesus was risen from the dead. The disciples, they said, stole it away. What! while the guards were there? Yes, the guards were asleep. With this answer they knew full well many would be satisfied, without inquiring any farther into the matter: but they could not expect that every body would be so contented; especially as they had reason to apprehend, that although the soldiers, who had taken their money, might be faithful to them, keep their secret, and attest the story they had framed for them, yet the truth might come out, by means of those whom they had not bribed; for St. Matthew says, that some of the watch went into the city, "and shewed unto the chief priests "all the things that were done." Some therefore remained behind, who probably had no share of the money which the chief priests gave to the soldiers; or, if they had, in all likelihood it came too late; they had already divulged the truth, as well from an eagerness, which all men naturally have, to tell a wonderful story, as from a desire of justifying themselves for having quitted their post. The chief priests therefore were to guard against this event also; in order to which, nothing could be more effectual, than to counterfeit the evidence of one part of the soldiers, by putting into the mouths of others of them a story, which, without directly contradicting the facts, might yet tend to overthrow the only conclusion which the disciples of Jesus would endeavour to draw from them, and which they were so much concerned to difcredit, viz. That Jesus was risen from the dead. For if the disciples and partizans of Jesus, informed by one part of the soldiers of the several circumstances related in St. Matthew, should urge these miraculous events of so many proofs of the resurrection of their Master, the unbelieving Jews were, by the

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* Chap. xxviii. ver. 11.
the testimony of those suborned witnesses, instructed to answer, that the earthquake and the angel were illusions of dreams;—that the soldiers had honestly confessed they were asleep, though some of them, to screen themselves from the shame or punishment such breach of discipline deserved, pretended they were frightened into a swoon or trance by an extraordinary appearance, which they never saw, or saw only in a dream;—that while they slept, the disciples came and stole the body; for none of the soldiers, not even those who saw the most, pretend to have seen Jesus come out of the sepulchre:—they are all equally ignorant by what means the body was removed;—when they awoke, it was missing;—and it was much more likely that the disciples should have stolen it away, than that an impostor should rise from the dead. I shall not go about to confute this story; to unprejudiced and thinking people it carries its own confusion with it: But I must observe, that it is founded entirely upon the circumstance of the soldiers not having seen Jesus come out of the sepulchre; a circumstance that even those who told the real truth, could not contradict, though they accounted for it in a different manner, by saying they were frightened into a swoon or trance at the sight of a terrible apparition, that came and rolled away the stone, and sat upon it. But this fact the chief priests thought it not prudent to allow, as favouring too much the opinion of Christ's being risen from the dead; neither did they think proper to reject it entirely, because they intended to turn it to their own advantage; and therefore, denying every thing that was miraculous, they construed this swoon or trance into a sleep; and with a large sum of money, and promises of impunity, hired the soldiers to confess a crime, and, by taking shame to themselves, to cover them from confusion. And so far, it must be acknowledged, they gained their point; for, until some proofs of the resurrection of Jesus should be produced, of which at that time they had heard nothing more, this story would undoubtedly have served to puzzle the caule, and hold people in suspense. Argument and reason indeed were wholly on the other side; but prejudice and authority were on theirs; and they were not ignorant to which the bulk of mankind were most disposed to submit.

But as no other than presumptive arguments in favour of the resurrection could be drawn from what happened to the soldiers at the sepulchre, even though the chief priests had permitted them to tell the truth; St. Matthew, in his narration, proceeds to second and confirm those arguments by positive evidence, producing witnesses who had seen and conversed with Jesus Christ, after he was risen from the dead: of these, as may be gathered from the other gospels, the number was very considerable; and very numerous were the infinities of Christ's appearing after his resurrection: yet from the latter has St. Matthew selected only two, upon each of which I beg leave to make a few remarks. The first appearance of Christ is to the women, which happened as they went to tell the disciples the message of the angel that had appeared to them in the sepulchre. I have already
already proved, in my observations upon St. John, that Mary Magdalene was not one of those women; and yet the words of St. Matthew, by the common rule of construction, seem to import the contrary. For, in the first place, the paragraph "(and the angel answered and said to the women)" is, in our translation, connected with the preceding by the copulative "and." 2dly, As in the foregoing part of this chapter no mention is made of any other women than Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, and no hint given of any other angel than that described as descending from heaven, &c. the words in this paragraph "(the angel and the women)" must be taken to relate to them. To which I answer, 1st, That this paragraph is not to be so connected with the preceding, as if nothing had intervened; since we shall find upon a closer examination of it, and comparing it with its parallel in St. Mark, that between the keepers becoming like dead men, and the angels speaking to the women, Salome had joined the two Marys in their way to the sepulchre; that before they arrived there the keepers were fled, and the angel was removed from off the stone, and was seated within the sepulchre: for which reason the particle &c, instead of being rendered by the copulative and, should rather be expressed by the disjunctive but, or now, as denoting an interruption in the narration, and the beginning of a new paragraph. 2dly, I allow the angel here spoken of to be the same with that mentioned in the foregoing verses, and the other Mary to be one of those women to whom this angel in the sepulchre, and afterwards Christ himself, appeared; and therefore admit the words, "the angel and the women," in this verse, relate to them. But this will not remove the difficulty; and it will be said, that either Mary Magdalene was with the other Mary in the sepulchre, or there is an inaccuracy in the expression; for the words, "women," and "fear not ye," being plural, imply there were more than one. I grant it, and St. Mark informs us that Salome was there. — But then, instead of one inaccuracy to be charged upon St. Matthew, here are two: Mary Magdalene, who was not present when the other Mary saw the angel, is, by the natural construction of his words, said to be there; and Salome, who was present, he takes no notice of at all. — I allow it, and let those who are given to object make the most of it: but let it at the same time be remembered, that the greatest part of the evangelical writers were illiterate men, not skilled in the rules of eloquence, or grammatical niceties, against the laws of which it is easy to point out many faults in the writings of most of them. The other passage I purposed to make some remarks upon, affords another instance of the same kind; it is as follows: "Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain, where Jesus had appointed them; and when they saw him, they worshipped him;" but some doubted. Here the words, "some doubted," by the strict rules of grammar, must be understood of some of the eleven disciples, who immediately before are said, when they saw Jesus, to have worshipped him; which surely is not very consistent with their doubting: neither is it very probable that a writer, however illiterate, should
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should mean to contradict himself in the compass of three words. Another interpretation therefore, though it be not so strictly agreeable to the grammar rules, is to be fought after, since it is a left crime to offend against grammar than against common sense. “Some doubted,” must mean some, besides the eleven who were present upon that occasion, doubted. And indeed had St. Matthew, in the former part of this narration, taken notice that others besides the eleven were there, there would have been no difficulty in understanding, even according to the strictest laws of the syntax, to whom the “some doubted” did belong; οἱ οἱ, and οἱ οἱ, set in opposition to each other, and signifying some and others, these and those, are frequently to be met with in Greek authors of the greatest authority; and no reason can be given, why, according to this manner of speaking, the οἱ οἱ δὲ καθὼς μαθήται προηκινθεῖσαι ἄντε—οἱ οἱ ἑρμηνεύουσαι, should not be interpreted now or then, the eleven disciples—worshipped him, but other doubted; but that some words to which the second οἱ οἱ (others) refer, are wanting.

But these defects, how grievous soever they may seem to grammarians, or cavillers, till more scrupulous and more punctilious than grammarians themselves, will by no means impeach the veracity of this evangelist in the opinion of those who, in making a judgment of his writings, are willing to take into the account the purpose he had in composing his gospel. He wrote, as I observed before, at the request of the Jewish converts; who, as St. Chrysostom informs us, came to him and besought him to leave, in writing, what they heard from him by word of mouth. His view, in writing the gospel therefore to the Jews, was to repeat what he had before preached to them: in doing of which, it was not at all incumbent upon him to relate every minute circumstance, which he could not but know they were well acquainted with, and which the mention of the principal fact could not fail to recall to their memories. Thus in the two passages above cited (to confine myself to them) it was not necessary for him, writing to the Jews, as it was for St. Mark, who wrote for the Egyptian converts, to explain the business that carried Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to the sepulchre. It was doubtless known among the Jews that they had bought spices, and went to the sepulchre in order to embalm the body of Jesus. Neither was it worth while, for the sake of a little grammatical exactness, to interrupt the course of his narration, to acquaint them that Salome joined the two Marys as they were going to the sepulchre, and went with them thither; and that Mary Magdalene, upon seeing the stone rolled away, ran immediately to inform Peter and John of it; especially as he did not think proper to take notice of Christ’s having appeared to her: and he seems to me to have mentioned Christ’s appearing to the other women, only because it was connected with the principal fact, the story of his appearing in Galilee to the eleven disciples.
Disciples and others. The disciples going to meet their Master on a mountain in Galilee, where he had appointed them, must needs have made a great noise among the Jews; especially as it did not fall out till above a week at least after the resurrection; during which time he had appeared thrice to his disciples, not including his appearance to Peter, to the two disciples, and the women. And as above twenty people were witnesses to one or other of these appearances, the fame of them was in all probability diffused not only through Jerusalem, but throughout all Judea. It is no wonder, therefore, that upon this solemn occasion, which had been notified so long before, not only by an angel at the sepulchre, and by Christ himself on the day of his resurrection, but foretold by him even before his death; it is no wonder, I say, that upon so solemn an occasion a great multitude, besides the eleven, should be got together. St. Paul mentions an appearance of Christ to above five hundred brethren at once, which cannot, with so good reason, be understood of any other but this in Galilee. And though out of so large an assembly some doubted, as St. Matthew says, yet that very exception implies, that the greatest number believed; and even those who doubted must have agreed in some common points with those who believed. They, as well as the eleven, saw Jesus; but, not having had the same sensible evidences of the reality of his body, doubted whether it was himself or his apparition which they beheld; while the latter, who needed no farther conviction, when they saw him, fell down and worshipped. Here then was a fact, which could not in all its circumstances but be very notorious to the Jews, and was therefore highly proper to be mentioned by St. Matthew. Here was a cloud of witnesses, the greatest part of whom were alive when St. Paul wrote his epistle to the Corinthians, and therefore were certainly living when St. Matthew composed his gospel; and many of them probably were of the number of those converts, for whom he wrote. Upon any of these suppositions, and especially the last, it is easy to account for the concise manner in which he has related this important event. It either was, or might easily be, known with all its circumstances by those to whom he addressed his Gospel. The little attendant circumstances, therefore, it were as needless for him to mention, as it was proper to take notice of the event itself. The Gospel of Christ and the faith of Christians are both vain, if Christ be not risen from the dead. It was therefore absolutely necessary for the apostles and preachers of the gospel to prove the resurrection; this they did as well by their own testimony, as by that of others, who had seen Jesus after he was risen. Thus St. Paul relates several appearances of Christ to Cephas and others, and closes all with his own evidence; adding, as and laft of all he was seen of me also.” The Evangelists in like manner produce many instances of the

* See John, chap. xxi. ver. 14. † 1 Cor. chap. xv. 6. ‡ 1 Cor. xv. 6.
§ St. Paul’s 1st Epistle to the Corinthians was written A. D. 57. See Mr. Locke, ad locum. The Gospel according to St. Matthew, about the year 53.
¶ 1 Cor. xv. 5-8.
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the like nature. St. Matthew speaks of two, St. Mark of three, St. Luke of as many, and St. John of four; each of them selecting such as best suited with the purpose had in view when they wrote their gospels. It is evident at least that St. Matthew did so. For in what better manner could he prove to the Jews the resurrection of Christ, than by referring them to the testimony of some hundreds of their own countrymen, who had all seen him after his death, and were so well convinced of the reality of his resurrection, that they believed and embraced his doctrine? This surely was sufficient to convince those who required a number of witnesses; and was, among the Jews at least, the best answer to those who, on the credit of a few Roman soldiers, pretended that the disciples had stolen the body. Upon this fact therefore he seems to rest his cause, and with it closes his gospel, adding only the commission given by Christ to the apostles, and consequently to himself as one of them, "to go and teach all nations," and his promise of "being with them always, even unto the end of the world."

Thus, upon the supposition that St. Matthew wrote his gospel for the Jewish converts, which St. Chrysostom positively affirms, I have endeavoured to account for some defects and omissions observable in his writings, as also for his having given us the history of the guarding the sepulchre, &c. and of Christ's appearing to the eleven disciples in Galilee, of which the other evangelists make no mention. I shall now make a few remarks upon the particulars related by St. Mark, and of which no notice is taken by St. Matthew; but, that I may not wander too far from my purpose, I shall confine them to such only as, belonging to the facts related by the latter, and having been mentioned only by the former, have induced some people to charge these two evangelists with contradicting one another. The circumstances then that I now intend to consider are, 1st, That of the women's "having bought spices, that they might come and anoint the body of Jesus;" 2dly, that of Salome's being one of those women; and, 3dly, that of their "entering into the sepulchre, and seeing a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment, and their being affrighted." I have already observed, that St. Mark wrote his gospel for the use of the Egyptian Christians; some say, the Roman; but whether Roman or Egyptian, is not material to the present question. It is certain they were Gentiles, and strangers to the Jewish customs and religion, as may be inferred from several little explanatory notes dropped up and down in his gospel. In order, therefore, to give these strangers a perfect intelligence of the fact he thought proper to relate, it was necessary for him to begin his account with that circumstance of the women's having bought spices, to anoint the body of Jesus, that they might understand what business carried them so early to the sepulchre, and see, by the preparations made by those women for the embalming the body of Jesus, and the little credit given by the Apostles to the reports of those who had seen our Lord on the day of
of the resurrection (which he mentions afterwards), that his rising from the dead was an event not in the least expected by any of them, and not believed by the Apostles even after such evidence as Jesus upbraided them for not attending to; from all which it was natural for them to conclude, that this fundamental article of their faith was neither received nor preached, but upon the fullest conviction of its truth.—But of this last point I shall speak more largely hereafter. For his mentioning Salome (which was the second thing proposed to be considered) no other reason can be given, and no better I believe will be required, than that the was there; and as to the third circumstance, viz. that of their “entering into the sepulchre, and seeing an Angel there sitting on the right side,” &c. I shall shew, under the second head, which I come now to consider, that though St. Mark has been more particular in his relation of it, yet the principal points are implied in the account given by St. Matthew.

§ 4. This 2d head contains the circumstances in which these two Evangelists agree; and they are these: 1st. The women’s going to the sepulchre early in the morning on the first day of the week: 2dly. Their being told by an angel that Christ was risen, &c. 3d. I have nothing to add to the remarks I have already made upon the first; but, upon the second, I must observe, that the several particulars put into the mouth of this angel at the sepulchre, by these two Evangelists, are precisely the same, except the addition of Peter’s name, inserted by St. Mark, doubts fill for some particular reason, which it is no wonder we should not be able to discover at this great distance of time. This single variation will not, I presume, be thought sufficient to overturn the conclusion I would draw from the exact agreement of all the other particulars, that the fact related by these two sacred writers is the same; especially if it be considered, that the circumstance of the angel’s being within the sepulchre, expressly mentioned by St. Mark, is so far from being contradicted by St. Matthew, as both have imagined, that it is plainly implied by these words, “He is not here,—Come” (ἀνάβου, which might more properly be translated “come hither”) “see the place where the Lord lay;” as is also that other circumstance of the women’s entering into the sepulchre, by the Greek term ἐγκυμονέον, which should have been rendered “they went out,” instead of “they departed,” as it is in the parallel passage in St. Mark. To which let me farther add, that the description of the angel’s clothing, which was a long white garment, according to St. Mark, corresponds with the only particular relating to it taken notice of by St. Matthew, which was, its whiteness: “His raiment was white as snow.” In the latter, indeed, this angel is also painted with a countenance like lightning, and “the keepers” are said to have trembled, &c. for fear of him. The purpose of this angel’s descending from heaven seems to have been not only to roll away the stone from the mouth of the sepulchre, that the women who were on their way thither might have free entrance into it, but also to fright away the soldiers, who were set to guard it, and who, had they continued there, would certainly not have per-
permitted the disciples of Jesus to have made the necessary inquiry for their conviction, could it be supposed that either they, or the women, would have attempted to enter into the sepulchre while it was surrounded by a Roman guard. For this end, it is not unreasonable to suppose he might not only raise an earthquake, but assume a countenance of terror; and, after it was accomplished, put on the milder appearance of a young man, in which form, the women, as St. Mark says, saw him "fitting within the sepulchre, on the right side." This supposition, I say, is neither unreasonable nor presumptuous; for, although to argue from the event to the design or intention, may, in judging of human affairs, be deceitful or precarious; yet in the actions of God, the supreme disposer of all events, it is most certain and conclusive. Thus, in the present case, the sudden appearance of an angel from heaven, attended by an earthquake, his removing by his single strength a stone, which (according to Beza's copy of St. Luke's gospel) twenty men could hardly roll; his taking his station upon it, and from thence, with a countenance like lightning, blazing and flashing amid the darkness of the night, were circumstances so full of terror and amazement, that they could not fail of producing, even in the hearts of Roman soldiers, the conformation mentioned by the Evangelists, and driving them from a port, which a divinity (for so, according to their way of thinking and speaking, they must have styled the angel) had now taken possession of. A cause so fitted to produce such an effect, is an argument of its being intended to produce it; and the intention being answered by the event, is a sufficient reason for varying afterwards the manner of proceeding. Accordingly the angel, after he had removed the stone, and frightened away the keepers from the sepulchre, quitted his station on the outside, put off his terror, and, entering into the sepulchre, sat there in the form of a young man, to acquaint the women that Jesus of Nazareth, whom they fought in the grave, was risen from the dead. That the angel was not seen by the women sitting on the stone, without the sepulchre, is evident, not only from the silence of all the Evangelists, with regard to such an appearance, but also from what has already been observed concerning Mary Magdelene, who, though the saw the stone rolled away from the sepulchre, yet saw no angel, as I have before. Besides, had the angel remained sitting on the stone without the sepulchre, with all his terrors about him, he would in all probability, by frightening away the women and disciples, as well as the soldiers, have prevented those visits to the sepulchre which he came on purpose to facilitate. It was necessary therefore either that he should not appear at all to the women, or that he should appear within the sepulchre, and in a form which, although more than human, might however not be so terrible as to deprive them of their senses, and render them incapable of hearing, certainly of remembering, that message which he commanded them to deliver to the disciples. From all which considerations it may fairly be concluded, that  

* See Whiston on the Resurrection, &c. according to Beza, &c.
that the appearance of the angel without the sepulchre, mentioned by St. Matthew, was to the keepers only; and that when he was seen by the women, he was within the sepulchre, as St. Mark expressly saith, and as the words above cited from St. Matthew strongly imply; so that these two Evangelists agree in relating not only the words spoken by the angel, but the principal, and as it were characteristic circumstances of the fact, which from this agreement I would infer to be one and the same. The like agreement is also to be found in their account of the terror of the women upon seeing the angel, their speedy flight from the sepulchre, and the disorder and confusion which so extraordinary an event occasioned in their minds; a confused and troubled mixture of terror, astonishment, and joy; which, according to St. Mark, was so great as to prevent their telling what had happened to those met upon the way: so must we understand "neither said they any thing to any man;" for it is not to be imagined that they never opened their lips about it. Their silence doubtless ended with the caufe of it, viz. their terror and amazement; and these in all probability vanished upon their seeing Christ himself, who, as St. Matthew hath informed us, met them, as they were going to tell the disciples the message of the angel, accosted them with an "All hail;" and bade them dismiss their fears. But of this more hereafter.

§ 5. I come now, under the 3d head, to consider those particulars in which these two Evangelists are thought to clash and disagree with each other. But so many of those have been already examined and set by me, as I hope, reconciled, under the two preceding divisions, that there remains to be discussed in this but one single point, arising from the seeming different accounts of the time when the women came to the sepulchre. St. Matthew says, "that Mary Magdalen and the other "Mary came to see the sepulchre, as it began to dawn;" St. Mark, "They came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun." To which I must add St. John, who, speaking of the same person, and the same facts, says, "they came when it was yet dark." The ἐν δὲ ἡμέρῃ τῆς "μνήμης of the latter, and the τῇ ἔναβεσσιν of St. Matthew, that signifying it being yet dark, and this, the day beginning to dawn, will, I believe, without any difficulty be allowed to denote the same point of time, viz. the ending of the night, and the beginning of the day; the only question therefore is, how this can be reconciled with the time mentioned in St. Mark, namely, "the rising of the sun." But this question, how perplexing ever it may appear at first sight, is easily resolved, only by supposing that St. Matthew, and with him St. John, speaks of the women's setting out, and St. Mark of their arrival at the sepulchre. And indeed the order of St. Matthew's narration requires that his words should be understood to signify the time of their setting out; otherwise, all that is related of the earthquake, the descent of the angel, &c. must be thrown into parenthesis, which very much disturbs the series of the story, and introduces much greater hardness into the construction, than any avoided by it. Nay, for my own part, I confess I can see no hardness in the interpretation.
tion now contended for. The Greek word ἔρχονται, in St. Matthew, might as well have been translated went as came, the verb ἔρχονται signifying both to go and to come, and consequently being capable of either sense, according as the context shall require. That in St. Matthew, as I said before, requires us to take the word ἔρχονται in the former, for the sake of order, and for another reason, which I shall now explain. The principal fact, upon the account of which the whole story of the women's going to the sepulchre seems to have been related, is the resurrection of Christ; and this fact is absolutely without a date, if the words of St. Matthew are to be understood to denote the time of the women's arrival at the sepulchre. When I say without a date, I mean that it does not appear, from any thing in St. Matthew or the other Evangelists, what hour of that night this great event happened. All the information they give us is, that when the women came to the sepulchre, they were told by Angels he was risen; but, on the contrary, by understanding St. Matthew to speak of the time of Mary Magdalene's setting out to take a view of the sepulchre, we have the date of the resurrection settled, and know precisely that Christ rose from the dead between the dawning of the day and the sun-rising. And can any substantial reason be assigned, why St. Matthew, having thought fit to enter into so circumstantial an account of the resurrection, should omit the date of so important a fact? or that, not intending to mark it, by mentioning the time how women's going to the sepulchre, he should place that fact be
er, which in order of time was prior to it? All these considerations therefore are, in my opinion, powerful arguments for understanding this passage of St. Matthew in the sense above expressed. About St. Mark's meaning, there is no dispute. He certainly intended to express the time of the women's arrival at the sepulchre; his words cannot be taken in any other sense. Those of St. John are limited to the same interpretation with those of St. Matthew, it having been allowed before that they both speak of the same point of time.

Before I quit the examination of these Evangelists, I beg leave to add a few remarks, on occasion of a word made use of in this place both by Mark and John, the explaining of which will set in a proper light some passages, that have not hitherto been brought sufficiently in view. The word I mean is αὐτός, which, having by our translators been rendered by the English word early, hath been limited to that sense only; and yet it has a farther signification, and imports not an only, but pre-European, ante constitution tempus; not only “early,” but “over-early, before the appointed time;” and in this sense, I am persuaded, it was here used by the Evangelists. For, had they intended to denote only the time of the women's setting out, and arriving at the sepulchre, the descriptive phrases “while it was yet dark,” and “at the rising of the sun,” would have been sufficient, and the more general word “early” absolutely redundant; whereas in the other sense it is very significant, and greatly tends to illustrate and confirm what hope
I hope more fully to make appear, by comparing the several parts of this history together, that the women came at different times to the sepulchre, and not all at once, as has been imagined. The business that carried them all thither, was, to pay their last respects to their deceased Master, by embalming his body; for which end they had bought and prepared unguents and spices; but were obliged to defer their pious work by the coming on of the Sabbath, "upon which day they rested," says St. Luke, "according to the commandment." On the eve of the Sabbath, therefore, when they parted, and each retired to their several habitation, it is most natural to suppose that they agreed to meet upon a certain hour at the sepulchre; and, as the evening upon which they were employed required day-light, the hour agreed on in all probability was soon after the rising of the sun; their apprehension of the Jews, as well as their zeal to their master, prompting them to take the earliest opportunity. But Mary Magdalene, it seems, whether from a natural eagerness of temper, or a more ardent affection for her Lord, to whom she had the greatest obligations, or from a higher cause, set out, together with the other Mary, just as the day began to break, in order to take a view of the sepulchre; and having either called upon Salome, or joined her in the way, came thither, together with her, early, before the time agreed on. This, in my opinion, is a very natural account of the whole matter, and points out the importance of these remarkable expressions, "went to see the sepulchre," in St. Matthew, and "who shall roll away the stone for us?" in St. Mark. For if, the reason of these two Marys setting out so early is here assigned: "They went to take a view of the sepulchre," i.e., in general, to see if all things were in the same condition in which they had left them two days before, that, if in that interval anything extraordinary had happened, they might report it to their companions, and in conjunction with them take their measures accordingly. Hence it is also evident, in the second place, why they were so few in number; they came to view the sepulchre, and came before the time appointed for their meeting. 2dly, As upon the present supposition there were but three women who came first to the sepulchre, their design in coming so early could be no other than that expressed by St. Matthew; for they knew that they themselves were not able to roll away the stone, which two of them at least (the two Marys) had seen placed there by Joseph of Arimathæa, and which they knew could not be removed without a great number of hands. Accordingly, "as they drew near, they said among themselves, who shall roll away the stone for us from the door of the sepulchre?" Those words intimate, that one of their chief views in coming to see the sepulchre, was to survey this stone, which closed up the entrance into it, and to consider whether they, and the other women who were to meet them there, were by themselves able to remove it; or whether they must have recourse to the assistance of others. For, "Who shall roll away the stone for us?"
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"us?" implies a sense of their own inability, and of the necessity of calling in others; after which the only thing to be considered was whom and how many: this therefore was the point under deliberation when they approached the sepulchre. 2 dly. It is also plain, from these words, that they did not expect to find any body there, and consequentlv that they knew nothing of the guard which the High-priest had set to watch the sepulchre; of which had they received any intelligence, they would hardly have ventured to come at all, or would not have deliberated about rolling away the stone, as the only or greatest difficulty.


"NOW upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them: And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre. And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus. And it came to pass as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold two men stood by them in shining garments; and as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they fainted unto them, Why feek ye the living among the dead? he is not here, but is risen. Remember how he spake unto you, when he was yet in Galilee, saying, The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again. And they remembered his words, and returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest. It was Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and other women that were with them, which told these things unto the Apostles. And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not. Then arose Peter, and ran unto the sepulchre, and stooping down he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves, and departed, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass."

In this relation of St. Luke's are many particulars that differ greatly from those mentioned by the other Evangelists. For, 1st, The women entering into the sepulchre see neither angel nor angels: And, 2dly, Not finding the body of the Lord Jesus, they fall into great perplexity. 3dly, In the midst of this perplexity, "there stood by them two men in shining garments:" Who, 4thly, say to them words very different from those spoken by the angel in St. Matthew and St. Mark. 5thly, When those women return from the sepulchre, and tell all these things unto the eleven and all the rest, St. Peter is made to be present, and upon their report to rise immediately and run to the sepulchre, &c. These marks of difference, one would imagine, were sufficient to keep any one from confounding the stories above-cited of Joanna and St. Peter with those concerning the Marys, and that disciple related in the other gospels; especially as they have been observed and acknowledged as well by the Christian as the infidel; the latter of whom hath produced them to support the charge of inconsciflency and contradiction, which he hath endeavoured to fix upon the sacred writers; while the former, seduced and dazzled by
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... a few points of resemblance, hath agreed with him in allowing these different facts to be the same; but, denying his conclusion, hath laboured to reconcile the inconveniences by rules and methods of interpretation, which, as they are trained and unnatural, tend only to discover the greatnes of his embarrasment. Whereas the true way, in my opinion, of answering this charge, is to shew that it is founded upon a mistake, by shewing that the Evangelists relate different, but not inconfluent, facts; and that, instead of clashing and disagreeing, they mutually confirm, illustrate, and support each other's evidence. This, therefore, I shall now endeavour to do, by taking a few remarks upon the several articles above mentioned. I shall begin with that relating to St. Peter, because the settlement of that will settle many other points. "Then arose Peter, and ran unto the sepulchre, and flopping down he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves, and departed, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass." This fact has always been taken to be the same with that related by St. John, from which however it differs, among other things, in this very material circumstance, viz. that whereas St. John expressly says, "that Peter went into the sepulchre, while he [John], who got thither first, contented himself with barely flopping down, and looking into it," St. Luke, in the passage before us, tells us, "that Peter flopping down, and looking in, beheld the linen clothes by themselves, and departed." The word σαρκομανάσια (flopping down and looking in), used by both Evangelists, and in the latter applied only to St. Peter, in the former only to St. John, is in his Gospel plainly distinguished from the word σαρκαμονόω (entered in), and set in direct opposition to it; and that not by the force of etymology and construction only, but by some particulars resulting from the actions signified by those two words, which prove them to be distinct and different from each other. He who "went into the sepulchre saw more than he who, staying without, only flopped down and looked in." Thus Peter and John, when they entered into the sepulchre, saw not only the linen clothes lie, but the napkin that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself: but when they only looped down and looked in, they could see only the linen clothes, as is evident from the words of St. John. The whole passage runs thus: Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre; and the other disciple did out-run Peter, and came first to the sepulchre, and he flopping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying, yet went he not in. Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and sees the linen clothes lie, and the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself. Then went in also that other disciple, and saw, &c. Now these two actions ring by these marks as clearly distinguished from each other in St. John, as the different places where they were performed can be by terms entrance and inside of the sepulchre, and as to distinguished lying been separately performed by that Apostle, they must also necessarily.
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necessarily be taken for separate and distinct actions, when related of St. Peter. And if it be reasonable to conclude, from St. John's account, that Peter, when he came with him to the sepulchre, did not stop at the entrance, flop down, and look in, but that he entered into it; it is no less reasonable to conclude, from St. Luke's narration, that, when he came at the time mentioned by him, he did not enter in, but, flopping down, beheld the linen clothes and departed, especially if the force of the Greek word μένη be considered, and the whole passage rendered, as it ought to have been, beheld the linen clothes only lying, καὶ ἄλλημα κατά κατά μένη. From all which it evidently follows, that the fact here related of St. Peter, and that related of him by St. John, are separate and distinct facts, and not one and the same, as has been imagined. And as the facts were different, so did they take their rise from two different occasions, or in other words, as it is evident from all that has been just now said, that Peter went twice to the sepulchre, so there are two distinct reasons for his so doing assigned in the gospels of Luke and John, viz. the report of Mary Magdalene, and that of Joanna and the other women. By the former, having been told that the body of Jesus was taken out of the sepulchre, he ran in great haste to examine into the truth of that account, and in pursuance of this intent entered into the sepulchre, that he might receive a thorough satisfaction upon that point. In the latter were two additional circumstances of importance: sufficient to awaken the curiosity of a less zealous disciple than St. Peter, whose affection for his Lord was, like his natural temper, fervent and impetuous. When he heard therefore from Joanna and the other women of a vision of angels, who had appeared to them at the sepulchre, and informed them that Christ was risen, can we wonder at his running thither a second time, in hopes of receiving some confirmation of the truth of that report, which, though treated by the rest of the apostles as an idle tale, he certainly gave credit to, as the whole tenor of this passage implies? I say, a second time; because, had he gone for the first time upon this report of Joanna's, he could have had no inducement to have gone to the sepulchre a second time from any thing he could learn from the first report made by Mary Magdalene, whose account contained nothing but what was implied in that given by Joanna and the other women. His behaviour also upon this occasion, when he only flopped down and looked into the sepulchre, so different from the former, when he entered into it, is very rational, and consonant with the purpose of this second visit, which was, to see if the angels, who had appeared to the women at the sepulchre, were still there; this could as well be discovered by looking, as by going into the sepulchre, as is plain from the story of Mary Magdalene, who, flopping down and looking in, saw two angels sitting, the one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain, as St. John tells us.

Having now, as I hope, proved that this visit of St. Peter's to the sepulchre, mentioned by St. Luke, must have been his second visit, I have
I have cleared this passage from two objections that lay against it; one, that it did not agree with the relation given by St. John; and the other, that it disturbed and confounded the whole order of St. Luke's narration; so that, notwithstanding this verse is wanting both in the Greek and Latin copies of Beza, there is no reason for rejecting it, as some have proposed.

This point being settled, I beg leave to make a few inferences from it, in order to explain some passages in the preceding verses of this chapter.

First, then, it is plain from this and the ninth verse, that St. Peter, after he had been with St. John and Mary Magdalene at the sepulchre, was now got together with the other apostles and disciples, whom, in all probability, he and John had assembled upon the occasion of Mary Magdalene's report. Peter, I say, and John, had in all probability assembled the other disciples and apostles, to inform them of what they had heard from Mary Magdalene, and of their having been themselves at the sepulchre to examine into the truth of her report; for it is not to be imagined, that these apostles would not have immediately communicated to the rest an event of so much consequence to them all, as that of the Lord's body being missing from the sepulchre. And as we now find them gathered together, and Peter with them, it is no unnatural supposition that they have been summoned thither by John and Peter: at least their meeting together so early in the morning is this way accounted for. Here then we see the reason of St. Luke's naming Mary Magdalene and the other Mary among those which told these things to the apostles. For although these two women were not with Joanna and her fret, and consequently could not have joined with them in relating to the apostles the vision of the two angels, &c. yet, as the account of their having found the stone rolled away, and the body of Jesus missing, had been reported from them by Peter and John to the other apostles, before the return of Joanna from the sepulchre, St. Luke thought fit to set them down as evidences of some of the facts related by him; and, indeed, it was very proper to produce the testimony of the two Marys concerning the stone's being rolled away, and the body gone, because they went first to the sepulchre, and first give an account of those two particulars to the apostles. I here join the other Mary with Mary Magdalene; for, though I think it is pretty plain, from St. John, that she alone brought this account, yet it is remarkable that in her narration she says, "We know not where they have laid him," speaking, as it were, in the name of the other Mary and her own: and doubtless she did not omit to acquaint them that the other Mary came with her to the sepulchre; so that this report, though made by Mary Magdalene alone, may fairly be taken for the joint report of the two Marys, and was probably styled so by Peter and John, and therefore represented as such by St. Luke in the passage before us.

Secondly, from hence also I infer, that the reports of the women were made separately and at different times. For, if Peter went twice to the sepulchre, there must have been two distinct reasons for his
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so doing, which reasons I have shewn to be the reports of Mary Magdalene and Joanna: and as there was a considerable interval between his first and second visit, a proportionable space of time must have intervened between the two reports. After Mary Magdalene's, he had been at the sepulchre, had returned from thence to his own home, and was now got with the other apostles and disciples, whom, as I said, he and John had in all probability called together before Joanna and the women with her came to make theirs.

Thirdly, as the reports were made at different times, and by different women, as the facts reported were different, and said to have happened all in the same place, viz. at the sepulchre, and as these facts must of consequence have happened at different times; it follows, that the women, who reported those facts as happening in their presence, must have been at the sepulchre at different times. For, had they been all present at each of these events, no reason can be given for their differing so widely in their relations, and pretty difficult will it be to account for their varying so much as to the time of making their reports. Here then is a strong argument in favour of what I have before advanced concerning the women's coming at different times to the sepulchre, and particularly about the Marys coming thither earlier than the rest. The reason for their so doing I have already pointed out in my observations upon St. Mark; and have shewn, that, upon the supposition of that reason's being the true one, their whole conduct was proper and consistent: which leads me to consider that of Joanna and the other women, who came somewhat later, and with another purpose, to the sepulchre. The former came to take "a view or survey of the sepulchre," as St. Matthew expressly says; the latter came to "embalm or anoint the Lord's body," and for that end not only "brought the spices which they had prepared," but were also accompanied by other women. Other women must mean some besides those that followed Jesus from Galilee, of whom alone St. Luke speaks in the former part of this verse and the latter part of the preceding chapter. By these therefore, as contradicting-guilded from the Galilean women, he probably means the women of Jerusalem, a great company of whom followed Jesus as he was going to his crucifixion, bewailing and lamenting him.* But what number of them went upon this occasion with the women of Galilee, is not any where said: neither, of these, are any named, besides Joanna, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, though many others followed Jesus from Galilee to Jerusalem, as both Matthew, c. 27, v. 55, and St. Mark, c. 15, v. 41, inform us, and were present at the crucifixion. It is therefore very probable that most, if not all, of those who were wont to minister to him in Galilee, who attended him to Jerusalem, and accompanied him even to Mount Calvary, contributed to this pious office of embalming their Master's body, either by buying and preparing the unguents and spices, and carrying them to the sepulchre, or by going to assist their companions in embalming the body and rolling away the stone, for which purpose I suppose the women

* See the 37th verse of the preceding chapter.
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Of Jerusalem principally attended, since none of them seem to have made any purchase of spiccs for embalming the body; and for this last purpose it is farther probable they thought their numbers sufficient. Accordingly, we do not find them saying among themselves, 'Who shall roll away the stone for us?' as the Marys did; nor do we find the Marys bringing the spiccs which they had bought, as is here related of Joanna, and thole with her; and doubtless the Evangelists had a meaning in their use and application of these expressions, the former of which is very agreeable to the purpose that carried the Marys so early to the sepulchre; as is the latter to that of Joanna, who, coming to embalm the body, brought with her all that was necessary for performing that business, viz. the spiccs, and other women to assist her in rolling away the stone, &c. The different conduct of the women, therefore, indicates their several purposes in going to the sepulchre, and tends to confirm what I have been all along labouring to prove, that they went thither at different times, and not all together.

And as their having had different motives was the cause of their going at different times, and dividing themselves into different companies, so from their coming to the sepulchre in different bodies sprang a subdivision of one of those companies, which I shall now explain. The two Marys and Salome came first to the sepulchre; and as they drew near, lifting up their eyes, perceived that the stone, which was very great, was rolled away from the entrance; upon which, they called Mary Magdalene, concluding that the body of Jesus was taken away, ran immediately to acquaint Peter and John with it, leaving her two companions at the sepulchre. That she was alone when the came to those two Apostles, is strongly implied by the whole context of that passage in St. John, where this fact is related, as I have already observed; and that the left her companions at the sepulchre, is as evident from what St. Mark says of their entering into the sepulchre, &c. The reason of which probably was this: she knew that Joanna and her company would not be long before they came thither, and might therefore think it proper to defer the other Mary, and Salome, to wait for them there, to inform them that they had found the stone rolled away, &c. and that she was gone to acquaint Peter and John with it: but whether this, or any other reason, was the cause of Mary Magdalene's going by herself to Peter and John, and the other two women staying behind at the sepulchre, is not very material to enquire; all I contend for is, that so it was; and that hence arose the subdivision of this company, that gave occasion to two appearances of Angels, and as many of Christ, and consequently multiplied the proofs and testimonies of the resurrection.

I hope by this time it is sufficiently evident, that the facts related by the several women to the Apostles were different and distinct facts: and therefore I think it unnecessary to enter into any farther argument upon that point. And although, in the beginning of my observations upon this chapter of St. Luke, I noted some particulars wherein this story of Joanna differs from that of the other
other women, and promised to make some remarks upon them; yet, for the last-mentioned reason, I dare say I shall be easily acquitted of my promise, especially as those marks of difference are so obvious and striking, that little more need be done than pointing them out to observation. I must, however, beg leave to observe, that the position relating to the Angels appearing and disappearing as they thought proper, laid down in my remarks upon St. John, is farther proved by the manner mentioned here in Saint Luke, which is implied to have been sudden, not only by the force and import of the expression, but by the remarkable circumstance of their not being seen by the women at their entering into the sepulchre.

§ 7. Though the following passage of this chapter relating to Christ's appearance to the Disciples at Emmaus hath been already produced in part, yet I think it proper to insert it entirely in this place, that, by the reader's having it all before him at once, he may be better able to judge of the observation I intend to make upon it.

"And behold two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about three-score furlongs; and they talked together of all those things that had happened. And it came to pass, that while they communed together, and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them; but their eyes were holden, that they should not know him. And he said unto them, 'What manner of communications are these, that ye have one to another, as ye walk and are sad? And one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering, said unto him, 'Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days?' And he said unto them, 'What things?' And they said unto him, 'Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God, and all the people; and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him. But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and, beholding all this, to-day is the third day since these things were done. Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonied, which were early at the sepulchre; and when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive: and certain of them which were with us went to the sepulchre, and found it even so as the women had said: but him they saw not.' Then he said unto them, 'O fools, and slow of heart, to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?' And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself. And they drew nigh unto the village whither they went, and he made as though he would have gone farther. But they constrained him, saying, 'Abide with us, for"
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"It is towards evening, and the day is far spent." And he went in to tarry with them. And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread and blessed it, and brake and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight. And they said one to another, 'Did not our hearts burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures?' And they rove up the fame hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them, saying, 'The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon.' And they told what things were done in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread.

Whoe'er reads this story over with any degree of attention, and considers the subject of the conversation which our Saviour held with the two disciples upon the road to Emmaus, will perceive that it must have arisen from what the angels had said to the women related in the preceding verses of this chapter. To fet this matter in the clearest light, we will put the several parts together. The angels said to the women who came to embalm the body of Jesus, "He is not here, but is risen. Remember how he spake unto you, when he was yet in Galilee, saying, 'The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.'" The words of our Saviour referred to by the angels are these (Luke xviii. ver. 31—33): "Then he took unto him the twelve, and said unto them, 'Behold we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished. For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spited on; and they shall scourge him, and put him to death; and the third day he shall rise again.'" The words of the angels these two disciples had heard from the women before they left Jerusalem; and as they were walking towards Emmaus, and talking over the wonderful things that had come to pass, they seem at first to have fallen into a debate upon the subject of these words, and the prophecies referred to by them, just as our Saviour drew near. That they were engaged in some argument or disquisition, I infer, not only from the Greek word ὕποκουλια, which signifies to discuss, examine, or inquire, together; but from our Saviour's question, who, apparently, having overheard some part of their discourse, asks them, Ἄνι οὐκ ἤκουσα ἐστι εἰς ἀπεκειμένης σημείως ἀληθείας; "What arguments are these, that ye are debating one with another, while ye walk and are sad?" The subject of their argument appears in their answer to this question, in which they give him to understand that they were reasoning upon the things that had come to pass concerning Jesus of Nazareth, "whom," say they, alluding plainly to the words of the angels, "the chief priests and our rulers have delivered to be condemned to death, and have crucified him." And hence arises all our fadness, for "we trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel; and
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"over and above all these things, to-day is the third day since "these things were done" (another allusion to the words of the angels); and "to-day some women of our company" astonished us with an account of their having been early at the sepulchre, and, not finding the body of Jesus, having there been told by angels that he was risen from the dead. And some of our companions, running immediately to the sepulchre, found the report of the women to be true; "but him they saw not." The sufferings, and death, and resurrection, of Jesus, were the subjects of their debates, foretold, as the angels bade them remember, out of the prophets, by Christ himself; and the scope of their inquiry was how to reconcile these events with the prophecies to which they were referred. Part of them had seen accomplished in the suffering and death of Christ; and that ought to have assured them of the accomplishment of the other part: but either from not understanding, or from a backwardness in believing, all that the prophets had said, they stopped short of this conclusion. For this ignorance and backwardness Christ reproves them; asks them whether (according to the prophets) "Christ ought not to have suffered these things, and "to enter into his glory, i.e. to rise again; and then beginning "at Moses and all the prophets, he expounds to them in all the "Scriptures the things concerning himself." The connexion is visible; at the beginning of the chapter the Angels refer the Disciples, for the proof of the resurrection, to the prophets; and here, Christ joining two of those Disciples on the road, is, by their discourse upon that subject, led to explain those prophecies, and prove from them that the Messiah was certainly risen from the dead. And in the like manner is the remaining part of this chapter, to verse the 46th, connected with this and the preceding. For these two Disciples returning to Jerusalem, relate to the Apostles and the rest, whom they found gathered together, what had passed between Christ and them upon the road to Emmaus; and while they were speaking, Christ himself appears; and, after having given them sensible proofs of his being risen from the dead, reminds them, as the angel had done, of the words which he spake unto them in Galilee, saying, "These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with "you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the "law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning "me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might "understand the Scriptures; and said unto them, Thus it is writ "ten, and thus it behaved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead "the third day."

The connexion and dependence of the several parts of this chapter upon each other, point out to us the reason that induced St. Luke to relate the vision of the two angels to Joanna and the other women; and at the same time prove that vision to be distinct and different from those seen by the Marys; each of which had, in like manner, its separate and peculiar reference to other facts, as will prefently be seen.
§ 8. I shall now proceed to consider the appearances of Christ to the women on the day of his resurrection; which, like those of the angels, have also been confounded, and from the same cause, viz. from the want of attending with due care to the several circumstances, by which they are plainly distinguished from each other. And, first, I obverse, that these appearances of Christ are so connected with the appearances of the angels, that these having been proved to be distinct, it follows that those are distinct also. 2dly, St. Mark expressly tells us, that Christ appeared first to Mary Magdalene, which, according to all propriety of speech, implies that she was alone at the time of that appearance, as I have said once before. But I think it self to set down the passages themselves, of St. John and St. Matthew, in which these appearances are related. John, chap. xx. ver. 11. "But Mary stood without, at the sepulchre, weeping; and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre; and seeth two angels in white, sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain; and they say unto her, 'Woman, why weepest thou?' She saith unto them, 'Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.' And when she had said thus, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus saith unto her, 'Woman why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou?' She supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, 'Sir, if thou hast borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.' Jesus saith unto her, 'Mary!' She turned herself, and saith unto him, 'Rabboni.' Which is to say, Master. Jesus saith unto her, 'Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended unto my Father; but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God.' Mary Magdalene went and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken these things unto her." Matt. xxviii. ver. 9. "And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, 'All hail!' And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him. Then said Jesus unto them, 'Be not afraid: go, tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me.'"

After having produced these two passages, it would be wasting both time and words, to go about to prove the appearances therein mentioned to be different. Compare them, and you will find them disagree in every circumstance; in the place, the persons, the actions, and the words; of which last I must obverse, that they refer to two different events, viz. the ascension of Christ into heaven, and meeting his disciples in Galilee, of which they were prophecies; and by which they, and consequently these appearances of Christ, were not long after verified, though discredited at first, and treated as idle tales.

I have now gone over the several particulars of the history of the resurrection, related in the Four Evangelists, have examined them with all the attention I am capable of, and with a sincere desire of discovering
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I second and embracing the truth; and have, as I think, made out the following points: 1st, That the women came at different times, and in different companies, to the sepulchre: 2dly, That there were several distinct appearances of angels: 3dly, That the angels were not always visible, but appeared and disappeared as they thought proper: 4thly, That these several facts were reported to the Apostles at different times, and by different women: 5thly, That there were two distinct appearances of Christ to the women: and 6thly, That St. Peter was twice at the sepulchre. These points being once established, all the objections against this part of the Gospel-history, as contradictory and inconsistent, entirely vanish and come to nought. That very learned and ingenious men have been embarrassed by these objections is some excuse for those who first started them, and those who have lately instigated upon them. Their having now received an answer (if that will be allowed), it is a clear proof that it was always possible to answer them, even with a very moderate share of common sense and learning. The nature of the answer itself, which is founded upon the usual, obvious, plain sense of the words, without putting any force, either upon the particular expressions, or the general construction of the several passages, is an evidence of what I now say. So that I must needs acknowledge, that its having been so long missed is matter of far greater surprize than its having been hit upon now.

I shall here beg leave to subjoin a few observations of a very eminent and judicious person, to whose inspection I submitted these papers, and in whose approbation of them I have great reason to pride myself. They are as follows:

1. To prove the appearances at the sepulchre to be different, and made to different persons, two things concur.

2. I. The several accounts, as given by the evangelists.

3. II. The circumstances which attended the case.

4. The first point is fully considered; and of the second it is very justly remarked, that the women having agreed to be early at the sepulchre, it fell out naturally, that some came before others. Now there being at the place of meeting something to terrify them as fast as they arrived, it accounts also for their dispersion, and their not meeting at all in one body. It may help likewise to account for the manner of delivering their messages to the Apostles; supposing their messages not delivered in the same order, in point of time, as the appearances happened. For the most terrified might be the latest reporters, though they received their orders first.

5. Which observation is favoured by St. Mark's own words, neither said they any thing to any man.

6. The difficulty upon stating the appearances to be different, and made to different persons, arises chiefly from Mary Magdalene being mentioned present by every evangelist: but there seems to be this reason for it; she was at the head of the women and the chief of those who attended our Lord, and followed him from Galilee; and Mary Magdalene, and the women with her, denotes the women who came
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came from Galilee, in the same manner that the eleven denotes the Apostles.

Three Evangelists say expressly that many women were present at the crucifixion. Had it been left to generally, we should have had no account who they were. Therefore St. Matthew, xxviii. 56. adds, οἱ γάρ τίνες, among whom was Mary Magdalene, &c. So it is again, Mark xvi. 40.—St. Luke having laid in general terms, that the women, who followed from Galilee, were spectators of the crucifixion, goes on with the account (xxiv. 1.) of their coming to the sepulchre, seeing angels, and returning to tell the eleven, and all the rest. But to give credit to their report, and to correct the omission in not describing them before, he tells us who they were: and how does he describe them? Way, by saying they were of the company of Mary Magdalene: 'Ἡσαυ οἱ ἡ Ἑλληνίσται, &c. xxiv. 10. which verse admits, perhaps requires, a different reading from that in our translation.

These considerations seem to account for her being mentioned in the transactions of these women, though not always present herself. St. Luke says (xxiv. 1.) that, besides the women from Galilee, there were other women there. To distinguish those who make the report to the disciples, from the other women, he adds the words already referred to.

It is remarkable, that St. Mark says of the women, mentioned by him, no more than that they had bought spices to anoint the body;

The words of St. Luke deserve a particular examination; they run thus in the Greek: ἔδωκεν ᾧ εὐαγγελίζεται ἵππος ἤκελα κατά τὰς παρὰ τὸν Ἰησοῦ κατά τὶς τετακείσι. ‘Ἡσαυ οἱ ἡ Ἑλληνίσται, &c. ήτοι καὶ η Μαγδαληνὴ καὶ Ιωάννης καὶ Ιωάννης ταῦτα τιθείσης. In English, 'And turning back from the sepulchre, they told all these things to the eleven, and to all the rest. Now they who related these things to the Apostles, were Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and the rest with them, i.e. of their company.' As the account of the proceedings of the Galilean women begins in the foregoing chapters, and is carried on without any interruption to the 9th verse of this chapter, so that the several verbs occurring in this and the preceding verses are all governed by the same nominative case, viz. τὰ τετακείσι; in vers. 55 of the 23d chapter, it is evident that τὰ τετακείσι, 'all these things,' must be taken to extend to all the particulars mentioned in that account, and cannot be confined to the transactions of the sepulchre only: and the same observation holds equally to the τάτα in the following verses. The utmost therefore that can be inferred from St. Luke's naming Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, is, that they were concerned in some of these transactions, and joined in relating some of those things to the Apostles; which is true, for they 'sat over against the sepulchre,' when Joseph laid in it the body of the Lord, Matt. xxvii. 61. 'And behold where he was laid'; Mark xvi. 47.—They also had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him; Mark xvi. 1. and were the first who came to the sepulchre that morning, and brought the first account of the body's being missing; Matt. and Mark. And though, by comparing the accounts given by the other Evangelists with this of St. Luke, it appears that neither of these women went with Joanna and her company to the sepulchre; yet as they were Galilean women, and bore a part, and a principal part too, in what the women of Galilee were then chiefly employed about, namely, the care of embalming the body of Jesus, there is certainly no impropriety in St. Luke's naming them with Joanna and the rest, as he does in the end of the general and collective account he gives of what was reported and done by the Galilean women. Neither does his naming them appropriate to them any particular part of that general account, any more than his not naming them would have excluded them from their share of those transactions, and the report then made to the Apostles. In this case they would have been included in the general terms of Galilean women; as, by being named, they are distinguished and marked as the most eminent persons and leaders of that company of women who followed Jesus from Galilee, &c.
body; enough to shew with what intent they went to the tomb:—
that they had any spices with them, he does not say. But St. Luke
says of those he mentions, that they actually brought with them
the spices; and not only so, but that they had prepared them; that
is, made them fit for the use intended. The several drugs were
bought singly, each by itself at the shop, and were necessarily to be
mixed, or melted together for use; and I imagine that, though all
the women joined in buying the spices, yet the care of getting and
preparing them was left particularly to the women mentioned by
St. Luke: and as they were Galileans, and not at home at Jeru-
salem, and probably unacquainted with the method of embalming
bodies, that they employed some inhabitants of the place to buy
and prepare the spices, and go with them to apply them to the
body; and these are the τις τῶν δακτυλίων, others with them, in St.

This will account for St. Matthew saying nothing of spices:—
for they had none with them: they set out before those who went
to bring the spices, to see what condition the sepulchre was in: and
their business is properly expressed by διασάξοντας τὸν τάφον, to see the
sepulchre.

Mary Magdalene was with the first (Matthew and Mark) who
went to the sepulchre; but I think she did not go to the sepulchre
then: as soon as she was in sight of the place, lifting up her eyes
[ἀεικαὶ ἔκρυμεν, Mark xvi. 4.] and seeing the stone removed, she
turned instantly [πρὸς ὧν, John xx. 2.] to tell Peter and John. And
it is plain by her behaviour at her second going, that she had
no share in the fright that seized those who went on after the left
them.

§ 9. Having thus cleared the way, I shall now set down the seve-
rnal incidents of this wonderful event in the order in which, ac-
cording to the foregoing observations, they seem to have arisen; after pre-
miling that our Saviour Christ was crucified on a Friday (the pre-
paration, or the third day before the Jewish sabbath), gave up the
ghost about three o'clock in the afternoon of the same day, and was
buried that evening, before the commencement of the Sabbath, which
among the Jews was always reckoned to begin from the first appear-
ance of the stars on Friday evening, and to end at the appearance of
them again on the day we call Saturday: that some time, and most
probably towards the close of the Sabbath, after the religious duties
of the day were over, the chief priests obtained of Pilate, the Roman
governor, a guard to watch the sepulchre, till the third day was past,
pretending to apprehend that his disciples might come by night, and
steal away the body, and then give out that he was risen, according
to what he himself had predicted, while he was yet alive: that they
did accordingly set a guard, made sure the sepulchre, and, to prevent
the soldiers themselves from concurring with the Disciples, they
put a seal upon the σπῆρα which closed up the entrance of the se-
bulchre.
The order I conceive to be as follows:

Very early on the first day of the week (the day immediately following the Sabbath, and the third from the death of Christ), Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, in pursuance of the design of embalming the Lord's body, which they had concerted with the other women, who attended him from Galilee to Jerusalem, and for the performing of which they had prepared unguents and spices, set out in order to take a view of the sepulchre, just as the day began to break and about the time of their setting out, "there was a great earth-quake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door of the sepulchre, and sat upon it: his countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow; and for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men," during whose amazement and terror Christ came out of the sepulchre; and the keepers, being now recovered out of their trance, and fled, the angel, who till then sat upon the stone, quitted his station on the outside, and entered into the sepulchre, and probably disposed the linen clothes and napkin in that order in which they were afterwards found and observed by John and Peter. Mary Magdalene, in the mean while, and the other Mary, were still on their way to the sepulchre, where, together with Salome (whom they had either called upon, or met as they were going), they arrived at the rising of the sun. And as they drew near, discoursing about the method of putting their intent of embalming the body of their matter in execution, "they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away this stone? for it was very great," and they themselves (the two Marys at least) had seen it placed there two days before, and seen with what difficulty it was done. But in the midst of their deliberation about removing this great and sole obstacle to their design (for it does not appear that they knew any thing of the guard), "lifting up their eyes," while they were yet at some distance, they perceived it was already rolled away. Alarmed at so extraordinary and so unexpected a circumstance, Mary Magdalene concluding, that, as the stone could not be moved without a great number of hands, so it was not rolled away without some design; and that they who rolled it away, could have no other design but to remove the Lord's body; and being convinced by appearances that they had done so, ran immediately to acquaint Peter and John with what she had seen, and what she suspected, leaving Mary and Salome there, that, if Joanna and the other women should come in the mean time, they might acquaint them with their surprize at finding the stone removed, and the body gone, and of Mary Magdalene's running to inform the two above-mentioned apostles with it. While she was going on this errand, Mary and Salome went on, and entered into the sepulchre, and there saw an angel sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment, and they were affrighted. And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted: ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen, he is not here: behold
behold the place where they laid him. But go your way, **disciples and Peter**, that he goeth before you into Galilee;

shall ye see him, as he saith unto you. And they went **quickly,** and fled from the sepulchre; for they trembled and **amazed;** neither said they any thing to any man; for they were **afraid.**” After the departure of Mary and Salome, came **John and Peter;** who, having been informed by Mary Magdalene, that the body of the Lord was taken away out of the sepulchre, and that he knew not where they had laid him, “ran both together to the sepulchre; and the other disciple [John] out-ran Peter, and came first to the sepulchre; and he stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying, yet went he not in. Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie, and the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself. Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw and believed; for as yet they knew not the Scripture, that he must rise again from the dead. Then the disciples went away again unto their own home: but Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping; and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre, and seeth two angels in white, sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain; and they say unto her, “Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto him, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him. And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus saith unto her, “Woman, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou?” She saith, supposing him to be the gardener, faith unto him, Sir, if thou hast borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. Jesus saith unto her, “Mary.” She turned herself, and faith unto him, Rabbi! which is to say, Master! Jesus saith unto her, “Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended unto my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God.” After this appearance of Christ to Mary Magdalene, to whom

**Believed.** Commentators have generally agreed to understand by this word no more than that St. John believed what Mary Magdalene said, viz. That they had taken away the Lord’s body; and seem to have been led into this opinion by the words immediately subjoined, “for as yet they knew not the Scripture that he must rise again from the dead;” which words contain a sort of an excuse for their not believing that he was risen. It is, however, certain, that by the word believes, when it is put absolutely, the sacred writers most commonly mean to have, what is called, Faith; and in this sense it is used no less than three times in the latter part of this chapter. To obviate this objection, retain the usual signification of this verb, and yet reconcile this verse with the following, it is pretended that Beza’s old Greek manuscript says he did not believe, i.e., instead of εκλεισμος, it has so εκλεισμον. Instead of entering into an examination which of these two readings is to be preferred, I shall only observe, that Beza himself, in his Commentaries upon this passage, takes no notice of the various reading above mentioned; on the contrary, he contends, that St. John did believe the resurrection. These are his words: “Et credidit...” See his Greek Testament in Folio, printed at Geneva, A.D. 1598. And I own I am not inclined to his opinion, for reasons which will appear in the course of this work.
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St. Mark says expressly he appeared first, the other Mary and me, who had fled from the sepulchre in such terror and amaze-
that "they said not any thing to any man," (that is, as I un-
and, had not told the message of the angel to some* whom
met, and to whom they were directed to deliver it) were met
their way by Jesus Christ himself, who said unto them, "All
ill! and they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped
m. Then said Jesus unto them, 'Be not afraid; go, tell my
ethren that they go into Galilee, and there they shall see me.'
se several women and the two apostles being now gone
the sepulchre, Joanna, with the other Galilean women, "and
hers with them, came bringing the spices which they had pre-
ried for the embalming the body of Jesus, and finding the stone
ched from the sepulchre, they entered in; but not finding
body of the Lord Jesus, they were much perplexed there-
out, and behold two men stood by them in shining garments;
da as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the
rth, they said unto them, "Why seek ye the living among the
ad? He is not here, but is risen. Remember how he spoke
to you, when he was yet in Galilee, saying, The son of man
be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified,
d the third day rise again. And they remembered his words,
returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things unto
eleven, and to all the rest. And their words seemed to them
idle tales, and they believed them not." But Peter, who, upon
report of Mary Magdalene, had been at the sepulchre, had en-
into it, and with a curiosity that bespoke an expectation of
thing extraordinary, and a desire of being satisfied, had ob-
that the linen-clothes, in which Christ was buried, and the
kin that was about his head," were not only left in the fe-
re, but carefully wrapped up, and laid in several places; and
from thence might begin to suspeét, what his companion St.
from those very circumstances, seems to have believed: Peter,
hearing from Joanna, that she had seen a vision of angels at
pulchre, who had assured her that Christ was risen, starting up,
hither immediately, and knowing that the angels, if they were
the sepulchre, might be discovered without his going in, he
ot as before enter in, but creeping down looked so far in as
the "linen clothes, and departed, wondering in himself at
which was come to pass." And either with Peter, or about
me, went some other disciples, who were present when Joanna
he other woman made their report, "and found it even so as
women had said. The same day two of the disciples went to
village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about three-
ere furlongs. And they talked together of all those things that
V.

* had

obably John and Peter, who were running with Mary Magdalene to the sepulchre
be time that these women were flying from it, might have been discerned by them at a
though the terror they were in might occasion their not recollecting them immediately,
this I shall hereafter say something more.
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"had happened. And it came to pass that while they communed
"together, and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with
"them; but their eyes were holden, that they should not know him.
"And he said unto them, What manner of communications" [argu-
"ments] "are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk and
"are sad? And one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering,
"said unto him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast
"not known the things which have come to pass there in these days?
"And he said unto them, What things? And they said unto him,

"Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in
"deed and word before God, and all the people; and how the
"chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to
"death, and have crucified him. But we trusted that it had been
"he which should have redeemed Israel: and, beside all this, to-day
"is the third day since these things were done. Yea, and certain
"women also of our company made us astonish, which were
"early at the sepulchre: and when they found not his body, they
"came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which
"said that he was alive: and certain of them which were with us,
"went to the sepulchre, and found it even so as the women had
"said: but him they saw not. Then he said unto them, O fools,
"and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!

ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into
"his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he ex-
pounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning
"himself. And they drew nigh unto the village whither they
"went, and he made as though he would have gone farther. But
"they constrained him, saying, Abide with us, for it is towards
"evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with
"them. And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took
"bread, and blessed it, and brake and gave to them. And their eyes
"were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their
"sight. And they said one to another, Did not our hearts burn
"within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he
"opened to us the Scriptures? And they rose up the same hour,
"and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered toge-
"ther, and them that were with them, saying, The Lord is risen in-
"deed, and hath appeared to Simon. And they told what things
"were done in the way, and how he was known of them in break-
"ing of bread.

This is the order in which the several incidents above related
appear to have arisen; the conformity of which with the words of
the Evangelists, interpreted in their obvious and most natural sense,
I have shewn in my remarks upon the passages wherein they are
contained: and although the reasons there given are, I apprehend,
sufficient of themselves to justify the exposition I contend for, yet,
for the better confirmation of what has been advanced, I beg leave
to lay before you an observation or two, suggested by this very
order itself, from whence its aptness and tendency to the great end
which it was in all its parts directed and disposed by the hand of evidence, viz. the proof of the resurrection of Christ, will manibly appear.

§ 10. First, then, by this order, in which all the different events durally and easily follow, and as it were rise out of one another, the narration of the Evangelists is cleared from all confusion and inconsistencies. And, 2dly, the proof of the resurrection is better established by thus separating the women into two or more divisions, than upon the contrary supposition, which brings them all together to the sepulchre; for, in the last case, instead of three different appearances of angels to the women, and two of Jesus Christ, we should have but one of each; whereas, in the former, there is a train of witnesses; a succession of miraculous events, mutually strengthening and illustrating each other, and equally and jointly concouring to prove one and the same fact; a fact, which, as it was in its own nature most astonishing, and in its consequences of the utmost importance to mankind, required the fullest and most unexceptionable evidence. And I will venture to say, never was a fact more fully proved; as I doubt not to make appear to any one, who with me will consider, 1st, The manner; 2dly, The matter of the evidence; and, 3dly, The characters and dispositions of the persons whom it was intended to convince. By these I chiefly mean the apostles and disciples of Jesus, who were to be the witnesses of the resurrection to all the world. By the manner, I understand the method and order in which the several proofs were laid before them; and by the matter, the several facts of which the evidence consisted.

I shall begin with the apostles and disciples, for whose conviction the miraculous appearances of the angels, and of Christ himself, to the women, were principally designed; and the knowledge of whose general characters, as well as of the particular dispositions of their minds at that time, will throw a light upon the other points proposed to be considered.

The greatest part, if not all, of the apostles and disciples of Jesus, those at least who openly and avowedly followed him, were men of lowbirth and mean occupations, illiterate, and unaccustomed to deep inquiries and abstracted reasonings; men of gross minds, contracted notions; and strongly possessed with the selfish, carnal, and national prejudices of the Jewish religion, as it was then taught by the Scribes and Pharisees. And hence, although it is evident from several passages in the gospel-history, that, convinced by the many miracles performed by Jesus of Nazareth, and the accomplishments of many prophecies in him, they believed him to be the Messiah; yet their idea of the Messiah was the same with that of their brethren the Jews, who, by not rightly understanding the true meaning of some prophecies, expected to find in the Messiah a temporal prince, a redeemer and ruler of Israel, who should never die. And to deeply was this prejudice rooted in the minds of the apostles, as well as the rest of the Jews, that although our Saviour constantly disclaimed the
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character of a temporal Prince, and upon many occasions endeavored to undeceive his disciples, yet they could not wholly give up their opinion, even after they had seen him risen from the dead, and received that incontestable proof of his being the Messiah, and of their having mistaken the sense of that prophecy about his being never to die. For, in one of his conferences with them after his resurrection, they ask him, whether he would at that time "rejoin the kingdom to Israel?" with so much obstinacy did they adhere to their former prejudices. This, therefore, being their settled notion of the Messiah, can we wonder their former faith in him should be extinguished, when they saw him suffering, crucified, and dying; and, instead of saving others, not able to save himself? To prepare them for these events, he had indeed most circumstantially foretold his own sufferings, death, and resurrection: but the apostles themselves assure us, that they did not understand those predictions till some time after their accomplishment; and they made this confession at a time when they were as sensible of their former delusion, and undoubtedly as much amazed at it, as they now pretend to be who object it against them; so that their veracity upon this point is not to be questioned. Immortality therefore and temporal dominion being, in their opinions, the characteristics of the Messiah, the sufferings and death of Jesus must have convinced them, before his resurrection, that he was not the Messiah, not that person in whom they had trusted as the redeemer and king of Israel. And having, as they imagined, found themselves mistaken in their faith as to this point, they might with some colour of reason be cautious and backward in believing any predictions about his rising from the dead, had they understood what these predictions meant. The state of mind, therefore, into which the apostles fell, upon the death of their master, must have been a state of perplexity and confusion. They could not but reflect upon his miraculous works, and his more miraculous holiness of life, and were not able to account for the ignominious death of so extraordinary a person—a state of dejection and despair: they had conceived great expectations from the persuasion that he was "the Christ of God:" but these were all vanished; their promised Deliverer, their expected king, was dead and buried, and no one left to call him from the grave, as he did Lazarus. With this life, they might prefigure, ended his power of working miracles, and death perhaps was an enemy he could not subdue, since it was apparent he could not escape it; and hence proceeded their despair. It was likewise a state of anxiety and terror. The Jews had just put their master to death as a malefactor and impostor; what then could his followers expect from his invertebrate and triumphant enemies, but insults and reproaches, and ignominy, scourges, chains, and death? The fear of the Jews made them desert their master, when he was first seized; made Peter, the most zealous of the apostles, "deny him thrice," even with oaths and imprecations; and made the apostles and disciples, when they met together, on the day of the resurrection,
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After they had discovered upon the accounts they had received of Christ’s being risen, retire into a chamber, and shut the door, that they should be discovered by the Jews. Such then was the state of the Apostles minds upon the death of their Master, full of prejudice, doubt, perplexity, despair, and terror; all temperatures that required a gentle treatment, lenient medicines, and a gradual cure. Which leads me to consider, in the next place, the manner, i.e. the method and order of that evidence by which they were recovered into a state of sanity; and, from defectors of their master, converted into believers, teachers and martyrs of the Gospel.

§ 11. The first alarm they received was from Mary Magdalene, who early in the morning, on the third day from the burial of our Saviour, came running to inform Peter and John, that she had found the stone rolled from the mouth of the sepulchre, and that the body of the Lord was taken away. This information carried those two apostles thither, who entered into the sepulchre, and found the linen clothes, in which his body had been wrapped, and the napkin that was bound about his head, folded up, and lying in different parts of the sepulchre. These circumstances, trifling as they may seem at first sight, were, if duly considered, very awakening, and very proper to prepare their minds for something extraordinary; since nothing but the resurrection of Jesus could, in right reason, be concluded from them. The body, they saw, was gone; but by whom could it be taken away? and for what purpose? Not by friends; for then in all probability they would have known something about it: not by the Jews, for they had nothing to do with it. Pilate, to whom alone the disposal of it belonged, as the body of a malefactor executed by his orders, had given it to his disciples, who laid it in the sepulchre but two days before; and wherefore should they remove it again so soon? Not to bury it; for in that case they would not have left the spices, the winding-sheet, and the napkin behind them. Whoever therefore had removed the body, they could not have done it with a design to bury it; and yet no other purpose for the removal of it could well be imagined. Besides, it must have been removed in the night by stealth, and consequently in a hurry: how then came the winding-sheet and the napkin to be folded up, and disposed in so orderly a manner within the sepulchre? Add to all this, that the stone was very large, and therefore many people must have been concerned in this transaction, not one of whom was there to give an answer to any questions. These, or such like reflections, could not but rife in their minds; and these difficulties could not but dispose them to expect some extraordinary event. His life, they knew, was a life of miracles, and his death was attended with prodigies and wonders; all which could not but come crowding into their memories: and yet none of them at that time (excepting John) believed that he was risen from the dead; “for as yet” (as the apostle affirms us) “they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead;” that is, they did not understand from the Prophets that the Messiah was to rise again from the dead; being, on the contrary, persuaded,
that these very Prophets had foretold the Messiah should not die abide for ever.

The next information they received was from Joanna, a woman who accompanied her to the sepulchre, who acquaints with two new and very surprising particulars, viz. that there seen a vision of angels, and that those angels had told the Jesus was risen, and had moreover reminded them of what I had formerly spoken to his disciples concerning his suffering death, and his resurrection on the third day, being foretold Prophets. What various reflections must these two amazing circumstances immediately suggest to them! The great difficulty of the body of their matter being missing, which had so much alarm puzzled them, was at once solved. Angels told the women from the dead; and, to induce them the more easily to believe astonishing an event, bade them remember that Christ himself not only from the spirit of prophecy, with which they knew endowed, but from the Prophets also, predicted his own full

* I have placed this report of Joanna next to the relation above cited made Magdalene, and before the second report made by her, and that of the other two because, by what the two disciples, who were going to Emmaus, say to Jesus, it is that they had heard the report of Joanna, and had not, when they left the disciples, heard either of the last-mentioned reports. Farther, by their using the plural in speaking of those to whom this report was made, as “some women of many made us astonished,” compared with what St. Luke says at the 7th verse, of their returning and telling all those things to the eleven and all the rest, it looks as if of the number of those who were present when this report was made and that was of that number is evident; and so, I think, were all the eleven, and many those called disciples, assembled together, probably by John and Peter, as was served. These several points being admitted, it will follow, that the report of those with her was made to the eleven and all the rest, previously to the second Mary Magdalene and that of the other two Marys, though the events which gave to the two latter were in order of time prior to that related by Joanna; for, if an who were present when Joanna related what had happened to her at the sepulchre heard that Christ had appeared to Mary Magdalene and the other two Marys, they doubtless have mentioned it upon that occasion, in which case it must have been and would as certainly have been mentioned by the two disciples in their conversation with Jesus on the way to Emmaus; and even supposing they were not present Joanna made her report, but received it only from some who were, it is probable they told them the particulars relating to Joanna, and Peter’s second visit to the would at the same time have informed them of the account given by Peter and the other Marys, had they at that time heard any thing of them. There be some difficulty in accounting for this, especially as the appearance of Christ Magdalene was very early; and it is said, John xxv. 18, that the went and told the disciples; and still more expressly by St. Mark, xvi. 10. And if her seal in carrying the news of the stone’s being removed, and the warmth of her own to the express command of Christ to her to acquaint his disciples, be considered, it very probable that she went on this errand immediately; and it is very natural to the went directly to Peter this second time, as she did the first; and that apostle, her at the sepulchre, went directly home, as did also John, John xx. 10. But Peter were gone to acquaint the other disciples with the Lord’s body being missing, supposed her not finding them immediately is easily accounted for; bethesda when other things might happen unknown to us, to bring Joanna and those with her to the other disciples, before they saw Mary Magdalene after her second visit to the and before the other two Marys came with their message, who, notwithstanding the to the city when Christ appeared to them, and the early date of that appearance, might not be able to recover from their sight to deliver their message immediately; were, they might, for the reason above given, mistake that apostle [Peter] to whom particularly commanded to deliver it, and to whom, therefore, in all probability, directly. All these things, however, are mere conjectures, and as such I submit to judgment of the reader.
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and death, and rising again from the dead on the third day. The words of their matter they well remembered, and were so far convinced that the women spoke truth. Those parts also of this prediction which related to his sufferings and death, they had seen most especially accomplished; and that was a powerful argument for their believing that the rest might be so too: besides, this was the third day, the very day on which Jesus had told them he should rise from the dead. The argument therefore drawn from the testimony of the reports upon which their disbelief of the resurrection was principally founded, was here attacked; and the interpretation of their matter, verified in most of the particulars by the event, was here set up in opposition to that of the Scribes and Pharisees, whose leaven they had so frequently been cautioned against. But then they did not understand what was meant by his rising from the dead. Was he once more to live with them upon the earth? If so, where was he? Nobody had as yet seen him, neither the women, nor those among them who, upon their report, had gone to the sepulchre. By his rising from the dead, therefore, might be meant, that God had taken him into heaven, as he did Enoch and Elijah; and could they hope he would return from thence to be the redeemer and king of Israel? To obviate these several difficulties, and proceed one step farther towards explaining to them the meaning of the resurrection, they were probably acquainted in the next place by Mary Magdalene, that she had seen, not angels only, but Christ himself, who had appeared unto her as she stood weeping at the sepulchre: that at first indeed she did not know him, taking him for the gardener; that, upon his calling her by her name, she knew him; that, having offered to embrace him, he forbade her, giving her for a reason that he was not yet ascended to his Father; but bidding her go, and tell his disciples, that in a short time he should ascend to his Father, and their Father, his God and their God. In this relation of Mary Magdalene's were three articles of great importance. 1st. A stronger proof than any they had hitherto received, of Christ's being risen from the dead: Mary Magdalene had seen him. 2dly. He told her he was not yet ascended to his Father, by which there seemed to be some hope given them, that they also might have the satisfaction of seeing him. 3dly. The words, "I ascend to my Father," &c. plainly referred to a conversation he had with them before he was betrayed, in which he told them that he should go to his Father, &c. By these words, therefore, they were not only reminded of another prediction of his, but called upon to expect the great things which were to be the consequence of his going to the Father, viz. the coming of the Comforter, a power of working miracles; and what would be an earnest of all these things, the joy of seeing him again; all which he had promised them in the conversation alluded to in this message*. Yet some doubts and difficulties still remained. Nobody but Mary Magdalene had seen him; and she did not know him at first, but took him for the gardener.

* See John, xiii. 24.
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dener. Perhaps the whole was illusion; but allowing it was Christ whom she saw, why was he commanded not to touch him? It was probably an apparition, and not Christ himself. Besides, wherefore did he not appear to his disciples, who, according to his own promise, were to see him again? The whole story therefore might still appear to them an idle visionary tale.

To deliver them from these perplexities, nothing could be better calculated than the account given by the other Mary and Salome, which imported, that they also had been at the sepulchre, where they had seen an angel, who not only assured them that Christ was risen, but ordered them to tell his disciples, that they should meet him in Galilee, agreeably to what he himself had said to them in his lifetime: that they were so amazed and terrified at this vision, that they fled from the sepulchre with the utmost precipitation, intending to communicate these things to the Apostles, as the angel had commanded them, but were so overcome with fear, that they had not the power to tell what they had seen and heard to some whom they saw in the way: that, as they were going, Jesus Christ himself met them, and saluting them with an "All hail! bade them not be afraid, but go and tell his brethren that they should go into Galilee, and that they should see him there;" to which they added, "that they went and held him "by the feet, and worshipped him." And farther they informed Peter, that the angel had expressly enjoined them to deliver this message to him in particular. Had the apostles and disciples given credit to this account of Mary and Salome, they could have had but one scruple left. Jesus had now appeared to two women besides Mary Magdalene; had permitted those women to embrace his feet, and given thereby a sensible proof that it was himself, and not an apparition; and had also appointed a place where they themselves were to see him. The only scruple, therefore, that now remained, arose from their not having seen him themselves; and, till they did, they seemed resolved to suspend their belief of his being risen from the dead, and treated all these several visions of the women as so many idle tales.

It is observable, that all these miraculous incidents followed close upon the back of one another, and consequently were crowded into a small compass of time; so that we ought to be the less surprized at the apostles not yielding at once to so much evidence. Such a heap of wonders were enough to amaze and overwhelm their understandings. They were, therefore, left for a time to ruminate upon what they had heard; to compare the several reports together; to examine the Scriptures; and recollect the predictions and discourses of their matter; to which they were referred both by the angels and himself. But the examination of the Scriptures was a work of some time; and, in the situation in which they then were, their minds undoubtedly were in too great an agitation to settle to such an employment with the composure and attention that was necessary. Besides, it must be remembered, they were a company of illiterate men, not versed in the interpretations of prophecies, not accustomed to long arguments and deductions; and were moreover under the dominion of an inveterate prejudice, authorised by the Scribes and Pharisees,
the priests and elders, whose learning and whose doctrines they had been instructed early to revere. To sift them in their inquiries, and lead them to the sense of the Scriptures, the only rational means of conquering their prejudice, Christ himself appeared that same day to two of his disciples who were going to Emmaus, a village about three score furlongs distant from Jerusalem, and whom he found discoursing and reasoning, as they went, upon those very topics. These disciples, as I have already shewed, had left Jerusalem before any of the women who had seen Christ had made their report, at least that report had not come to their knowledge. All they had heard was, that some women, who had been early at the sepulchre, had there been informed by angels, that he was risen from the dead, and put in mind that he himself had formerly predicted his resurrection, by shewing out of the Prophets that so it was to be. This argument were they debating, when our Saviour joined them; who questioning them upon the subject of their debate, and the affliction visible in their countenances, and understanding, from the account they gave, that they were still unsatisfied as to the main point, and seemed to put the proof of his being risen from the dead upon his shewing himself alive, rebuked them first for their "ignorance and backwardness" in believing all that the prophets had spoken; and then, beginning "at Moses and all the Prophets, he expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself." During this whole conversation they knew him not; their eyes were holden, as St. Luke informs us, and for what reason is very plain. The design of Christ, in entering into so particular an exposition of the Prophets, was to shew, that, by making a proper use of their understanding, they might, from those very Scriptures, whose authority they allowed, have been convinced that the Messiah ought to have suffered as they had seen him suffer, and to rise from the dead on the third day. That is, Christ chose rather to convince them by reason, than by sense; or at least so to prepare their minds, that their asent after wards to the testimony of their senses should be with the concurrence of their reason. He had proceeded in the same manner with the other disciples at Jerusalem, from all of whom he had hitherto withheld the evidence of sense, having not appeared to any of them, excepting Peter, till after the return of these two disciples to Jerusalem. This proceeding, at once so becoming the Lord of righteousness and truth, and the freedom of man, as a reasonable being, must have been prevented, had Christ discovered himself to them at his first appearing. Wonder and astonishment, in that case, had taken place of reason, and left them, perhaps, when the first strong impression was a little worn away, in doubt and scepticism. But now having duly prepared them to receive the testimony of their senses, he discovered himself to them, and that by an act of devotion, in "breaking of bread," which among the Jews was always attended with thanksgiving to God, the giver of our daily bread. But there seems to have been something peculiar in this action, upon which account it was mentioned by St. Luke in his narration of this history, and by the two disciples themselves when they related to the apostles.
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apostles at Jerusalem, what had happened to them at Emmaus. The manner undoubtedly of breaking the bread, and probably the form of words in the thanksgiving, were particular to our Saviour; and these latter, perhaps, were the very same with those made use of by him at the last supper. At least, these two actions are described by St. Luke in the same words, viz. “He took bread and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave to them.” If so, how strongly were they called upon by this action to remember their Lord, who had instituted that very form in remembrance of his death! and how properly did it accompany that discovery of himself, which he now thought fit to make to them! Accordingly they were convinced, and returned that same hour to Jerusalem, where they found the Apostles assembled together, and debating—apparently upon the several reports they had heard that day, and particularly upon what Peter had told them, to whom some time that day Christ had appeared. But as neither the time, nor the particulars of that appearance, are recorded by the Evangelists, I shall not pretend to say any thing more about it, than that the apostles seem to have laid a greater stress upon that alone, than upon all those related by the women. For upon these two Disciples coming into the chamber, they acrost them immediately, without waiting to hear their story, with “The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon,” but make no mention of any of his appearances to the women. After which, the two disciples related what had happened to them in the way to Emmaus, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread. But St. Mark says, * they did not believe these two disciples any more than they had done the others to whom Christ had appeared; which words seem to contain a sort of a contradiction to what they themselves seem to acknowledge in saying, “the Lord hath risen indeed, and hath appeared unto Simon.” Let us therefore examine these two passages with a little more attention. The whole passage, in St. Mark, is this; “After that, he appeared in another form to two of them, as they walked, and went into the country, and they went and told it unto the rest;” “due, neither believed they them.” To which I must add the following: † “Afterwards he appeared unto the eleven, as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen.” By comparing these passages in St. Mark with the parallel passages in St. Luke, it will appear what the belief of the apostles was, and what their unbelief. The parallel to the first has been already considered. The course of my narration leads me now to consider that to the second; and, in doing of this, I shall take occasion to observe how they illustrate and explain each other, and thereby vindicate these two Evangelists from the suspicion of contradicting one another’s account.

The apostles, by the several relations of the women, which they received early in the morning, and upon which they had had sufficient time to comment and reflect (for it was now night), and afterwards

* Chap. xvi. 15. † Ver. 14
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afterwards by those of Peter and the two disciples from Emmaus, being ripe for conviction, Christ vouchsafed to give them that evidence they seemed so much to desire, and which having been granted to others, they had some reason to hope for and expect. Accordingly, as the disciples from Emmaus had just finished their story, "Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and faith unto them, Peace be unto you: and they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed they had seen a spirit." Here then was their error, and in this confined their unbelief. They acknowledged, indeed, that Christ was risen from the dead, but did not believe that he had bodily appeared to those who pretended to have seen him, and to have had sufficient evidence upon that point. These, St. Mark says, they did not believe; and we learn from St. Luke, that, when he appeared to them, they did not believe even their own eyes, but supposed they had seen a spirit. That this was the unbelief for which, as we read in St. Mark, our Saviour rebuked them, is evident from what follows after in St. Luke. "And he said unto them, why are ye troubled? And why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them his hands and his feet."

We may judge of the distemper by the remedy. He bade them feel and see that it was no spirit, but he himself. Why? because they doubted of it: and he upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they doubted of it, notwithstanding the testimony of people whose veracity they had no reason to suspect, and who brought credentials with them that could not be forged. It being evident from these passages, thus compared together, that the unbelief of the Apostles, mentioned by St. Mark, and the belief which they professed, according to St. Luke, were both partial, those two evangelists are thus perfectly reconciled.

But if any one should still insist that these words of the apostles and disciples, "the Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon," imply that they then had a full and explicit belief of the resurrection of Christ, as from the force of the word "indeed" I am myself inclined to think, and should demand how they came afterwards to disbelieve the two disciples, and to suspect even that appearance which themselves saw? I answer, that in the appearance of Christ to the two disciples, and in that afterwards to themselves, were some circumstances which at first, and till more satisfactory proofs were given, might naturally tend to confound and unsettle the faith which they had taken up upon the evidence of Peter: because Christ appearing first to the two disciples in another form, and vanishing out of their sight as soon as he was made known to them, seemed better to suit with the idea of his being a spirit, than a living body; and his entering into the room where they were assembled, the doors being shut, rather confirmed that idea, in the first sudden impression it made upon their minds; which mistake, in both cases, arose from their not attending sufficiently to the miraculous powers belonging
belonging to Christ, to the operations of which his being in the body was no impediment. This inadvertency, and want of due consideration in the apostles and disciples, justifies our Saviour's rebuking them for not believing which they had seen him. But the doubts occasioned by it were soon overcome by those farther proofs of the reality of his body, which he afterwards vouchsafed to give them: and by this explanation, as well as by the former, the evangelists are cleared from contradicting each other.

However, neither did these proofs entirely satisfy them; for, as the history goes on, "while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, Christ said unto them, Have ye any meat? And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and an honey-ccomb, and he took it, and did eat before them." So much compulsion did he shew for their infirmity! and so much care did he take, that not even a shadow of a scruple should remain in their minds, upon a point of the utmost importance to the great business he came about! And perceiving now that every doubt was vanished, and they were perfectly convinced, he said to them (purposing the argument begun by the angels, and carried on by himself with the two disciples in the way of Emmaus), "These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understandings, that they might understand the Scriptures, and said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ (i.e. Messiah) to suffer, and to rise from the dead on the third day; and that repentance, and remission of sins, should be preached in his name, beginning at Jerusalem: and ye are witnesses of these things."

The Apostles having now had every kind of evidence laid before them, that was requisite to convince them of the reality of the resurrection of Christ; and being moreover enabled, by the gift of that Holy Spirit which inspired the prophets, to understand the true meaning of those sacred oracles to which their Master constantly referred them for the marks and characters of the Messiah, which he affirmed to be found in him, as well in his sufferings and death, and rising again from the dead on the third day, as in the miraculous actions and unpolluted holiness of his life; were again left to consider and examine at leisure the several proofs of the resurrection, which they had heard and seen that day; and particularly those arising from the accomplishment of the predictions contained in the Holy Scriptures. That they might apply themselves to this examination with that cool, deliberate, and sober attention, that is more especially necessary to the rooting out inveterate and religious prejudices, and planting in their stead a rational and well-grounded faith, such as is required of all those who believe in Christ, and particularly necessary for those who were to be witnesses of all these things to all the world, he forbore visiting them any more for eight days; after which he condescended to submit himself to a farther examination, in order to remove the unreasonable scruples of St. Thomas, one of the apostles, who, having not been
been present when our Saviour appeared to the other disciples, and consequently not having seen him himself, refused to believe upon the report of others so wonderful a thing as Christ's rising from the dead; nay, he was resolved not to be convinced with seeing only. "Except I shall see in his hands, says he, the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe." Jesus, when he appeared to his disciples, shewed them his hands and his feet, as a proof of his being the same Jesus that was crucified. This circumstance, among the rest, the Apostles undoubtedly related to St. Thomas, as an evidence by which they were assured that it was their master whom they had seen; and upon this evidence St. Thomas also was contented to believe: but first he would be convinced that it was real; he would not only see the print of the nails, which might be counterfeited; he would put his finger into the print of the nails, and thrust his hand into his side. Eight days after, therefore, when his Disciples were again met together in a chamber, and Thomas was with them, Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. Then faith he to Thomas, reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands, and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side; and be not faithless, but believing." What could St. Thomas do, but yield immediately to the evidence he had required? And what could he say to one who appeared to know all his thoughts, but "My Lord, and my God!" Jesus faith unto him, "Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."

After this there seems to have been no scruple left in the minds of any of the Apostles, to whom however Christ was still pleased to continue his visits, * being seen of them, as St. Luke tells us, "forty days after his passion, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God." But as hitherto all the appearances of Christ seem to have been intended only for the conviction of his Apostles, and those that follow rather for their confirmation and instruction in the faith and doctrines of the Gospels, sacred writers, who have been very particular in the accounts they give us of the former, have mentioned but very few of the latter: I say few; for I think it highly probable that the appearance of Christ to his apostles for the remaining thirty days, were more than they have thought proper to record. And the reason of this different proceeding is very obvious. The apostles are to be considered both as witnesses of the miracles and the sufferings, the death and the resurrection, of Jesus Christ, and teachers and preachers of his doctrine. In the character of witnesses, a circumstantial account of the means and opportunities they had of knowing certainly the several facts attested by them, must needs give great force and credit to their evidence; whereas, in that of preachers, it is sufficient if their auditors were satisfied in general that the doctrines taught by them were derived from the instructions, and autho-
rifed by the commision given them by their maister to teach all na%
\tion; and of this, the various gifts of the Holy Spirit, poured out
not upon the Apostles only, but by them upon all believers, were
full and unquestionable proofs. But among the last-mentioned ap-
pearances of Christ there are two, which, by reason of their con-
exion with the former, ought by no means to have been omitted:
the first relates to Christ’s meeting his disciples in Galilee, which
was foretold by Christ himself before his death; repeated by the
angels to the women at the sepulchre, and afterwards confirmed
to them again by Christ. The accomplishment of this prophecy, it
was certainly necessary to shew; accordingly we have it in St. Ma-
thew, who says, “Then the eleven disciples went into Galilee, unto
a mountain where Jesus had appointed them; and when they saw
him, they worshipped him; but others doubted.” The second, in
like manner, correpsonds with what was spoken by our Saviour to
Mary Magdalene in these words: “But go to my brethren, and say
unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father; and to my
God and your God;” which words, as I have already observed, re-
ferred to a conversation he had with his disciples the night before he was
betrayed, wherein he told them, 1st, That he should go to his Father;
2dly, That he would come to them before he went to his Father; 3dly,
That after he was gone to the Father, he would send them a comfort-
er, even the Spirit of Truth; who would “teach them all things,
and bring all things to their remembrance, whatsoever he had said
unto them.” And, 4thly, That whosoever believed on him should
have the power of working as great, nay greater miracles than he did.
The fulfilling of which several promises, or prophecies, I shall now
set down, only premising that the second article was abundantly ac-
complished by the several appearances above mentioned, as we have
already seen. The first, viz., his ascension into heaven, came to pass
in this manner;—* “And being assembled together with them,
he commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem,
but wait for the promise of the Father, which, faith he, ye have
heard of me. For John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be
baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. When they
therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt
thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto
them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which
the Father hath put in his own power; but ye shall receive power
after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be wit-
nesses unto me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Sa-
maria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth. And when he
had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up, and
a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked
steadfastly towards heaven, as he went up, behold two men stood
by them in white apparel, which said unto them, Ye men of Ga-
lilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which
is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come, in like manner as

We have seen him go into heaven."—The history of the accomplishment of the third article is in the next chapter, and in these words: "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place; and suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting: and there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as a fire, and it sat upon each of them, and they were filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. And there were dwelling at Jerusalem, Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in their own language. And they were all amazed, and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galileans? And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born? Parthians and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Melopotamia, and in Judea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and Proselytes, Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God."—For a proof of the com- mission of the fourth article, I shall refer the reader to the history of Acts of the Apostles, in which he will find numerous instances of the power of working miracles in the apostles; "by whose hands" (as the historian, ch. v. ver. 12.) "were many signs and wonders wrought among the people,—inasmuch that they brought forth he sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that it least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them. There came also a multitude out of the cities round about Jerusalem, bringing sick folk, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits, and they were healed every one." From this view of the method and order in which the several proofs the resurrection were laid before the apostles, it is manifest that, Christ required of them a reasonable and well-grounded faith, so he pursueth the most proper and effectual means for the attaining end. With this purpose, instead of bearing down their reason, dazzling their understanding by a full manifestation of himself all once, we see him letting in the light upon them by little and little, preparing their minds by the gradual dawn of truth, that they might be able to bear the full force of the sun of righteousness rising in the grave; to consider and examine, and know that it was his self, and to assure the world it was impossible they could be lived. And as, by this proceeding in general, he intended to their understandings by degrees, and conduct them step by step full conviction and knowledge of the truth; so by referring them to the Scriptures, and submitting himself to the scrutiny and judgment of their enemies, he did not only wave all authority, but require in a strong and particular manner to exercise their reason in mining the evidence brought before them; for which purpose also
he both improved their faculties by the infusion of his Holy Spirit, and gave them sufficient time, and frequent opportunities, "shewing "himself to them alive after his passion, by many infallible proofs," says the author of the Acts, "being seen of them forty days, and "speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God." And most certainly never was evidence more fairly offered to consideration, never was there inquiry put upon a more rational method, as indeed there never were any facts that could better abide the test. This shall now endeavour to evince, by considering the facts themselves, upon which the proof of the resurrection, and consequently the faith of the Apostles, was established.

§ 12. The facts, of which the evidence of the resurrection con- sisted, may be comprised under three heads: 1st, The appearances of the angels; 2dly, the appearances of Christ to the women; and 3dly, the appearances of Christ to the disciples and apostles.

1st. The appearances of the angels at the sepulchre on the morn- ing of the resurrection were many, each differing from the other, and seen by different persons: as, 1st, by the Roman soldiers, who kept the sepulchre; 2dly, by the other Mary and Salome; 3dly, by Mary Magdalene; 4thly, by Joanna, and those with her.

The angel, who appeared to the Roman soldiers, was clothed with terror; "His face was like lightning, and his raiment white as "snow." His coming was attended with an earthquake, and his strength so much beyond that of mortals, that he singly rolled away the stone from the mouth of the sepulchre; which, according to Beza's copies, both Greek and Latin, was so large that twenty men could hardly roll it. I have already taken notice of the two purposes upon which this angel of the Lord descended from heaven, viz. to fright away the soldiers, and to open the sepulchre, that the women who were then on their way thither, and the others, both women and disciples, and Jews, who were to come thither that day, might have free entrance into it, and see that the body of Jesus was not there. The reasonableness of these two purposes, I think, every body must acknowledge; and that is a very material point towards establishing the credibility of the fact; especially if we consider that, without the interposition of Heaven, the sepulchre would probably not have been opened, nor the guard removed, till after the expiration of the third day, the day prefixed by Christ for his rising from the dead; in which case, though no earthly power could have hindered Christ, who is the power of God, from coming out of the grave, yet the door of the sepulchre remaining closed, and the guard continuing there, must effectually have prevented that examination into the state of the se- pulchre, which convinced St. John that Christ was risen, and which, if it did not of itself amount to a clear proof of the resurrection, was at least admirably calculated to prepare the minds, not of the Apo- stles only, but of all the Jews who were at that time in Jerusalem, to admit such other proofs as were afterwards offered to their con- sideration. For it is not to be imagined, that none of the disciples of Jesus visited the sepulchre that day. The story told by the soldiers undoubtedly soon spread all over Jerusalem; and bare curiosity, with-
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out any other motive, was surely sufficient to carry numbers to sur-
vey the scene of so astonishing an event: a sepulchre, hewed out of a
rock, closed with a vast stone, and that stone but the evening before
glued up by the high priests and elders, and committed to a guard of
Roman soldiers; this sepulchre, notwithstanding all these precautions,
opened, as one part of the soldiers reported, by an angel from hea-
ven, or, as others said, by the disciples of Jesus; who, as was pre-
tended, “came by night, and, while the guard slept, stole away the
body of Jesus,” which in effect was missing. These two different
and irreconcilable reports must have likewise induced others to go,
and consider upon the spot, by examining into the nature and situ-
tion of the sepulchre, the probability of that report, which charged
the disciples with having stolen away the body of Jesus; for as, upon
that supposition, none but human means are said to have been em-
ployed, in order to know whether those means were proportioned to
the effects ascribed to them, it was necessary to compare what was
done with the manner in which it was pretended to be performed. And
upon such an examination, I think, it must have appeared to every
confident man, if not impossible, at least improbable in the highest
degree, for the disciples of Jesus to have stolen away his body, while
the guards were at their posts. For supposing the disciples to be the
revers of what they were, bold, enterprising, cunning impostors,
and capable of making so hazardous an attempt, can it also be sup-
posed, that a company of Roman soldiers, trained up under the strictest
discipline, and placed there but the evening before, should be all
asleep at the same time, and sleep so soundly and so long, as not to
be awakened, either by rolling away the stone (which, as it finely
closed up the mouth of the sepulchre, must certainly have been very
large), or by the carrying off the body? The former of which re-
quired a great number of hands, and the latter must have appeared to
have been done with some deliberation, since the linen clothes in which
the body was wrapped, and the napkin that was wound about the
head, were folded up and laid in different parts of the sepulchre. The
sepulchre was hewed or hollowed into the solid rock; so that they
could have no thought of making a secret passage into it, by digging
through the rock, and consequently must have gone in by that only
entrance which was closed up by a great stone, and guarded by a
band of Roman soldiers; these several circumstances, duly at-
tended to, were of themselves sufficient to invalidate the testimony
of those soldiers who pretended that the disciples stole away their
master’s body while they were asleep. But they were, on the
other hand, very strong arguments for the credibility of that ac-
count, in which all the soldiers at first agreed, and which part of
them undoubtedly had published, before the other story was put into
their mouths by the chief priests and elders. For in this relation a
causis is assigned proportionable to all the effects; effects which, as
they were visible and notorious, as well as extraordinary, could not
fail of exciting the natural curiosity of mankind to enquire by what
means they were brought about. The solution is easy and full. “An
angel of the Lord descended from heaven, rolled away the stone from
You. V. “the
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"the mouth of the sepulchre, and fat upon it: his countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow." This account for the terror of the soldiers, their deserting their post, their precipitate flight into the city; for the stone's being rolled away from the mouth of the sepulchre, even while it was surrounded by a Roman guard; for the sepulchral linen being left in the grave, folded as; and lying in different places; and for the body's being missing; and therefore the cause here assigned, however wonderful, is most likely to be true.

Nor could the miracle be an objection to the credibility of this account among the Jews; who, upon the authority of their lawgivers, their prophets, and their historians, were accustomed to think the working of miracles very consistent with the idea God, the all-mighty and all-wise creator of heaven and earth; though some modern philosophers have pretended to discover from reason, that "miracles are to the common sense and understanding of man utterly impossible, and contrary to the unchangeableness of God." This point, indeed, if it could be made out (as most certainly it cannot), would of itself be a sufficient answer to all the arguments that can be brought in support of the credibility, not of this story only, but of all the evangelical history, and the Jewish religion also; and would supersede all other objections to them, as needless and superfluous. Let those, then, who upon the force of this speculation deny Christlikeness, here try their strength: let them prove that miracles are utterly impossible, &c. or, till they do, let them give leave to those who are of a contrary opinion, to insist that in the present case the miracle can be no objection to the credibility of the fact; and that, as I have said, it could have been none among the Jews in particular, who from their infancy had heard, and read, and believed the "mighty signs and wonders wrought by God for his people Israel," had expected to find in the Messiah a power of working miracles; and had evidence of many performed among them by Jesus and his disciples. And, indeed, the appearance of an angel, upon this occasion, so far from being an objection, was highly proper. I had almost said necessary. Jesus had, but two days before, been put to death by the rulers of the Jews, as an impostor; one, who by the authority of Beelzebub cast out devils, and by assuming the character of the Messiah blasphemed God. His sepulchre also was guarded by a band of soldiers, under the pretence of preventing his disciples from carrying on the imposture begun by their master, by stealing away his body, and giving out that he was risen from the dead, in consequence of what he had said before his crucifixion. Under these circumstances, the attestation of heaven was necessary, to show that God, though he had suffered him to expire on the crosses, had not forsoaken him; but, on the contrary, had co-operated with him even in his sufferings, his death and burial, and resurrection from the dead on the third day; having, by the secret workings of his providence and his almighty power, accomplished in every point the several predictions of Jesus relating to each of those events; events which, at the time of the predictions, none but God, or an eye enlightened by his omniscient spirit, could foresee, and which nothing less than his all-
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The controlling power could bring about. The descent therefore of the angel of the Lord from heaven, and his rolling away the stone from the sepulchre, was a visible proof that the finger of God was in the great work of the resurrection, was a proper honour done to him who claimed to be the Son of God, and unanswerably refuted the impious calumnies of those who upon account of that claim styled him an impostor and blasphemer.

§ 13. What has been just said, of the propriety and necessity of an angel’s descending from heaven upon the present occasion, is applicable in general to the several appearances of angels seen by the women, which I shall examine in the next place, taking it for granted that the miraculousness of such appearances will be no longer urged as an argument against their possibility. The only thing then remaining to be considered, in this examination, is the internal evidence which these several visions carry along with them of reality and truth; for by some they have been treated as pure illusions, and by others as downright falsehoods. The principal argument made use of, to prove their falsehood, is founded upon a supposéd contradiction and inconsistency in the several accounts given of them by the Evangelists; which argument having been thoroughly discussed in the foregoing part of this discourse, I must refer the reader thither for an answer to it. That these appearances were illusions, the effects of superstitition, ignorance, and fear, hath been inculcated rather than asserted; but hath never, that I know of, been attempted to be proved. I shall not, therefore, amuse myself with a vain search after arguments, which, I presume, are not easy to be found; or they would have been produced by those who have laboured with so much diligence to expose and ridicule the faith of Christians: but leaving such to make good their assertion, who shall think fit to maintain it, I shall proceed to lay down a few observations tending to prove the reality and truth of these appearances of the angels to the women.

The angel first seen by the women was that described by St. Mark, in the form of a “young man fitting” [within the sepulchre] “on the right side, clothed in a long white garment;” at the sight of whom the women [Mary and Salome] discovering great signs of fear, be faith unto them, “Be not affrighted; ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified; he is risen, he is not here. Behold the place where they laid him. But go your way, tell his disciples, and Peter, that he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him,” as he said unto you.” That this was a real vision, and no phantom of the imagination, is evident from these particulars: 1st, As it does not appear, from this or any other account, that the women, upon their coming to the sepulchre, were under any such terror or perturbation of mind as are apt to fill the fancy with speciers and apparitions: on the contrary, they went thither a little after day-break, prepared and expecting to find the dead body of Jesus there, and purposing to embalm it; about the doing of which they had been calmly conferring by the way. So,
2dly, by their coming with a design to embalm the body, it is plain they had no notion either of his being already riven, or that he would rise from the dead; and, therefore, 3dly, had the angel been put into his mouth a speech that directly contradicted all the ideas upon which they proceeded but one moment before. 4thly, It is to be observed farther, that the illusion must have been double, two senses must have been deceived, the hearing and the sight; for the angel was heard as well as seen: and though this frequently happens in dreams, and sometimes perhaps in a delirium, or a fit of madness, yet I question whether an instance, exactly parallel in all its parts to the case here supposed, was ever known; for no two people dream together exactly alike, nor are affected in a delirium with exactly the same imaginations. 5thly, The words spoken by the angel refer to others spoken by Christ to his disciples before his passion, in which he told them, that, after he was riven, he would "go before them to Galilee." This promise or prediction the angel here reminds them of, bids them tell the disciples from him to go into Galilee, and promises them that Christ will meet them there. Now, as not only the resurrection, but the personal appearance of Christ also, is implied in these words, the reason given above under the third particular concludes in the present case more strongly against supposing them to have proceeded only from the imagination of the women; for the sudden change of whole opinion, from a disbelief of the resurrection into a full and explicit belief of it, no adequate cause can be assigned. For if it should be allowed that they knew of this prediction of Christ's (which however does not appear), yet theibusens that brought them to the sepulchre makes it evident, that till that instant they did either not recollected, not understand, or not believe it: and if it be farther said, that upon their entering into the sepulchre, and not finding the body of Jesus, this prediction might naturally come at once into their heads, and they might as suddenly and as reasonably believe Christ to be riven, as St. John did, whose faith was built upon no other evidence than what these women had now before them; I answer, that allowing St. John, when he is said to have first believed the resurrection, had no other evidence than these women now had or might have had, yet it is to be observed, that St. John was in a fitter disposition of mind to reflect and judge upon that evidence than the women. St. John ran to the sepulchre upon the information given him by Mary Magdalene, that the body of Jesus was removed from thence, and said the knew not where, nor by whom; and, as the sepulchre was at some distance from his habitations, many thoughts must naturally have arisen in his mind tending to account for the removal of the body, and among the other, perhaps, some confused and obscure hope, that he might be riven from the dead, puruant to many predictions to that purpose delivered by him to his disciples. But whatever his thoughts were at the time of his coming to the sepulchre, about which it must be owned
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owned nothing can be offered but mere conjecture; it is certain he
had leisure to reflect upon the predictions of his master, and to exa-
mine into the state of the sepulchre, which both he and Peter did
(and that implies some deliberation and presence of mind), and
that after this deliberate examination he departed quietly to his own
home: whereas the women are represented as falling into the ut-
most terror and amazement immediately upon their entering into
the sepulchre, and continuing under the same consternation till
they were met flying from thence by Christ himself. Under such a
disorder of mind, can we suppose them capable of recollecting the
predictions of Christ about his resurrection? considering the proofs
of their accomplishment arising from the state of the sepulchre? and
perusing themselves at once that he was not only risen from the
dead, but would personally appear to his disciples? And then im-
mediately upon this conviction fancying they saw an angel, and
heard him assure them in a distinct manner that Christ was risen;
call them to view the place where he had been laid, and bid them
tell his disciples that he would meet them in Galilee? In a word,
if this supposed illusion proceeded from a strong persuasion that
Christ was risen from the dead, whence arose that belief? If that
belief arose from a cool reflection upon the predictions of our Sa-
vior, and the state of the sepulchre (the cause of St. John's faith),
whence came their terror? which, if not previous to the appari-
tion of the angel, was at least prior to the words, "Be not af-
frighted," with which he first accosted them. If it be urged, that
this terror was of the nature of those caufeless and unaccountable
terrors called panics, it may be answered, that this is giving us a
name instead of a reason, and is, in effect, saying just nothing at
all, or saying no more than that they were affrighted, but nobody
can tell why or wherefore. 6thly, It is observable, that the speech
of the angel to the women consists of ten distinct particulars: As, 1.
"Be not affrighted:" 2. "Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was cru-
cified:" 3. "He is risen:" 4. "He is not here:" 5. "Behold
the place where they laid him:" 6. "But go your way, tell his
disciples:" 7. "And Peter." 8. "That he goeth before you into
you." The order and connexion of which several particulars
are no less remarkable than their number; and therefore, taking both
these considerations into the account, I leave any one to judge whe-	her it be conceivable that women, under so great a terror and distrac-
tion of mind as to fancy they saw and heard an angel when there
was no such thing, should be able to compose a speech for this phan-
tom of their fear and imagination, containing so much matter, order,
and reason, and proceeding upon the supposition that they were not
then convinced that Christ was risen from the dead, though the be-
lief of his resurrection is presumed not only to have proceeded, but
even to have occasioned this illusion.

I have dwelt the longer upon the examination of this first appear-
ance of the angel to the women, because the settling the nature of
that will save us the trouble of entering into a particular discusison
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of the rest; the several articles of which will fall under one or other of the foregoing observations. All I shall do therefore is, to mention the different circumstances observable in each of them, and from thence endeavour to raise another argument for the truth and reality of all.

The vision we have just now considered, was of one angel; that seen by Mary Magdalene was of two; as was likewise that reported by Joanna and those with her. And whereas the first angel was found by the women upon their entering into the sepulchre, sitting on the right side, the two last mentioned appearances were abrupt and sudden: for the angels which Mary Magdalene discovered sitting, one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had been laid, were not seen by Peter and John, who just before had entered into the sepulchre, and viewed every part of it with great attention; and Joanna, and "thou with her," had been some time in the sepulchre before they saw any angels; which angels seem also to have appeared to them in a different attitude from those seen by Mary Magdalene, and by the other Mary and Salome. As the number of the angels, and the manner of their appearance, was different, so likewise were the words spoken to them by the women, and the behaviour of the women upon those several occasions. Mary and Salome were touched with fear, and fled from the sepulchre in the utmost terror and amazement. Joanna, and "thou with her," were struck with awe and reverence, and bowed down their faces to the earth; but Mary Magdalene seems to have been so immersed in grief at not being able to find the body of the Lord, as to have taken little or no notice of so extraordinary an appearance; the sees, hears, and answers the angels, without any emotion, and without quitting the object upon which her mind was wholly fixed, and till she was awakened out of her trance by the well-known voice of her master calling her by her name. But here let us stop a little, and ask a question or two. Could this appearance then be an illusion? Could a mind so occupied, so lost in one idea, attend at the same time to the production of so many others of a different kind? Or could her imagination be strong enough to see and converse with angels, and yet too weak to make any impression on her, or call off her attention from a less affecting, less surprising subject? Real angels, indeed, she may be supposed to have seen and heard; and not to have regarded them; but apparitions raised by her own fancy could not have failed engaging her notice: for although, when we are awake, we cannot avoid perceiving the ideas excited in us by the organs of sensation, yet is it, in most instances, in our power to give to them what degree of attention we think fit; and hence it comes to pass, that when we are earnestly employed in any action, intent upon any thought, or transported by any passion, we see, and hear, and feel a thousand things, of which we take no more notice than if we were utterly insensible of them, as every one's daily experience can testify. But to the ideas not proceeding immediately from sensation, but formed within us by the internal operation of our minds, we cannot
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but attend; because in their own nature they can exist no longer than while we attend to them. Of this kind are all the phan-
masms that haunt our sleeping or waking dreams: for so all extasies, delusions, and the ravings of madness, may not improperly be called; and whatever may be the physical cause that upon these occasions sets the mind to work, and influences her imagination, she is cer-
tainly more than passive in these productions, and is generally so attentive to them, as to disregard, during her transports, all the opportunities of external objects, or to blend and colour with the prevailing idea all those arising from the information of the senses. From all which it is evident, that the mind cannot apply herself to the contemplation of more than one object at a time; which, as long as it keeps possession, excludes or obscures all others. Mary Mag-
dalene, therefore, having taken it strongly into her head, upon seeing the stone rolled away from the mouth of the sepulchre, that some persons had removed the body of the Lord, in which notion she was still more confirmed after her return to the sepulchre with Peter and John, and grieving at being thus disappointed of paying her last duty to her deceased master, whole body, as Peter his most zealous, and John his most beloved disciple, knew noth-
ing of the removal of it, the might imagine was got into the hands of his enemies, to be exposed, perhaps, once more to fresh insults and indignities, or at least to be deprived of the pious offices which the duty and affection of his followers and disciples were preparing to perform. Mary Magdalene, I say, falling into a passion of grief at this unexpected distress, and abandoning herself to all melancholy reflections that must naturally arise from it, with her eyes suffused with tears, and thence diflfering more im-
perfection, looking as it were by accident, and while she was thinking on other matters, into the sepulchre, and seeing angels, might, according to the reasoning above laid down, give but little heed to them, as not perceiving on a sudden, and under so great a cloud of sorrow, the tokens of any thing extraordinary in that appear-
ance. She might take them, perhaps, for two young men, which was the form assumed by those who appeared to the other women, without reflecting at first that it was impossible they should have been in the sepulchre without being seen by John and Peter, and improbable that they should have entered into it after their depart-
ure, without having been observed by her. Intent upon what passed within her own bosom, she did not give herself time to con-
sider and examine external objects; and therefore knew not even Christ himself, who appeared to her in the same sudden and mi-
vaculous manner; but, "supposing him to be the gardener," begged him to tell her, if he had removed the body, where he had laid it, that she might take it way. By which question, and the answer she had made to the angels immediately before, we may perceive what her thoughts were so earnestly employed about; and thence conclude still farther, that the angels were not the creatures of her imagination, since they were plainly not the objects of her atten-
tion.
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The appearance, therefore, of the angels was real. The return from this digression.

If the several appearances of the angels, examined separately, be shewn to carry with them evident marks of reality and the confounding and comparing them together will set them in a yet stronger light; such, we presume, as will entirely remove every doubt in the minds of those who seem inclined to believe thing possible, but that the Gospel should be true. For, by the number, the manner, the variety, and nature of the circumstances of these visions, and their being seen by different persons at different times, make it, according to the natural course of things, utterly incredible that there should have been in them either illusion or imposture. Many instances, perhaps, of illusions in single persons, and even in numbers (for nothing is more contagious than superstition and enthusiasm), may be produced; how well authenticated, it will be time enough to enquire when we know what they are. But, I believe, it will be generally found, upon a strict examination, that whenever any number of people have fallen into such an illusion, as, by the force of imagination only, to hear and see spectres and apparitions, the imagination or artifice of some one among them hath given birth to the phantom; and working upon minds already disposed to superstition, enthusiasm, or credulity, or cunningly prepared, perhaps, for that particular occasion, hath led them easily to see and hear things that existed only in their own preconceived and over-heated fancies. But nothing of all this can be pretended in the present case. The women, by whom these different visions of angels were severally seen, had no communication with each other during the time of these appearances, as is evident from the whole tenor of this history: Mary and Salome were fled from the sepulchre before Mary Magdalene returned; and Mary Magdalene was departed from thence again before Joanna, and "those with her," came thither; so that they could not catch the illusion from one another; and that their minds, at the time of their coming to the sepulchre, were very far from being disposed to form imaginations of Christ's being risen from the dead, is evident from the businesse that carried them thither. They came to perform the last offices usually paid to the dead; and, by embalming the body, to complete the interment of their deceased matter; which, by the coming-on of the Sabbath, they had been obliged to leave unfinished: and when, upon entering into the sepulchre, they found not the body, it was more natural for them to think, with Mary Magdalene, that some persons had taken it away, and laid it they knew not where, than to conclude it was risen from the dead; and is plain, that Joanna, and "those with her," were in this way of thinking; for "when they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus, they," says St. Luke, "were much perplexed thereabout:" i.e. they knew not what was become of the body, could not account for its being missing, and were therefore in great distress and anxiety about
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about it; which would not have happened, had they believed that he had risen from the dead.

If, from what has been said, it may seem reasonable to conclude, that the appearances of the angels were not the effects of illusion, the phantoms of a disordered visionary mind, it will, I think, be more safely granted, that they were not the operations of artifice and imposture. For, without examining who could be the actors, or what the motives of an impostor of this kind, there are evidences enough, arising from the circumstances of these several appearances, to shew, that the powers that produced them were more than human: such, for example, is the earthquake occasioned by the descent of the first angel, the amazing brightness of his countenance, which, St. Matthew tells us, was like lightning, and the prodigious strength which appeared in his Spy rolling away a stone that was large enough to close up the entrance into the sepulchre; and, what was common to all the angels, the faculty of becoming visible or invisible as they thought proper. These certainly were characteristic marks of an agent endowed with privileges and powers superior to the limited abilities of man, whose operations cannot go farther than his knowledge of the laws and powers of nature; and how far short of such wonderful effects as these that knowledge would carry him, I leave the most ingenious professor of natural magic to determine.

2. I come now, in the second place, to consider the appearances of Christ himself to the women, which were two, the first to Mary Magdalene, the second to the other Mary and Salome. But I shall not have occasion to dwell long upon this head, since the appearances of the angels having been proved to be real, put these appearances of Christ more out of doubt and suspicion. The angels assured him that he was risen from the dead; and, if he was risen, it was natural to expect he would appear. The main difficulty consisted in his getting loose from the bonds of death, and breaking the prison of the grave; and, therefore, whoever upon the testimony of the angles believed the resurrection (as all those must have done who acknowledged them to be real angels) would not, if they saw Christ himself, be very apt to call in question the reality of his appearance. But though the testimony of angels, affirming that Christ was risen from the dead, renders his appearing afterwards less liable to doubt and question; yet, before we admit the reality of every such appearance as may be pretended, I grant it is reasonable to expect some farther proofs, though perhaps not so many or so strong as if no such previous evidence had been given. And in the case of Mary and Salome it may be suggested, that their very belief of the resurrection of Christ, joined to the disorder and amazement they were then under, might help to convince them too easily of the reality of his appearance, though at the same time it might be nothing but a spectre of their imagination, and a mere illusion: let us therefore examine what evidence may be collected, from the account given of this appearance, to induce us to think that these women were not deceived; and the evidence, I believe, will be found sufficient. They had the attestation of their sight, their hearing, and their feeling:
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feeling: by the two first the voice and countenance of their Lord mighbe known; and by the last they might be assured, that it was no spec general that they heard and saw, but a body consoliting of flesh and bones. One of these proofs, indeed, was wanting to Mary Magdalenæ, Christ forbade her to touch him; and yet any one, who considers with due attention the circumstances of this appearance, will find sufficient reason to be persuaded that it was Christ himself who appeared to her. For, first, he had stood by her some time, had spoken to her, and had answered him before she knew him to be Christ; on the contrary, she took him for the gardener: by all which it is manifest, that the scene, if it was one, was not of her creating. Her mind was otherwise engaged; and had it been either at leisure, or disposed to rapture, it is most likely she would have called upon some person, with whom she had more acquaintance and concern than a keeper of a garden, whom probably she had never known nor seen before. 2dly, she called her by her name; by which it appeared that he knew her: she did the, it seems, discover him; for turning immediately about, she accosted him with the respectful title of: "Rabboni, my master," and, as may be inferred from the ensuing words of Christ, offered to embrace him. His voice and his countenance convinced her that it was Christ himself. 3dly, In the words, "Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say to them, "I ascend to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God," is contained a most clear proof that it was Christ himself who uttered them. To understand this, it must be remembered, that these words allude to a long discourse which our Saviour held to his disciples the very night in which he was betrayed; wherein he told them, that he should leave them for a short time ("a little while and ye shall not see me"), and that he would come to them again, though but for a short time ("and again a little while, and ye shall see me"), "because (added he) "I go to my Father." By the phrase "I go to my Father," Christ meant his final quitting the world, as he himself explained it to his disciples, who did not then understand either of the above-cited expressions. "I came forth from the Father," says he, "and am come into the world. again, I leave the world, and go to the Father." But left they should fall into despair at being thus forsaken by him, for whom they had forsook all the world, he at the same time promised to send them a Comforter, even the Holy Spirit, who should teach them all things, bring to their minds whatsoever he had said unto them; should guide them into all truth; shew them things to come, and abide with them for ever; and that whoever believed should be able to do greater works [i.e. Miracles] than he did, because he was to go to the Father; and that finally, though they for a season should be sorrowful, yet should their sorrow be turned into joy, and that joy should no man take from them." These were magnificent promises, promises which, as the disciples could not but remember —

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Remember Christ had made to them, so they might be assured that no
me but Christ was able to make them good; and therefore, when
they came to reflect seriously upon the import of these words, "Touch
me not, for I am not yet ascended to my Father; but go to my
brethren and say to them, I ascend to my Father and your Father,"
to my God and your God," it was impossible for them to conclude
therewith than that it was Christ himself who appeared and spokour
Mary Magdalen. For as the latter expression, "I ascend to my
Father," &c. implied a remembrance, and consequently a renewal,
\(\ne\) those promises, which were to take place after his ascension to the
Father; so did the former, "I am not yet ascended to my Father,"
give them encouragement to expect the performance of that other pro-
mise of his coming to them again before his ascension, by giving them
to understand, that he had not yet quitted this world: and I take
Christ's forbidding Mary Magdalen to touch [or embrace] him, to
have been meant as a signification of his intending to see her and his
disciples again; just as in ordinary life, when one friend says to
another, "Don't take leave, for I am not going yet;" he means to
let him know that he purposes to see him again before he sets out upon
his journey. That this is the true import of the words "touch me
not," is, in my opinion, evident, not only from the reason subjoin-
ed in the words immediately following, "for I am not yet ascended
to my father" (by which expression, as I have shewed above, Christ
meant he had not finally quitted the world), but from these farther
considerations: Christ, by shewing himself first to Mary Magdalen,
intended, doubtless, to give her a distinguishing mark of his favour,
and therefore cannot reasonably be supposed to have designed at the
same time to have put a slight upon her, by refusing her a pleasure
which he granted not long after to the other Mary and Salome; and
yet this must be supposed, if "touch me not" be understood to im-
ply a prohibition to Mary Magdalen to embrace him, for any reason
consistent with the regard shewn to the other women, and different
from that now contended for, namely, because he intended to see her
and his disciples again. On the contrary; if these words be taken to
signify only a put-off to some fitter opportunity, they will be so far
from importing any unkindness or reprehension to Mary Magdalen,
that they may rather be looked upon as a gracious assurance, a kind
of friendly engagement to come to her again; and, in this sense, they
correspond exactly with Christ's purpose in sending this message by
her to his disciples; which, as I have observed before, was to let them
know that he remembered his promise of coming to them again, and
was still in a condition to perform it, not having quitted this world;
and of his intention to perform it, this his refusing to admit the af-
fectionate or reverential embraces of Mary Magdalen, "who loved
much, for much had been forgiven to her," was an earnest, as his
coming to them again would be a pledge of his resolution to acquit
himself in due time of those promises which were not to take effect
till after his final departure out of this world. And thus will this whole
discourse of our Saviour to Mary Magdalen be in all its parts intel-
ligible,
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ligible, rational, and coherent; whereas, if it be supposed that Mary Magdalene was forbidden to touch Christ for some mystical reason, contained in the words, "for I am not yet ascended to my Father," it will be very difficult to understand either the meaning or intent of that message, which she was commanded to carry to the disciples; and still more difficult to account for his suffering, not long after, the embraces of the other Mary and Salome. To the fame, or even greater difficulties, will that interpretation of this passage be liable, which supposes that the prohibition to Mary Magdalene was grounded upon the spiritual nature of Christ's body, which, it is premised, was not sensible to the touch or feeling. And, indeed, both these reasons for the behaviour of Christ to Mary Magdalene are overturned by his contrary behaviour to the other Mary and Salome. But if the feeble contend for be admitted, it will be no difficult matter to account for this difference of his behaviour on those two occasions. Why he forbade Mary Magdalene to touch him, has already been explained; why he permitted the other Mary and Salome to hold him by the feet and worship him," I shall now endeavour to shew. These last-mentioned women, as St. Mark informs us, were so terrified and amazed at the sight and words of the angel, who appeared to them in the sepulchre, that although they ran with a design to tell the disciples what they had heard and seen, as the angel had commanded them, yet, through the greatness of their confusion and disorder, they had neglected to deliver this important message to some whom they saw in Ch. u2. ¶ Matth. xxviii. 8.

¶ That these words, "Neither said they any thing to any man," must be limited to some certain time, will, I believe, be readily allowed; for it cannot be imagined, that after all other appearances of the angels, &c. were published, these women only never opened their lips "to any man" about what they had seen and heard at the sepulchre. The question then will be, how long they may be supposed to have forborn speaking of it? And this, I think, was not longer than during the time of their flying from the sepulchre, and till they were met by Christ himself; because the only reason here assigned for their "not saying any thing to any man," viz. "For they were afraid," (or afflicted rather) being removed by Christ's appearing to them, &c. It is reasonable to believe (if it is not implied), that their silence lasted no longer than the only cause of it, their terror. Besides, if St. Mark breaks off the narration of what happened to these women very abruptly, short of Christ's appearing to them, in order to relate his appearance to Mary Magdalene, which, indeed, was previous to it, though subsequent to the appearance of the angel seen by these women at the sepulchre, what he says of their "not saying any thing to any man" cannot be taken to extend beyond the period where he chose to break off his narration, without supposing him guilty of a needless impropriety. And if these words, "Neither said they any thing to any man," be construed to signify that they did not tell what they had seen and heard to some whom they saw as they were flying from the sepulchre, it seems rational to conclude, that these were some of the disciples to whom they were ordered to deliver the message of the angel, and to whom they would probably have delivered it, had they not been under so great a terror and amazement; for had the persons whom they saw, been any other than the disciples of Jesus, it is not likely that St. Mark would have taken any notice of their "not saying any thing to any man," since it is reasonable to imagine they would not, even though they had not been afflicted, have told the message of the angel, &c. to any but the disciples. And as the time of Peter and John's running to the sepulchre, upon the first report of Mary Magdalene, coincides with that of these women flying from it, it is no improbable conjecture, that these were the persons whom they saw in their way, at a distance perhaps, and coming by a different road to the sepulchre; especially if it be considered that, as the words of St. Mark, "neither said they," &c. seem to carry with them an imputation of neglect upon these women, though be at the same time both accounts for it, and excuses it, by adding: "for they were afflicted," to the same evangelist hath before acquainted us, (verse 7.) that they were ordered by the angel to deliver the message he gave them to Peter in particular.
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In their way; for so, with all the commentators, I understand these words of St. Mark, "neither said they any thing to any man, for they were afraid." That this testimony therefore of the angel to the resurrection of Christ, and the assurance given to the disciples, that they should see their master in Galilee, might not be lost, either by the women's forgetting, through the greatness of their amazement, what the angel had said to them, or through a suspicion of its having been a mere illusion, neglecting or scrupling to tell it, Christ himself thought proper to appear to them, to calm their minds, disperse their terror, obviate their doubts. With this view he first accords them with the gracious salutation of "All hail!" then suffers them not only to approach him, but to "hold him by the feet and worship him;" and, lastly, bidding them dismiss their fears, orders them, in confirmation of what the angel had said to them, to tell his disciples from him to "go into Galilee," assuring them with his own mouth, "that they should see him there." Every word, we see, tended to inspire them with courage and confidence; and the gracious influence of every word upon their minds could not but be rendered still more powerful and efficacious by his suffering them to embrace him. After this familiar instance of his favour and complacence, and this sensible proof of his being really and bodily risen from the dead, there could be no room left for doubt or terror: conviction, certainty, and joy, must have banished those uneasy passions for ever from their breasts. And hence it appears, that the different conduct of Christ, on these two occasions, was owing to the different circumstances attending them; to which it was most wisely suited. Mary Magdalene's grief (the only disorder of mind the then labouried under) for the suppedis of her master's body, was soon dispersed, upon her hearing him call her by her name, and seeing him stand by her; she was immediately convinced that it was Christ, and testified her conviction by giving him the title of "Rabboni, my master." She wanted not (and therefore there was no need of giving her) any farther proofs: but, satisfied with what she had seen and heard, she went to the disciples, and told them the "had seen the Lord;" and that he had said such and such things to her. But terror, the most untractable of all passions when excessive, had seized upon the other Mary and Salome: a terror, which, had it proceeded from the unexpected and supernatural appearance of an angel, was more likely to be confirmed than removed by the like appearance of Christ, had he not proceeded gently with them, and by his gracious words and demeanour given them encouragement and permission to familiarize themselves with him by degrees, and take, in their own way, what proofs they thought proper to remove their fears or doubts, and convince them that their affectionate and beloved Master was in reality restored to them again from the grave. But besides the assurance given by Christ to his disciples in the words here spoken by Mary Magdalene, of his intention to perform his promises of coming to them again, &c. I cannot help thinking he had a farther meaning, which, though not so obvious, is, however, in my opinion,
opinion, equally deducible from those words with the other just now mentioned. That remarkable expression, "I ascend to my Father," Christ undoubtedly made use of upon this occasion to recall to his disciples minds the discourse he held to them three nights before, in which he explained so clearly what he meant by "going to his Father," that they said to him, "Lo! now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no paradox." But this was not the only expression the puzzled them; they were as much in the dark as to the meaning of, "a little while and ye shall not see me, and again a little while and ye shall see me," which they likewise confessed they did not understand. But Christ did not think fit to clear up their doubts at that time, and left those words to be expounded by the events to which they severally related, and which were then drawing on apace. For that very night he was betrayed, and seized, and deserted by his disciples, as he himself had foretold but a very few hours before, upon their professing "to believe that he came forth from God:" the next day he was crucified, expired upon the cross, and was buried. Upon this melancholy catastrophe the disciples could be no longer at a loss to understand what Christ meant, when he said to them, "a little while and ye shall not see me:" he was gone from them, and, as their fears suggested, gone for ever, notwithstanding he had expressly told them, that he would come to them again; and to those words, "a little while and ye shall not see me," he added, "and again a little while and ye shall see me." This latter expression, one would think, was full as intelligible as the former; and as the one, now expounded by the event, was plainly a prophecy of his death, so must the other be understood as a prophecy of his resurrection from the dead. But, if they understood it in that sense, they were very far from having a right notion of the resurrection from the dead; as is evident from their imagining, when Christ first showed himself to them after his passion, that they saw a spirit; even though they had just before declared their belief "that he was risen indeed, and had appeared to them mon." The resurrection of the body, it should seem from this instance, made no part of their notion of the resurrection from the dead: to lead them therefore into a right understanding of this most important article of faith, Christ, in speaking to Mary Magdalene, and by her to his disciples, makes use of terms which strongly imply his being really, that is, bodily, risen from the dead. "I am not yet," says he, "ascended to my Father; but go unto my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father," &c. The words "I go to my Father," Christ, as has already been observed, explained by the well-understood phrase of leaving the world; and to this explanation the words immediately foregoing give so great a light, that it is impossible to mistake his meaning. The whole passage runs thus, "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world; and again I leave the world, and go to the Father." By the expression, "I am come into the world," Christ certainly meant to signify his being and conversing visibly and bodily upon earth; and therefore by the other

* John xvi. 29.
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ther expression, "I leave the world," he must have intended to de-
vote the contrary to all this, viz. his ceasing to be and conversing vi-
ibly and bodily upon earth; and so undoubtedly the disciples under-
tood him to mean, when they said to him, "now speakest thou plain-
ly, and speakest no parable." But as they very well knew that the
usual road, by which all men quitted this world, lay through the gates
of death, and were assured their matter had trodden that irreparable
path, they might naturally conclude, that what he had said to them
about "leaving the world and going to his Father" was accomplished
in his death; and consistently with that notion might imagine that,
by his coming to them again, no more was intended, than his ap-
ppearing to them in the same manner as many persons have been thought
and said to appear after their decease. To guard against this double
error, which Christ, to whom the thoughts of all hearts are open,
perceived in the minds of his disciples, he plainly intimates to them
in the words, "I am not yet ascended to my Father, but—I do
(or shall) ascend to my Father," that his dying, and his final leaving
of the world, were different things, the latter of which was still to come,
though the former was past: he had indeed died, like other mortals,
and had, like them, left the world for a season, as he himself had often
foretold them should come to pass; but he was now risen from the
dead, returned into the world, and should not leave it finally till he
ascended to his Father. Of his being returned into the world, his
appearing to Mary Magdalene was doubtless intended for a proof;
and yet of this it could be no proof at all, if what the law was no more
than what is commonly called a spirit; since the spirits of many people
have been thought to appear after their decease, who notwithstanding
are supposed to have as effectually left this world by their death, as
those who have never appeared at all. Lazarus, like Christ, had
died, and was by his quickening word recalled to life, which consists
in the animation of the body by its union with the soul. Now had
Christ called up nothing but the spirit of Lazarus, and left his body
not to putrefy and perish in the grave, would not Lazarus, I ask, have still
been reputed dead, and consequently considered as out of this world,
though his spirit had appeared to a thousand different people? If Christ
therefore was risen from the dead, as the angels affirmed he was; if
he had not yet finally left the world, as the words, "I am not yet
"ascended to my Father," plainly import; and if his appearing to
Mary Magdalene was intended for a proof of those two points, as un-
doubtedly it was; it will follow that he was really, that is, bodily,
risen from the dead; that he was still in the world in the same man-
er as when he "came forth from the Father, and came into the
"world;" and that it was he himself, and not a spirit without flesh and
bones, that appeared to Mary Magdalene.

Before I conclude this argument, I must beg leave to make one ob-
servation more upon the term "ascend," twice used by our Saviour in
the compass of these few words. In the discourse here alluded to by
Christ, he told his disciples that he should go to his Father, and he
now bids Mary Magdalene tell them that he should ascend to his
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Father; a variation in the phrase, which I am persuaded had its particular meaning, and that not very difficult to be discovered. For as by the former expression he intended, as we have seen, to signify in general his final departure out of this world, so by the latter is the particular manner of that departure intimated; and doubts of a view of letting his disciples know the precise time after which they should no longer expect to see and converse with him upon earth, but wait for the coming of that Comforter which he promised to send them in his room, and who, unless he departed from them, was not to come. Jesus made frequent visits to his disciples after his passion; "being seen of them, says St. Luke, "forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God." Between some of these visits were pretty long intervals, during which he seems to have disappeared, i.e. not to have reappeared upon earth. Had Christ therefore left his disciples without any mark or token by which they might be able to distinguish his final departure from those that were only temporary, they would probably have taken each visit for the last; or have lingered after his final departure, in a fruitless expectation of seeing him again; either of which states of uncertainty, and especially the last, were liable to many inconveniences, to doubts and jealousies, and fears, which it was good as well as wise in our Saviour to prevent. Nor was the preventing these evils the only advantage that flowed from this early intimation of the manner of Christ's final departure out of this world, implied in the words, "I ascend to my Father," and verified in his ascension into heaven. For as this could not have been effected without the power of God co-operating with him, so neither could it have been fore-known by him, without the communication of that spirit which only knows the counsels of God. When the disciples therefore beheld their Master "taken up into heaven, and received out of their sight by a cloud of glory," they could not but know assuredly that this was the event foretold about forty days before to Mary Magdalene; and knowing that, could no longer doubt whether it was Christ himself who appeared and spoke those prophetic words to her; how little credit however they had given to her, when she first told them the "had seen the Lord." And thus, (as I have endeavoured to make appear) in these comprehensive words of Christ spoken to Mary Magdalene, "Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to my Father; but go to my brethren, and say to them, I ascend to my Father," are implied three particulars. I. A renewal of the several promises made by him to his disciples, the night in which he was betrayed; one of which was the promise of coming to them again before his final departure out of this world. Of his intention to perform which promise, I take his forbidding Mary Magdalene to touch or embrace him, to be an earnest or token. And, An intimation, that as his death and his final departure out of this world were two distinct things, the latter of which

* Acts, ch. i. and iii. † See John xx. 21.
‡ Acts, ch. i. ver. 9. See Whitby on this place.
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as yet to come; so, by his rising from the dead, they were to understand his returning and being in the world, in the same manner with those who have not yet quitted the world by death, and consequently he was really, that is bodily, risen from the dead, of which his appearing to Mary Magdalene, and saying those words, was an un doubted evidence. And, 3dly, a prophetic account of the manner of his departing finally out of the world, viz. by ascending into heaven. From which several particulars it was impossible, as I said before, for the disciples to draw any other conclusion than that it was Christ himself who appeared and spoke to Mary Magdalene. I do not say the disciples must necessarily have perceived, at the very first hearing these words, the several inferences which I have drawn from them; but when they came to consider them attentively, to reflect upon what their Master had said to them in the night in which he was betrayed (to which those words evidently referred), and when, after having handled his feet and hands, they were by their own senses convinced that he was bodily risen from the dead; and, lastly, when they had seen those words, “I ascend to my Father,” verified in his ascending into heaven before their eyes; then, I think, they could hardly avoid perceiving the several inferences, and drawing from them the conclusion above mentioned. For if it was not Christ who appeared to Mary Magdalene, it must have been some spirit, either good or bad; or some man, who, to impose upon her, counterfeited the person and voice of Christ; or, lastly, the whole must have been forged and invented by her. The first of these suppositions is blaspheous; the second, absurd; and the third, improbable. For, allowing her to have been capable of making a lie, for the carrying on an imposture from which she could reap no benefit, and to have been informed of what our Saviour had spoken to his disciples the night in which he was betrayed, which does not appear, it must have been either extreme madness or folly in her to put the credit of her tale upon events, such as the appearing of Christ to his disciples, and his ascending into heaven, which were so far from being in the number of contingencies, that they were not even within the powers and operations of what are called natural causes.

The same answer may be made to the supposition, that the appearance of Christ to the other Mary and Salome was likewise a forgery of those women; and with this I shall conclude the second head.

§ 15. 3dly, Of the many appearances of Christ to his disciples, for the forty days after his passion, the sacred writers have mentioned particularly but very few; imagining, doubtless, those few sufficient to prove that fundamental article of the Christian faith, and resurrection of Jesus. And, indeed, whoever attends to the nature and variety of the evidence contained even in those few particulars which they have transmitted to us, cannot, I think, but acknowledge that those who were appointed to be the witnesses of the resurrection, had every kind of proof, that in the like circumstance either the most scrupulous could demand, or the most incredulous imagine. This I doubt

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not but to be able to make appear in the course of the following ob-
servations; in which I shall confine myself to the examination of
those appearances only, whose circumstances the evangelical his-
torians have thought proper to record, and upon which the faith of the
Apostles was principally established.

The first of these, though but barely mentioned by * St. Mark,
is very particularly related by † St. Luke, in the following words:
"And behold two of them went the same day to a village called Em-
maus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs; and
they talked together of all these things which had happened; and
it came to pass, that while they communed together, and reasoned,
Jesus himself drew near, and went with them: but their eyes were
helden, that they should not know him. And he said unto them,
"What manner of communications are these, that ye have one to
another, as ye walk, and are sad? And one of them whose name
was Cleopas, answering, said unto him, 'Art thou only a stranger
in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are to come to
pafs there in these days?' And he said unto them, 'What things?'
And they said unto him, 'Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which
was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the
people; and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to
be condemned to death, and have crucified him. But we trusted
that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and besid
all this, to-day is the third day since these things were done. Yes,
and certain women also of our company made us astonishe, which
were early at the sepulchre; and when they found not his body,
they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which
said that he was alive. And certain of them which were with us,
got to the sepulchre, and found it even so as the women had said:
but him they saw not.' Then he said unto them, 'O fools, and slow
of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not
Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?'
And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto
them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself. And they
drew nigh unto the village whither they went, and he made as
though he would have gone farther. But they constrained him,
saying, 'Abide with us, for it is towards evening, and the day is
far spent.' And he went in to tarry with them. And it came to pafs,
as he sat at meat with them, he took bread and blessed it, and brake
and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew
him; and he vanished out of their sight. And they said one to
another, 'Did not our hearts burn within us, while he talked with
us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?' And they
rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the
eleven gathered together, and them that were with them, saying,
'The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon.' And
they told what things were done in the way, and how he was known
of them in breaking of bread.'

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* Ch. xvi. † Ch. xxiv.
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Two objections have been made to the credibility of this fact: 1st, That these disciples knew not Jesus during the whole time of his walking, conversing, and sitting at meat with them; 2dly, That when, upon his breaking bread, &c. their eyes were opened, and they are said to have known him, he vanished so suddenly out of their sight, that they seem not to have had time enough to satisfy those doubts, which must have arisen from their having conversed with him so long without knowing him. To the first of these objections, the evangelist himself furnishes us with an answer, telling us, that "their eyes were holden that they should not know Him;" which, as it will not be pretended to be above the operation of him whom the apostle of the Gentiles styles "the power of God," so have I already showed it to be a proceeding not unworthy of him whom the same inspired writer, in the same place, calls also "the wisdom of God." He threw a mist before their corporeal eyes, that he might, by the pure and unprejudiced light of reason only, remove from before their internal sight that strong delusion, which held their understanding from knowing the true import of those types and prophecies by which his sufferings, death, and resurrection, were foreshewn. He disguised himself, but laid open the Scriptures; which till then had "appeared to them in another form;" and having by an exposition of Moses and the prophets, which made "their hearts burn within them," stripped off those veils and colours which the worldly and carnal-minded Scribes and Pharisees had laid over them, and set them before their eyes in their genuine shape and lustre, he in the next place disclosed himself, and left them convinced, as well from the Scriptures as from their senses, that he was risen from the dead. Which leads me to consider the 2d objection, founded on his vanishing out of their sight so soon after his discovering himself to them. And here I shall observe, 1st, That it appears they had no doubt but that the person who joined them in the way to Emmaus, and opened the Scriptures to them, was the same whom, upon his breaking of bread, &c. they took to be Jesus. 2dly, That upon their taking him to be Jesus, they must have been sensible of some alteration, either in themselves or in him, by which they were enabled to discover the mistake they were under while they knew him not. 3dly, That alteration must to them have appeared supernatural and miraculous, as it is implied to have been in this phrase, "their eyes were opened and they knew him," as must also his vanishing (or disappearing) from their sight. And as from these particulars it could not but be evident to them, that the person whom, when their eyes were opened, they, from his countenance, &c. knew to be Jesus, was endued with powers more than human; so was it impossible for them to conclude it to be any other than Jesus himself, without blasphemyously supposing that God would permit any spirit, either good or bad, to assume the person of his beloved Son, with a view of countenancing and carrying on a falsity and imposture;
especially as, in the conversation he had held with them by the way, he had opened the Scriptures, and had shewn them from Moses and all the prophets, that Christ was to suffer and die, and rise again from the dead. But, besides the clearing up all their doubts, arising from his sufferings and death, which had staggered their faith in him, whom till then "they trusted to be him who should redeem Israel," it is very probable, from what they say about "their hearts burning within them, while he opened to them the Scrip-
tures," that they perceived, either in his manner or his doctrine, some lively marks and characters of that dignity and authority which was wont to distinguish him so much from the ordinary teachers of Israel, the Scribes and Pharisees. And, not to repeat what I have said before, about the probability of Christ's having upon this oc-
casion made use of some gesture or phrase peculiar to himself, is breaking and blessing the bread, I shall only add one remark from Grotius*, viz. that since it was the custom among the Jews for the master of the feast, or the most honourable guest, immediately after blessing the cup, to take the bread, give thanks over it, break it, and, after eating a bit of it, to distribute it round the table, Christ by this action declared himself something more than what those disciples had hitherto taken him for, a stranger and traveller whom they had picked up by the way, and "constrained to abide" with them; and by that declaration awakened their attention to that discovery of him-
self, which followed immediately upon it; and to which this solemn and religious act was certainly no improper introduction. The in-
ference that is naturally deducible from these several observations is, that these two disciples, even upon the supposition that Christ disap-
appeared, immediately after their eyes were opened, and they knew him, had sufficient reason to be assured that it was he himself, who had walked, conversed, and dined at meat with them; and con-
sequently that he was risen from the dead, according to what the an-
gels had told the women, who had been that morning at the sep-
pulchre.

§ 16. The next appearance of Christ, that I shall take notice of, and that to which all those before mentioned were preparatory, was to the eleven, and those with them, on the evening of the same day. This appearance is mentioned by three of the evangelists, one relating one particular, and another another; out of each of whose gospels I shall therefore take such circumstances as are not related by the others, and putting the scattered parts together, compose from all of them one entire relation.

"Then the same day," (viz. the day of the resurrection) "at
evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut,
where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews,† while
they sat at meat" [immediately after the two disciples from Emmaus
had finished their relation], "came Jesus, and stood in the midst, and
faith unto them, 'Peace be with you.' § But they were terri-
* In locum. See also Duftra, ibid.
† John xx. 19.
§ Mark xvi. 14.
§ Luke xiv. 36.
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"And he (upbraiding them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them who had seen him after he was risen) said to them, 'Why are you troubled, and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.' And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them his hands and his feet. And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, 'Have ye here any meat?' And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honey-comb; and he took it, and did eat before them.

† Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord. § And he said to them, 'These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me.' Then || (breathing on them, and saying, 'Receive ye the Holy Ghost') opened he their understandings, that they might understand the Scriptures; and said to them, 'Thus it is written; and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day.—And ye are witnesses of these things.'

To this I shall add the appearance of Christ to St. Thomas, that I may bring all the proofs of the resurrection under one view.

"But Thomas **, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said to him, 'We have seen the Lord:' but he said to them, 'Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.' And, after eight days, again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them; then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, 'Peace be unto you.' Then said he to Thomas, 'Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side; and be not faithless, but believing.' And Thomas answered and said unto him, 'My Lord, and my God!' Jesus faith unto him, 'Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.'

The proofs of Christ's being risen from the dead, here exhibited to the disciples, as set forth in the above-cited passages, may be comprized under four heads. 1st, The testimony of those "who had seen him after he was risen." 2dly, The evidences of their own senses. 3dly, The exact accomplishment of the "words which he had spoken to them, while he was yet with them." And, 4thly, The "fulfilling of all the things which were written in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning him." The conclusive events of all which proofs I shall endeavour to shew in some observations upon each of them. Upon the first I have nothing

thing to add to what I have written already under the second general head *, and the beginning of this, excepting that our Lord, by " upbraiding his disciples for not believing those who had seen " him after he had risen," took from them all possibility of doubting afterwards of the truth and reality of those appearances, thus confirmed and verified by his own irrefragable testimony. Under the words, " those who had seen him after he was risen," is comprehended likewise his appearance to Simon, mentioned both by St. Luke † and St. Paul ‡, as also that to the two disciples on the way to Emmaus. Upon the second head (viz. the evidence of their own senses), it might, one would imagine, be thought sufficient to observe, that the disciples had the same § infallible proofs (as the author of the Acts calls them) of Christ’s being alive after his passion, as they ever had of his being alive before it. They saw him, faw the particular marks of identity in his person and countenance, in his hands, feet, and side, which had been pierced at his crucifixion; and one of them, who had refused to believe " except he put his " finger into the print of the nails, and thrust his hands into his side," had that farther satisfaction, unreasonable as it was, granted him; they saw him also eat, what they themselves gave him, " a piece of a broiled fish and an honey-comb;" they heard him speak, and were by him commanded to " handle him," and see that he had flesh and bones; a command ¶ which, doubtless, they obeyed. And yet these infallible tokens, or proofs, these Θεματα, certa & indubitatae signa, have been set aside by some pretended philosophers and philosophizing divines, upon no better grounds than their own vain inferences from these words of St. John, " Then came Jesus, " the doors bring shut, and stood in the midst:" for taking it for granted, what as philosophers it better became them to have proved, that it is suggested in these words that Jesus passed through the walls, or doors, while they remained shut, without either suffering in his own body, or causing in them any change, during his so passing; and having discovered, " that for one solid or material body to " pass through another solid or material body, without injuring the " form of either, both the passive and passing body remaining the " same, is contrary to all the laws of nature; they have concluded, that the body of Christ was not real, i. e. a material body, and consequently was incapable of being felt by St. Thomas, &c. From whence it will follow, that the whole story is absurd and false.

In answer to this, I deny that the words, " Jesus came, the doors " being shut, and stood in the midst," imply that " Jesus passed through

* See the 35 Head, Of the Appearance of Christ to the Women; and the 34, Of his Appearance to the two Disciples on the way to Emmaus.
† Chap. xxiv. 34.
‡ 1 Cor. xv. 5.
§ Acts i. 3. ἐν πολλαῖς θεματαῖς, by many certain and undoubted proofs or tokens: Quin
filian from Aristotle says, Θεματα are indubitatae & certissima signa, as the actions of speak-
ing, walking, eating, and drinking, are the Θεματα [undoubted signs] of life.
¶ The words, "as ye see me have," strongly imply, that they had received the satisfaction offered them by seeing his hands and feet.
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"through the walls or doors, while they remained shut, without 
either suffering in his own body, or causing in them any change 
during his so passing." They seem, indeed, to imply, that he 
came in miraculously, though not by a miracle that contains a con-
tradiction or impossibility; and I am persuaded that, had not St. 
John intended to signify that he came in miraculously, he would not 
twice have mentioned that otherwise trifling circumstance of "the 
doors being shut." But though a denial without proof be a pro-
per and sufficient answer to an assertion without proof, yet I shall 
give some reasons why the interpretation contended for by these 
philosophers cannot be the true one. 1st. It is not to be presumed, 
that St. John, who with the other disciples had received sensible 
evidence of the reality, i.e. the materiality of Christ's body, should 
be absurd enough to imagine, at the same time, that it was a spiritual 
body; which he must have done, had he thought that Jesus passed 
through the walls or doors, while they remained shut, without either 
suffering in his own body, or causing in them any change, during 
his so passing; it requiring no great depth of philosophy to under-
stand it to be impossible, even to omnipotence, to caufe the body of 
man to penetrate through a wall or door, without causing some 
change or alteration in the one or the other. Neither (2dly,) is it to 
be presumed, that St. John, intending, as it is plain he did, by re-
ferred the story of St. Thomas, to acquaint the world, that he 
(Thomas), as well as the other disciples, had, by feeling and exa-
imining his Master's body, sensible evidence of his being really, i.e. 
bodily, risen from the dead, should be weak enough to infer in his 
relation a circumstance which tended to prove that the body, which 
St. Thomas is supposed to have felt, was not a material but a spiritual 
body, and consequently incapable of being felt and handled. Con-
tradictions and absurdities are not to be presumed in any writer. On 
the contrary, as it is supposed that every man in his fenses has some 
meaning in what he speaks or writes, so by that meaning only 
(which is best collected from the drift and tenor of the whole dis-
course) is the sense of any ambiguous word or sentence in it to be 
determined; and every interpretation of such ambiguous word or 
sentence, as can be shewn to be inconsistent with the plain meaning 
of the speaker or writer, is, for that reason, to be rejected. This, 
justice, candour, and common sense, require. 3dly, By the way of 
reasoning made ufe of upon this occasion by these free-reasoning 
philosophers, the spirituality of the walls, or doors, may as well be 
inferr'd as the spirituality of Christ's body; for Christ's body being 
proved to be material, by being handled by his disciples, &c. and it 
being admitted that he penetrated through the walls or doors, while 
they remained shut, without suffering, &c. it will follow that the 
walls or doors had spiritual bodies; since it is contrary to the laws 
of nature that one solid or material body should pass, &c. An ar-
gument which would have very well become the philosophical an-
swer to the "Trial of the witnesses," as being sophistical, ludicrous, 
and absurd.
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Having now given my reasons for rejecting, as false, the interpretation above mentioned, which some have endeavoured to fix upon these words of St. John, "Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst;" and having also allowed, that those words naturally suggest the entrance of our Saviour to have been miraculous; I shall in the next place attempt to shew that the miracle here wrought by Jesus, instead of awakening in the minds of the disciples any suspicion, that their senses might have been imposed upon, in the examination they took of their Lord's body, because it is as easy for a power that can control the law of nature, to excite in us the ideas of hearing, seeing, and feeling, without the real existence of any object of those sensations, as to open a passage for a human body through walls or doors, without making any visible breach in them; this miracle, I say, instead of raising any such suspicion in the disciples, tended on the contrary to remove all their doubts, and convince them effectually, that it was Jesus himself in a body consisting of flesh and bones, and not a spirit, which appeared to them.

The disciples, during their conversation with Christ before his passion, had been accustomed to see him work miracles of various kinds, cast out devils, heal all manner of diseases, give light to the blind, elocution to the dumb, legs and nerves to the lame and paralytic, and life to the dead; and all this by a word, which they had also seen even the winds and seas obey. From this extensive power of controlling the laws of nature, established by the great Creator himself, joined to the more than human purity of his life and doctrine, the disciples most rationally concluded that he "came forth from God." And, therefore, as, on the one hand the power of working miracles was a characteristic mark of Jesus, and consequently his working miracles after his resurrection was one evidence of the identity of his person; so, on the other hand, was the assurance of his coming "forth from the God of truth," founded upon his doing such works, "as no man could do, unless God was with him," an infallible security to the disciples against the suspicion of his intending to impose upon them. From whence it will follow, that when, upon their fancying they saw a spirit, he assured them it was he himself, and no spirit, "which (says he) hath not flesh and bones, as they, by feeling and handling him, saw he had," they could have no shadow of a pretence either for disbelieving his word, or disrupting their own senses. For, in reality, doth not his appealing to their senses for a confirmation of what he asserted (viz. that it was he himself, and not a spirit), imply an affirmation that their senses were the proper judges of the point in question, and that he therefore left the determination of it to them? And are not both the parts of this affirmation absolutely false, if it be supposed that the body here assumed by Christ was a spiritual, i.e. an immaterial body? And if, instead of the object upon which they were to judge (viz. a material body, capable of exciting such and such sensations), a very different thing was substituted
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ed, namely, a mere idea of such an object, occasioned by the ry and suborned evidence of sensations imprinted on their s by a miraculous power; would not, I say, an appeal to the ment of their senses in this case have been a mockery? And d not the imposing upon their senses, after such an appeal, have fraudulent and dishonest? And would not such a proceeding been absurd as well as dishonest? For, if it be allowed that had the power of imposing miraculously upon the senses of lifeciples, it will not surely be denied that he had the power of ing miraculously into the chamber, where they were assembled, e "the doors were shut." The latter of these two miracles rs the first unnecessary. For if Jesus could in his human body into the chamber, while the doors were shut, there was no ion for him to impose upon the senses of his disciples. And m had it in his option to work whichever of those miracles he aid, would it not have been absurd (with reverence be it spoken) m to choose that which was inconfident with the character of who "came forth from the God of truth," and directly op-o the design of his appearing to his disciples after his passion; h was by offering his body to the examination of their senses, convincem that he was really, i.e. bodily, risen from the e disciples, therefore, who by the mighty signs and wonders by him before his passion were convinced that God was with could not, upon this occasion, but draw the same conclusion his entering miraculously into the room while the doors were and as miraculously perceiving the secret doubts and reason of their hearts; and though, not understanding what was meant fing from the dead, they had at first suspected him to be a ; yet, having been satisfied of the contrary by handling his, they had no more reason to distrust the evidence of their s, than they had formerly, when after having seen him "walk river the waves," and having from thence fallen into the like ination of his being a spirit, they had been convinced of their e by the same kind of proof, viz. by seeing, hearing, and g him, eating and conversing with him in the same manner as other men. And, indeed, there is no intimation in the sacred rs of their having had, upon either of these occasions, any cion of fraud or impolite. They were simple, plain men, gers to vain and visionary speculations; and went upon tho ends upon which all men a?, however some may talk, who reaom themselves out of all the principles of reason. Having fore throughout all their past lives trusted to the information ir senses, they could not avoid believing them upon the pre- occasion, especially when they were commanded to believe them hee whose transcendent knowledge and power manifested him to a thorough insight into the frame of man, as well as a supreme ority over the laws of nature.

Math. xiv.
§ 17. 3dly. The exact accomplishment of the words in which our Saviour foretold to his disciples his sufferings, death, and resurrection, will evidently appear by comparing the words of those prophecies with the several circumstances of those events. And, therefore, to enable the reader to make this comparison with the greater ease, I shall first set down the several particulars of the passion, and death, &c. of Christ, and then produce the prophecies corresponding to them.

The sufferings of Jesus, properly so called, took their beginning from the treachery of Judas, "one of the twelve, who" (as it is related by the evangelists) "having received a band of soldiers, &c. from the chief priests," with whom he had bargained "for thirty pieces of silver" to deliver him up, "went with them to a garden, whither he knew Christ was accustomed to resort," and there by the sign agreed on ("a kiss") having pointed him out, put him into their hands, who, seizing on him immediately, "carried him before the high priest," &c.

This fact was several times foretold by Jesus; at first more obscurely, as in these words, "Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?" And, an informer; and in these, "The Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of men"; and in others of the same general import: then more plainly at the last supper, to his disciples, who, upon his saying, "Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me," were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto him, "Lord, Is it I?" In answer to which he said, "He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me." These words, as Grotius observes, must be taken to come somewhat nearer to a declaration of the person who was to betray Jesus, than those others, "one of you shall betray me." "Wherefore," adds that learned commentator, "I am persuaded that Judas was near to Christ, so as to eat out of the same dish or mess with him, there being few or no dishes or messes on the table." This conjecture is indeed very probable, and gives great light to this whole matter: upon which we may observe still farther, that as the disciples, even after this declaration, were still in doubt of whom he spake, it is evident there must have been others, besides Judas, who "dipped their hands in the same dish with Jesus," otherwise that description had sufficiently made him known, and there had been no occasion for Simeon Peter to have "beckoned to that disciple, who was leaning on the bosom of Jesus," that he should ask him of whom he spake? In compliance therefore with this demand made to him by St. John in the name of all his disciples, and to put an end at once to all their doubts, Jesus told them he would point out the very person to them, saying, "It is he, to whom I shall give a top when I have dipped it;" and

3 See Grot. in loc. ** John xiii. 21.
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and when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon;" who appearing surprized at being thus pronounced a traitor, either for his farther satisfaction, or to dissimble he wickedness of his heart, himself asked Jesus, if it was he: to whom Jesus answered, "Thou sayest." "And thus" (concludes Erotius) "Christ gave proofs of his fore-knowledge by degrees; first including the future traitor in the number of the twelve; then in the letter number of those who sat next to him; and, lastly, by certain and precise marks pointing out the very person himself." To which I must add, that, in order to imprint this prophecy strongly on the minds of his disciples, he introduced it with applying to himself a passage of the Psalms. "* He that eateth bread with me, hath lifted up his heel against me;" and with these remarkable words, "Now I tell you before it come, that when it is come to pass you may believe that I am he." 2. The next incident is the desertion of the disciples, who, as we learn both from St. Matthew † and St. Mark ‡, upon their master's being seized by the soldiers and servants of the chief priest, who came with Judas, "all immediately forsook him and fled." Of this their desertion Jesus had forewarned them but a very short time before it came to pass, and that in the very pride and confidence of their faith upon their professing to believe, that "he came forth from God; § Then faith Jesus to them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night," or (as it is in John) "shall be scattered every man to his own home; for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad."

3. The third particular is Peter's disowning Christ, recorded in all the evangelists by whose accounts it appears, that Peter, following Christ at a distance to the palace of the high priest, was let into the court by the means of St. John, who "spake to her that kept the door, and brought in Peter;" where, standing among the crowd while his master was under examination, he was three several times charged by some that were about him with belonging to Christ, which he as often denied, affirming with oaths and imprecations," that he did not so much as know him; and immediately after his third denial the cock crowed; and then the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter, and Peter remembered the word of the Lord—and went out and wept bitterly.

The prophecy is as follows: "Verily I say to thee [Peter], this day, even this night, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny [or disown] me thrice." Here we see the nature, the time, and the repetitions of Peter's offence precisely defined and limited. And I take the suddenness and sincerity of his return to his former faith in his master, implied in his "weeping bitterly" upon the recollection of his crime, and of his master's words, to be fore-signified in this passage of St. Luke ††, "And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat.

* Psal. xii. 9. † Matth. xxvi. 56. ‡ Mark xiv. 50. § Matth. xxvi. 51.
Mark xiv. 57. compared with John xvi. 32. ¶ Luke xxii. 61. ** Mark xiv. 30.
†† Ch. xxii. 31, 32.
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"wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not, and when thou art converted" [τριφθέ, returned back again to the faith], "strengthen thy brethren."

4. The fourth event foretold by Christ, is his being delivered to the high priests, and by them to Pontius Pilate the Roman governor, together with many particulars of his sufferings from that time to his crucifixion. All which things are related by the evangelists, as follows:

"And they that had laid hold on Jesus, led him away to Cai-pha the high priest*, where the Scribes and the elders were assembled; who, after having examined some witnesses, from whole evidence nothing criminal could be made out against him, at length adjured him by the living God to tell them, Whether he was the Christ, the Son of God." To him Jesus faith, "Thou hast said. Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy, What farther need have we of witnesses? Be hold, now you have heard his blasphemy. What think ye? They answered and said, 'He is guilty of death.' Then did they spit in his face, and buffeted him, and others smote him with the palms of their hands, saying, Prophecy to us, thou Christ, who is he that smote thee.

"And when they had bound him, they led him away to Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor; who, overcome by the clamours of a tumultuous multitude, at last delivered him to be crucified, after having declared him innocent five several times, and endeavoured in vain to prevail upon the Jews to let him go free, or to be contented with his having scourged him. "† Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the common hall, and gathered to him the whole band of soldiers; and they stripped him, and put on him a scarlet robe; and when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand. And they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail King of the Jews. And they spit upon him, and took the robe off from him, and put his own raiment on him, and led him away to crucify him.

The words in which many of these particulars were foretold, are thefe. "† Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and the son of man shall be betrayed to the chief priests, and to the Scribes, and they shall condemn him to death; and shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him." In St. Mark § it is, "They [the Gentiles] shall mock him, and shall scourge him, and shall spit upon him, and shall kill him." In St. Luke, "For he shall be delivered to the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitely entreated, and spit on, and they shall scourge him and put him to death." Of his sufferings from the elders and chief priests he spoke in these words: "**From that time forth began Jesus to shew to the disciples how he must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests, and Scribes, and be killed," &c.

5. His

* Matth. xxvi. 57. Mark xiv. 55. † Matth. xxvii. 20. § Matth. xxvi. 34. ¶ Matth. xxvii. 30. ‡ Ibid xx. 18.
5. His crucifixion and death are mentioned in every one of the last cited passages, and in many others up and down the evangelists, either in express words, or in figures and allusions, which I think it is not necessary to insert, no more than the relation of those events, which are too well known to be disputed.

One proof, however, of his death, I shall here beg leave to mention, because it has not been much attended to by common readers. St. John, cap. xix. 33, 34, after having related that the soldiers "brake the legs of the two thieves," who were crucified with Jesus, adds, "But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead "already, they brake not his legs; but one of the soldiers with a "spear pierced his side, and forthwith came thereout blood and "water; and he that saw it, bare record," &c. Upon these words Beza makes the following observation. Among the reasons that induced St. John to assert this fact with so much emphasis, this ought not to be passed over, which Erasmus also touches upon; namely, that by this wound the death of Christ is fully proved. For the water, flowing out of that wound in the side, was an indication of the spear's having penetrated the pericardium, in which that water is lodged, and which being wounded, every animal must necessarily die immediately. This fact, therefore, was inferred to obviate the calumnies of the enemies of the truth, who might otherwise pretend that Jesus was taken down from the cross before he was dead, and thence call in question the reality of his resurrection from the dead.

6. Of his rising from the dead I need not here again produce the proofs, having set them forth so copiously in all the preceding parts of this discourse; but concerning the evidence of his rising precisely on "the third day," I think it proper here to add an observation or two. That he did not rise before the third day, is evident from what St. Matthew relates of the watch or guard being set at the door of the sepulchre. The passage is this: "* Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together to Pilate, saying, Sir, we remember that he deceiver said, whilst he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again: command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure* until the third day, *left his disciples come by night and steal him away,* and say to the people, *He is risen from the dead; so the last error shall be worse than the first,* &c. From these words I observe, first, That the watch or guard was set at the sepulchre the next day after the death and burial of Christ. Secondly, It is most probable this was done on what we call the evening of that day; because that was a high-day, not only a Sabbath, but the passover; and it can hardly be imagined that the chief priest, and especially the Pharisees who pretended to greater strictness and purity than any other sect of the Jews, should, before the religious duties of the day were over, defile themselves by going to Pilate; for that they were very scrupulous upon that point appears from what St. John says of their not entering into the hall of judgement

* Chap. xxvii. 63. † Chap. xviii. 21.
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judgement (the praetorium, where Pilate's tribunal was) the day before, "left they should be defiled," and so kept from eating the pass-over. And if it should be said, that the paschal-lamb being always eaten in the night, all their frupules upon that account were over, and they at liberty to go to Pilate in the morning, or at what other time they pleased; I answer, that, allowing the objection, it is still farther to be considered, that this was the Sabbath-day: and can it be supposed that the Pharisees, who cenfured Jesus "for healing, and "his disciples for plucking and eating the ears of corn on the Sab-"bath-day," would profane that day, and defile themselves, not only by going to Pilate, but with the soldiers to the sepulchre of Christ, and setting a seal upon the door of the sepulchre, before the religious duties of that solemn day were past? especially as they were under no kind of necessity of doing it before the evening; though it was highly expedient for them not to delay it beyond that time. Both which points I shall now explain.

Jesus had said, whilst he was yet alive, that he should rise again from the dead on "the third day," which prophecy would have been equally falsified by his rising on the first, or second, as on the fourth. If his body, therefore, was not in the sepulchre "at the close of the second day," the chief priests and Pharisees would gain their points, and might have asserted boldly, that he was an impostor; from whence it will follow, that it was time enough for them to visit the sepulchre at the close of the second day." On the other hand, as he had declared he should rise on the "third day," it was necessary for them (if they apprehended what they gave out, that his disciples would come and steal him away), to guard against any such attempt on that day, and "for that day only." And, as the third day began from the evening or shouting-in of the second, according to the way of computing used among the Jews, it was as necessary for them not to delay visiting the sepulchre, and setting their guard, till after the beginning of that third day; for if they had come to the sepulchre, though ever so short a time after the "third day "was begun," and had found the body missing, they could not from thence have proved him an impostor. And accordingly St. Matthew tells us they went thither on the second day," which was the Sabbath; and though the going to Pilate, and with the Roman soldiers, to the sepulchre, and sealing up the stone, was undoubtedly a profanation of the Sabbath, in the eyes of the ceremonious Pha-riees, yet might they excuse themselves to their consciences, or (what seems to have been of greater consequence in their opinions) to the world, by pleading the necessity of doing it that day. And surely nothing could have carried them out on such a bufinefs, on such a day, but the urgent necessity of doing it "then," or "not "at all." And as I have shewn above, that this urgent necessity could not take place till the "close of the second day," and just, though but one moment, before the beginning of the third; it will follow, from what hath been said, that in the estimation of the high priest and Pharisees, the day on which they set their guard was the second day; and the next day consequently was the third; to the
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he end of which they requested Pilate to command that the sepulchre might be made sure. Here then we have a proof, furnished by the murderers and blasphemers of Christ themselves, that he was not risen before the third day; for it is to be taken for granted, that before they sealed up the sepulchre, and set the guard, they had inspected it, and seen that the body was still there. Hence also we are enabled to answer the unlearned cavils that have been raised upon these expressions, "three days and three nights," and "after three days." For it is plain that the chief priests and Pharisees, by their going to the sepulchre on the Sabbath-day, understood that day to be the second; and it is as plain by their setting the guard from that time, and the reason given to Pilate for their doing so, viz., "left the disciples should come in the night, and steal him away," that they construed that day, which was just then beginning, to be the day limited by Christ for his rising from the dead, i.e. the third day. For had they taken these words of our Saviour, "The Son of man shall be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth," in their strict literal sense, they need not have been in such haste to set their guard; since, according to that interpretation, there were yet two days and two nights to come; neither, for the same reason, had they any occasion to apprehend ill consequences from the disciples coming that night and stealing away the body of their master. So that, unless it be supposed that the chief priests and Pharisees, the most learned sect among the Jews, did not understand the meaning of a phrase in their own language; or that they were so impious or impolitic to profane the Sabbath and defile themselves without any occasion; and so foment and impertinent as to ask a guard of Pilate for watching the sepulchre that night and day, to prevent the disciples stealing away the body of Christ the night or the day following; unless, I say, these strange suppositions be admitted, we may fairly conclude, that in the language, and to the understanding of the Jews, "three days and three nights, and after three days," were equivalent to "three days," or "in three days." That he rose on the third day, the testimony of the angels, and his own appearances to the women, to Simon, and to the two disciples on the way to Emmaus, which all happened on that day, are clear and sufficient proofs.

The predictions of Christ, relating to this miraculous event, are many; some of which only, I shall here set down, for brevity's sake.

* And as they [the three disciples] came down from the mountain [where Christ had been transfigured] "Jesus charged them, saying, Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead.

† But after I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee.

‡ From that time forth began Jesus to shew to his disciples, how that he must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and Scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day."

Behold

* Matth. xvii. 9. † Chap. xxvi. 13. ‡ Chap. xvi. 22.
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"Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and the Son of man shall be betrayed to the chief priests, and to the Scribes; and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles, to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him; and the third day he shall rise again."

I shall defer what remarks I have to make upon these predictions, and their accomplishment, till I come to consider the prophecies contained in the writings of Moses, and the Prophets, and the Psalms, relating to the sufferings, and death, and resurrection of Christ; for those only belong to the present subject.

§ 18. 4thly, The fourth evidence, appealed to by our Saviour, was the testimony of the Scriptures; in which are contained, not only the promises of a Messiah, and Saviour of the world, but the marks and descriptions by which he was to be known. Of these there are many, and those so various, so seemingly incompatible in one and the same person, and exhibited under such a multitude of types and figures, that as it was absurd for a mere mortal to pretend to answer the character of the Messiah in all points, so it was difficult to those who by some expressions of the prophets were filled with the idea of a glorious, powerful, and triumphant deliverer, to understand the intimation given in others of his sufferings and death. But this difficulty proceeds rather from the prejudices and blindness of the interpreters, than from any degree of obscurity in the latter more than in the former. His sufferings and death, and his offering himself up as a sacrifice for sin, are as plainly set forth in the writings of the prophets, and in the types of the Mosaical ceremonies, as his power and his priesthood: and if the Jews, and even the disciples, poffessed with the like vain and carnal imaginations, turned their views and expectations to the one, and overlooked the other, it was owing to their mistaking the nature of his kingdom, and the end and design of his priestly office. This, I doubt not, might be made appear by comparing the several types and prophecies together, but would carry me too far from my present purpose, which is only to shew, that the sufferings, and death, and resurrection of Christ, were foretold in the types and predictions contained in the books of Moses, in the Prophets, and in the Psalms; and to derive from thence another proof in favour of the resurrection.

The first prophecy relating to this subject in the books of Moses, and the first indeed that was ever given to man, is that recorded in the third chapter of Genesis, and the 15th verse, in these words, "And I will put enmity between thee [the serpent] and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed. It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."

Upon this prophecy, I shall beg leave to quote a passage out of the late Bishop of Salisbury’s most admirable discourse, "Of the Use and Intent of Prophecy in the several Ages of the World." Dic. III. p. 57.—"Let us consider the history of Moses, as we should do any other ancient Eastern history of the like antiquity: sup-
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pose, for instance, that this account of the fall had been preferred
to us out of Sanchoniatho's Phœnician history: we should in that
case be at a loss perhaps to account for every manner of representa-
tion, for every figure and expression in the story; but we should
soon agree that all these difficulties were imputable to the manner
and customs of his age and country; and should shew more respect
to so venerable a piece of antiquity, than to charge it with want of
sense, because we did not understand every minute circumstance:
we should likewise agree, that there were evidently four persons
concerned in the story; the man, the woman, the person repre-
sented by the serpent, and God. Disagree we could not about their
several parts. The serpent is evidently the tempter; the man and
the woman are the offenders; God, the judge of all three. The
punishments inflicted on the man and woman have no obscurity
in them; and as to the serpent's sentence, we should think it
reasonable to give it such a sense as the whole series of the story
requires.

'Tis no unreasonable thing surely to demand the same equity
of you in interpreting the sense of Moses, as you would certainly
use towards any other ancient writer: and if the same equity be
allowed, this plain fact undeniably arises from the history; that
man was tempted to disobedience, and did disobey, and forfeited
all title to happiness, and to life itself; that God judged him and
the deceiver likewise under the form of a serpent. We require
no more; and will proceed upon this fact to consider this prophecy
before us.

The prophecy is part of the sentence passed upon the deceiver:
the words are these: 'I will put enmity between thee and the wom-
man, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head,'
and thou shalt bruise his heel.' Gen. iii. 15. Christian writers
apply this to our blessed Saviour, emphatically styled here the seed
of the woman, and who came in the fulness of time to bruise the
serpent's head, by destroying the works of the devil, and restoring
those to the liberty of the sons of God, who were held under the
bondage and captivity of sin. You'll say, what unreasonable liberty
of interpretation is this? Tell us by what rules of language the
seed of the woman is made to denote one particular person, and by
what art you discover the mystery of Christ's miraculous concep-
tion and birth in this common expression? Tell us likewise, how
bruising the serpent's head comes to signify the destroying the power
of sin, and the redemption of mankind by Christ? 'Tis no wonder

to hear such questions, from those who look no farther than to the
third chapter of Genesis, to see the ground of the Christian appli-
cation. As the prophecy stands there, nothing appears to point
out this particular meaning; much less to confine this prophecy to
it. But of this hereafter. Let us for the present lay aside all our
own notions, and go back to the state and condition of things, as
they were at the time of the delivery of this prophecy; and see (if
haply we may discover it) what God intended to discover at that
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"time by this prophecy, and what we may reasonably suppose on
"first parents understood it to mean.
"They were now in a state of sin, standing before God to receiv
"sentence for their disobedience, and had reason to expect a full exe-
cution of the penalty threatened, "in the day thou eatee thereof thou
"shalt surely die." But God came in mercy as well as judgment, pur-
posing not only to punish, but to restore man. The judgment's
awful and severe: the woman is doomed to sorrow in conception;
the man, to sorrow and travail all the days of his life; the ground is
cursed for his sake; and the end of the judgment is, "dust thou art,
and to dust thou shalt return." Had they been left thus, they might
have continued in their labour and sorrow for their appointed time,
and at last returned to dust, without any well-grounded hope or
confidence in God; they must have looked upon themselves as re-
jected by their Maker, delivered up to trouble and sorrow in this
world, and as having no hope in any other. Upon this foot, I
conceive, there could have been no religion left in the world; for
a sense of religion, without hope, is a state of frenzy and disfrac-
tion, void of all inducements to love and obedience, or any thing
else that is praise-worthy. If therefore God intended to preserve
them as objects of mercy, it was absolutely necessary to communi-
cate so much hope to them, as might be a rational foundation for
their future endeavours to reconcile themselves to him by a better
obedience. This seems to be the primary intention of this first
divine prophecy; and it was necessary to the state of the world, and
the condition of religion, which could not possibly have been sup-
ported without the communication of such hopes. The prophecy
is excellently adapted to this purpose, and manifestly conveyed such
hopes to our first parents. For let us consider in what sense we
may suppose them to understand this prophecy. Now they must
necessarily understand the prophecy, either according to the literal
meaning of the words; or according to such meaning as the whole
circumstance of the transaction, of which they are a part, does re-
quire. If we suppose them to understand the words literally, and
that God meant them so to be understood, this passage must appear
ridiculous. Do but imagine that you see God coming to judge the
offenders; Adam and Eve before him in the utmost distress; that
you hear God inflicting pains, and sorrow, and misery, and death,
upon the first of human race; and that, in the midst of all this scene
of woe and great calamity, you hear God foretelling, with great
solemnity, a very trivial accident, that should sometimes happen in
the world; that serpents would be apt to bite men by the heels, and
that men would be apt to revenge themselves by striking them on
the head. What has this to do with the loss of mankind,
with the corruption of the natural and moral world, and the ruin
of all the glory and happiness of the creation? Great comfort it was
to Adam, doubtless, after telling him that his days should be short
and full of misery, and his end without hope, to let him know,
that he should now and then knock a snake on the head, but not
"even
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even that, without paying dear for his poor victory, for the snake should often bite him by the heel. Adam, surely, could not understand the prophecy in this sense, though some of his sons have so understood it; a plain indication how much more some men are concerned to maintain a literal interpretation of Scripture, than they are to make it speak common sense. Leaving this therefore as absolutely absurd and ridiculous, let us consider what meaning the circumstances of the transaction do necessarily fix to the words of this prophecy. Adam tempted by his wife, and the by the serpent, had fallen from their obedience, and were now in the presence of God expecting judgment. They knew full well at this juncture, that their fall was the victory of the serpent, whom by experience they found to be an enemy to God and to man; to man, whom he had ruined by seducing him to sin; to God, the noblest work of whose creation he had defaced. It could not therefore but be some comfort to them to hear the serpent first condemned, and to see that, however he had prevailed against them, he had gained no victory over their Maker, who was able to affer his own honour, and to punish this great author of iniquity. By this method of God's proceeding they were secured from thinking that there was any evil being equal to the creator in power and dominion. An opinion which gained ground in after-times through the prevalency of evil; and is, where it does prevail, destructive of all true religion. The condemnation therefore of the serpent was the maintenance of God's supremacy; and that it was so understood, we have, if I mistake not, a very ancient testimony in the book of Job; 'with God is strength and wisdom, the deceived and the deceiver are his;' i. e. equally subject to his command: Job. xii. 16. The belief of God's supreme dominion, which is the foundation of all religion, being thus preferred, it was still necessary to give them such hopes as might make them capable of religion toward God. These hopes they could not but conceive, when they heard from the mouth of God that this serpent's victory was not a complete victory over even themselves: that they and their posterity should be enabled to contest his empire; and though they were to suffer much in the struggle, yet finally they should prevail, and bruise the serpent's head, and deliver themselves from his power and dominion over them. What now could they conceive this conquest over the serpent to mean? Is it not natural to expect, that we shall recover that by victory, which we lost by being defeated? They knew that the enemy had subdued them by sin; could they then conceive hopes of victory otherwise than by righteousness? They lost through sin the happiness of their creation; could they expect less from the return of righteousness than the recovery of the blessings forfeited? What else but this could they expect? for the certain knowledge they had of their los, when the serpent prevailed, could not but lead them to a clear knowledge of what they should regain by prevailing against the serpent. The language of this prophecy is indeed in part metaphorical; but 'tis a great mistake to think that all metaphors are

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of uncertain signification; for the design and scope of the speaker, with the circumstances attending, create a fixed and determinate sense. Were it otherwise, there would be no certainty in any language; all languages, the eastern more especially, abounding in metaphors.

Let us now look back to our subject, and see what application we are to make of this instance.

This prophecy was to our first parents but very obscure; it was, in the phrase of St. Peter, but 'a light shining in a dark place;' all that they could certainly conclude from it was, that their cafe was not deperate; that some remedy, that some deliverance from the evil they were under, would in time appear; but when, or where, or by what means, they could not understand; their own sentence, which returned them back again to the dust of the earth, made it difficult to apprehend what this victory over the serpent should signify, or how they, who were shortly to be dust and ashes, should be the better for it. But, after all that can be urged upon this head to fet out the obscurity of this promise, I would ask one question; Was not this promise or prophecy, though surrounded with all this obscurity, a foundation for religion, and trust and confidence toward God after the fall, in hopes of deliverance from the evils introduced by disobedience? If it was, it fully answered the necessity of their cafe, to whom it was given, and manifested to them all that God intended to make manifest. They could have had towards God no religion, without some hopes of mercy: it was necessary therefore to convey such hopes; but to tell them how these hopes should be accomplished, at what time and manner precisely, was not necessary to their religion. And what is now to be objected against this prophecy? It is very obscure, you say; so it is; but it is obscure in the points which God did not intend to explain at that time, and which were not necessary then to be known. You see a plain reason for giving this prophecy; and as far as the reason for giving the prophecy extends, so far the prophecy is very plain; it is obscure only where there is no reason why it should be plain; which surely is a fault easily to be forgiven, and very far from being a proper subject for complaint.

But if this prophecy conveyed to our first parents only a general hope and expectation of pardon and restoration, and was intended by God to convey no more to them, how came we their posterity to find so much more in this promise than we suppose them to find? how is it that we pretend to discover Christ in this prophecy, to see in it the mystery of his birth, his sufferings, and his final triumph over all the powers of darkness? By what new light do we discern all these secrets? By what art do we unfold them?

'Tis no wonder to me, that such as come to the examination of the prophecies applied to Christ, expecting to find in each of them some express character and mark of Christ, plainly to be understood as such antecedently to his coming, should ask these, or any other like questions; or that the argument from ancient pro-
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Phecy should appear so light and trivial to those who know no
better use of it.

"When God is all his works from the beginning; and
whatever degree of light he thought fit to communicate to our first
parents, or to their children in after-times, there is no doubt but
that he had a perfect knowledge at all times of all the methods by
which he intended to rescue and restore mankind; and therefore all
the notices given by him to mankind of his intended salvation, must
correspond to the great event, whenever the fulness of time shall
make it manifest. No reason can be given why God should at all
times, or at any time, clearly open the secrets of his providence to
Men; it depends merely upon his good pleasure to do it in what time
and in what manner he thinks proper. But there is a necessary rea-
on to be given why all such notices as God thinks fit to give should
answer exactly in due time to the completion of the great design; it
is absurd therefore to complain of the ancient prophecies for being
obscure; for it is challenging God for not telling us more of his
secrets. But if we pretend that God has at length manifested to us,
by the revelation of the Gospel, the method of his salvation, it is
necessary for us to shew that all the notices of this salvation given
to the old world do correspond to the things which we have-seen
and heard with our eyes. The argument from prophecy there-
fore is not to be formed in this manner: "all the ancient prophecies
have expressly pointed out and characterized Christ Jesus." But
it must be formed in this manner: "all the notices which God gave
the fathers of his intended salvation are perfectly answered by the
coming of Christ." He never promised or engaged his word in
any particular relating to the common salvation, but what he has
fully made good by sending his Son to our redemption. Let us try
these methods upon the prophecy before us. If you demand that
we should shew you, a priori, Christ Jesus set forth in this prophecy,
and that God had limited himself by this promise to convey the
blessings intended by sending his own Son in the flesh, and by no
other means whatever, you demand what I cannot shew, nor do I
know who can. But if you inquire whether this prophecy, in the
obvious and most natural meaning of it, in that sense in which our
first parents, and their children after, might easily understand it,
has been verified by the coming of Christ, I conceive it may be
made as clear as the sun at noon-day, that all the expectation
raised by this prophecy has been completely answered by the re-
demption wrought by Jesus Christ. And what have you to desire
more than to see a prophecy fulfilled exactly? If you insist that
the prophecy should have been more express, you must de-
mand of God, why he gave you no more light; but you ought
at least to suspend this demand till you have a reason to shew
for it.

"I know that this prophecy is urged farther, and that Chris-
tian writers argue from the explications of it, to shew that
Christ is therein particularly foretold: he properly is the seed of
"
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"woman in a sense in which no other ever was; his sufferings were
well prefigured 'by the bruising of the heel,' his complete victory
over sin and death by 'bruising the serpent's head.' When unbet-
lievers hear such reasonings, they think themselves intitled to laugh;
but their scorn be to themselves. We readily allow that the ex-
pressions do not imply necessarily this sense: we allow farther, that
there is no appearance that our first parents understood them in this
sense, or that God intended they should understand them; but
since this prophecy has been plainly fulfilled in Christ, and by the
event appropriated to him only; I would fain know how it comes
to be conceived to be so ridiculous a thing in us, to suppose that
God, to whom the whole event was known from the beginning,
should make choice of such expressions, as naturally conveyed so
much knowledge as he intended to convey to our first parents, and
yet should appear in the fulness of time to have been peculiarly
adapted to the event, which he from the beginning saw, and which
he intended the world should one day see; and which when they
should see, they might the more easily acknowledge to be the work
of his hand, by the secret evidence which he had enclosed from the
days of old in the words of prophecy. However the wit of man may
defile this method, yet there is nothing in it unbecoming the wis-
dom of God. And when we see this to be the case, not only in
this instance, but in many other prophecies of the Old Testament,
it is not without reason we conclude, that under the obscurity of
ancient prophecy there was an evidence of God's truth kept in re-
serve, to be made manifest in due time."

The exquisite and matterly sense, clearness, and force of reason,
which is so conspicuous in this passage, that every common reader
must perceive, and every judicious one admire it; and the pertinency
of it to the present subject, will, I doubt not, sufficiently atone for
the length of the quotation.

In all the books of Moses I find no other prophecy but this relating
to the death and sufferings of Christ; I shall therefore, according to the
method pointed out in the words of our Saviour, proceed in the
next place to the Prophets; and first produce one out of Isaiah, whose
application to the Messiah the most obstinate enemies of the Gospel
have not been able to deny.

Isaiah, Ch. iii. "Who hath believed our report? And to whom
is the arm of the Lord revealed? For he shall grow up before him
as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no
form nor comeliness: and when we shall see him, there is no beauty
that we should desire him. 'He is despised and rejected of men,
a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief,' and we hid as it were
our

""Remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is none else; I am
God, and there is none like me; declaring the end from the beginning, and from an-
cient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will
do all my pleasure." Isa. xlv. 9, 10.

""The works of the Lord are done in judgement from the beginning; and from the time
he made them, he disposed the parts thereof." Exod. xlv. 26."
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our faces from him. He was despised, and we esteemed him not; surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray: we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth. He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter; and as a sheep before her shepherds is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? For he was cut off out of the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was stricken. And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he poured out his soul unto death, and he was numbered with the transgressors, and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

It is impossible for any one, who is the least acquainted with the history of Christ, not to perceive many circumstances of his life, his sufferings and his death, plainly pointed at in this prophecy; and indeed so apparently and so completely was it fulfilled in Christ, that the later Rabbins, to avoid the conclusions which the Christians might draw from this and other prophecies in favour of the Gospel, have invented a distinction of a double Messiah; "one who was to redeem us, and another who was to suffer for us: for they say, that there are two several persons promised under the name of the Messiah; one of the tribe of Ephraim, the other of the tribe of Judah; one the son of Joseph, the other the son of David; the one to precede, fight, and suffer death; the other to follow, conquer, reign, and never to die." But Bishop Pearson, from whom I have borrowed this remark, has clearly shewed this distinction to be not only false in itself, but advantageous to the Christian faith, as admitting a suffering Messiah to be foretold by the Prophets; and has also proved, that the ancient Rabbins did understand this fifty-third chapter of Isaiah to be a description of the Messiah, without any intimation of a double Messiah, an invention introduced by the modern Jews, to favour their vain expectations of a temporal prince and deliverer.

B 4

* The margin of the Bible has it, "he was taken away by distress and judgment."
† See Pearson on the Creed, p. 183. § Pearson on the Creed, p. 57.
For what is farther to be considered out of the other prophecies, and especially the Psalms, relating to this subject, I cannot do better than to give it to the reader in the words of the same Bishop Pearson, whose observations upon the several articles concerning the sufferings, &c. of Jesus, I would with him to consider.

"All which [the predictions of his sufferings, and particularly this fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, compared with his life] if we look upon in the gross, we must acknowledge it fulfilled in him [Jesus] to the highest degree imaginable, that he was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. But if we compare the particular predictions with the historical passages of his sufferings, if we join the prophets and evangelists together, it will most manifestly appear the Messias was to suffer nothing which Christ hath not suffered. If Zachary say, they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver; St. Matthew will shew, that Judas fold Jesus at the same rate; for the chief priests covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver: If Isaiah say that he was wounded; if Zachary, they shall look upon me whom they have pierced; if the prophet David yet more particularly, they pierced my hands and my feet; the evangelists will shew how he was fastened to the cross, and Jesus himself print the print of the nails. If the Psalms tell us, they should laugh him to scorn, and shake their head, saying, He trusted in the Lord that he would deliver him; let him deliver him, saying he was delighted in him; St. Matthew will describe the same action, and the same expressions: for they passed by reviled him, wagging their heads, and saying, He trusted in God, let him deliver him now if he will have him; for he said, I am the Son of God. Let David say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? and the Son of David will shew in whole person the Father spoke it, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? Let Isaiah foretell He was numbered with the transgressors, and you shall find him crucified between two thieves, one on his right-hand, the other on his left. Read in the Psalms, in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink, and you shall find in the evangelist, Jesus, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, I thirst; and they took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink. Read farther yet, they part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture; and to fulfil the prediction, the soldiers shall make good the division, who took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part, and also his coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. They said therefore, amongst themselves, let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be. Lastly, let the prophets teach us, that he shall be
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be brought like a lamb to the slaughter, and be cut off out of the land of the living; all the evangelists will declare how like a lamb he suffered, and the very Jews will acknowledge that he was cut off.

These instances, I imagine, are sufficient to shew, that according to the prophets, thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to die. That his burial also, and his resurrection, were in like manner foretold, will appear by the following passages.

Isaiah, in the above-quoted chapter, ver. 9, speaks of his burial in these words, and he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death,” the circumstantial accomplishment of which is too remarkable not to be taken notice of.

* The power of life and death had been taken from the Jews, and lodged in the hands of the Roman governor, from the time that Augustus annexed Judea to the province of Syria; which was done some years after the birth of Christ. The chief priests therefore and rulers of the Jews were obliged to apply to Pontius Pilate, not only to put Jesus to death, but for leave to take down his body and those of the two malefactors executed with him, that they might not remain upon the cross on the Sabbath-day.” For among the Romans (with whom crucifixion was the usual capital punishment for slaves, robbers, &c. under the degree of Roman citizens), it was customary to let the carcasses hang on the cross till it was either consumed by time or devoured by birds and beasts. Upon a petition, however, of the executed person’s friends or relations, leave to bury them was seldom or never refused; and hence Pilate without any difficulty yielded to the application of the Jews for taking down the bodies, and gave permission to Joseph of Arimathea to bury that of Jesus. What became of the bodies of the two thieves after they were taken down from the cross, is not mentioned by any of the evangelists. That they were buried is almost certain; because not only the custom of the Jews, but the express words of Moses, required, “If a man have committed a sin worthy of death, and he be put to death, and thou hang him on a tree, his body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day, that thy land be not desecrated,” Which precept was doubtless the reason of their petitioning Pilate to have the bodies taken from the cross that day, enforced by the additional consideration of the particular solemnity and sanctity of the paschal sabbath then immediately ensuing. And that they were buried in or near the place of crucifixion is, I think, most probable, for the following reasons. First, the place where they were executed was called Golgotha, i.e. a place of a skull,” a name in all likelihood derived to it from the number of skulls which (if it was the usual place of execution, as from this instance it is most reasonable to conclude it was) might frequently have been found there, either fallen from bodies left to putrefy on the cross, or turned up by the opening the ground for such malefactors as the governor permitted to be buried.

Secondly, * See Pearson on the Creed, art. 4. † Deut. xxi. 22–23. ‡ Matth. xxvii. 53.
Secondly, the passchal sabbath was drawing on space. For among the Jews the day was always reckoned to commence from the evening, so, for the greater caution, were they accustomed to begin the sabbatical rest from all kind of work an hour before sun-set; but on this day, which was the preparation of the passover, the holy hours (if I may so speak) began still earlier; because the passchal-lambs were always slain between the ninth and eleventh hours, within which space of time the whole multitude of Jews repaired to the temple, where alone the passover was killed, and having there offered the blood and entrails of the passchal victims, they brought back the remaining carcasses to dress and eat it at their homes, according to the Mosaical institution. The Jews could not then be much pressed in time, for the ninth hour was begun before our Saviour expired; and the soldiers coming after that time to the two malefactors, found them not yet dead; and therefore, by a cruel kind of mercy to put an end to a painful life, and to dispatch them the more speedily, broke their legs, the Coup de Grace obtained for those miserable wretches of the Roman governor by the Jews, and intended likewise for him, who, though innocent, and delivered up by their malice to that infamous and horrid death, yet, with a benevolence and generosity unparalleled, interceded for them even upon the cross, in these compassionate terms, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!” Now as Jesus; and consequently the two thieves, did not expire till after the ninth hour, as the Jews were obliged to repair to the temple before the eleventh hour, at the expiration of which the sabbatical rest from all kinds of work began; and as they were solicitous that the bodies should be taken down and buried before the commencement of that high and solemn day; it is most likely they buried them at or near the place where they were crucified; because they had not time to carry them to any great distance; because Golgotha, from its name, seems to have been a place of burial for those who had been executed there; and because the want of time is the very reason given in the evangelist for laying the body of Jesus in the sepulchre of Joseph of Arimathea, which was near adjoining, as St. John tells us in these words: “Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden, and in this garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid.” There laid they Jesus therefore, because of the Jews preparation, for the sepulchre was nigh at hand. Here then we may see and admire the exact completion of this famous prophecy of Isaiah: “He made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death.” He was buried like the wicked companions of his death under the general leave granted to the Jews for taking down their bodies from the cross; and was like them buried in or near the place of execution. But here the distinction, foreseen and foretold many hundred years before, took place in favour of Jesus, who, though numberless with the transgressors, had done no violence, neither was there any deceit in his mouth;” for Joseph of Arimathea rich.
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rich man, and an honourable councillor, and Nicodemus, a man of the Pharisees, a ruler of the Jews, a matter of Israel, con-
spired to make his grave with the rich, by wrapping his body in linen-clothes, with a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hun-
dred pound weight, and laying it in a new sepulchre he hewed or hol-
lowed into a rock, which Joseph of Arimathea had caused to be made for his own use; circumstances which evidently shew, that he was not only buried by the rich, but like the rich also according to the prophecy.

The words of David foretelling the resurrection of Christ, together with St. Peter's comment upon them, I shall infer here as they stand in the second chapter of the Acts, the 25th and following verses:

"For David speaketh concerning him, I forewast the Lord always before my face; for he is on my right-hand, that I should not be moved: therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope, because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine holy one to see corruption. Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance. Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day; therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit upon his throne; he seeing this before, spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption."

The apostle's reasoning was very well understood by the Jews, and so convincing, that § "three thousand souls were that day added" to the church, and baptized into the faith of Christ. His argument stands thus. You acknowledge David to be a prophet, who under his own person often spake of the Messiah. To the Messiah therefore belong these words: "thou shalt not leave my soul [life] in hell [bades, the grave]; neither shalt thou suffer thy holy one to see corruption;" because they are by no means applicable to David, who it is not pretended ever rose from the dead: on the contrary, he was buried, and his body remained and putrefied in his sepulchre, which "is with us even to this day." But by divine illumination he foresees that the Messiah, or Christ, who according to the flesh was to descend from him, should be raised up from the dead, to "sit upon his throne," i.e. to reign like him over the people of God; and therefore he foretold the resurrection of Christ in words most exactly fulfilled in Jesus, who rose alive out of the grave in so short a time after his death, that "he saw no corruption," whereas, adds he, "we are witnesses."

Concerning these words no other question can be raised, than whether they relate to the Messiah, for to David most certainly they can never be applied. If they relate to the Messiah, then was Jesus the Messiah;

* John xix. 39, 40. † Acts iii. 9. ‡ Ps. xvi. 8, 9. § Acts ii. 42.

† Ps. xvi. 11. See Whitby on this passage.
Messiah, for in his resurrection were they accomplished; and doubled the three thousand Jews who were converted by the preaching of Peter, acknowledged both the one and the other of these propositions. And, indeed, by the manner in which these words of the Psalms were urged by St. Peter, and afterwards by St. Paul, it seems to have been by them taken for granted, that, as they were not applicable to David, they must be understood of the Messiah, whom therefore, according to Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms, it behoved to suffer, to die, to be buried, and to rise again from the dead.

Besides the express words of the prophecy, there were several predictions of another kind, of the sufferings, death, and resurrection of Christ, held forth in types and figures; such as those two mentioned by our Saviour, and applied to himself: + if as Moses, said he, lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man lift up; and again, as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale’s belly, so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.† The paschal-lamb, alluded to by St. Paul in these words, Christ our passover is slain; the veiled theaf alluded to in like manner by the same apostle, ἡ πασχάλιν ἡμέρα, 1 Cor. xv. 20, 23. Rom. xi. 16. and many others. I shall not here inquire how far, and in what cases, an argument from types and figures may be admitted, but shall content myself with quoting a passage relating to this point out of the incomparable Difcourses of Bishop Sherlock upon prophecy, as follows:

"Another question, proper to be considered with respect to the state of religion under the Jewish dispensation, is this: how far the religion of the Jews was preparatory to that new dispensation, which was in due time to be revealed, in accomplishment of the promise made to all nations. Now if Abraham and his posterity were chosen, not merely for their own sakes, or out of any partial views, and regards towards them, but to be instruments in the hand of God for bringing about his great designs in the world; if the temporal government was given for the sake of the everlasting covenant, and to be subordinated to the introduction of it, it is highly probable, that all the parts of the Jewish dispensation were adapted to serve the same end; and that the law founded on the temporal covenant was intended, as the temporal covenant itself was, to prepare the way to better promises. If this, upon the whole, appears to be a reasonable supposition, then have we a foundation to inquire into the meaning of the law, not merely as it is a literal command to the Jews, but as containing the figure and image of good things to come. It can hardly be supposed, that God, intending finally to save the world by Christ, and the preaching of the Gospel, should give an intermediate law, which had no respect nor relation to the covenant which he intended to establish for ever. And whoever will be at the pains to consider seriously the

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the whole administration of Providence together, from the beginning to the end, may see perhaps more reason than he imagines to allow of types and figures in the Jewish law.

To proceed then: the Jewish dispensation not conveying to all nations the blessing promised through Abraham's seed, but being only the administration of the hopes and expectations created by the promise of God; in this respect it stood entirely upon the word of prophecy; for future hopes and expectations from God can have no other real foundation. Inasmuch then as the Jewish religion did virtually contain the hopes of the Gospel, the religion itself was a prophecy, &c.

That the Jewish rabbins and the fathers of the Christian church, as well as our Saviour and his apostles, understood many things in the law of Moses, in the historical books of the Old Testament, in the Prophets and the Psalms, to be types and shadows of things to come, is very certain; and if the two former carried their conceits upon this head farther than reason or sense could allow them to do, types and figures are not upon that pretence to be wholly rejected; especially as many precepts and ceremonies in the Mosaic institution may very well be accounted for by supposing them intended as images and shadows of things to come, and can but ill be reconciled to the wisdom of the lawgiver without such a solution. And if such types be once admitted, it will be no difficult matter to shew that they were fulfilled in Christ Jesus, as the great antitype to which they all referred.

§ 9. Whoever takes an attentive view of the predictions relating to the Messiah, contained in the writings of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms, will perceive the great scheme of Providence in the deliverance of mankind from the power of sin and death, opening by degrees, in a succession of prophecies through the several ages of the world; each of which, in proportion as the accomplishment of the wonderful and gracious purpose of God advanced, grew more explicit and particular; till they came at last to point out the very times and perfon of the expected deliverer. Thus the promise of redemption to mankind, which was given to our first parents in very general and obscure words, "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head," importing, that some of their descendants should vanquish their great enemy, was renewed to Abraham in clearer terms, and limited to his descendants through Isaac, "In thy seed shall the nations of the earth be blessed:" then to Jacob the younger of the two sons of Isaac; and afterwards to Judah and his children; and lastly to the family of David, who was of the tribe of Judah. The particular flock from which this branch of righteousnes and immortality was to proceed, being thus limited and settled, God was pleased, in the next place, to bring into a nearer and more distinct view the long-promised seed, declaring by his prophets the precise time of his coming, the place, and miraculous manner of his birth, and so many wonderful particulars of his life, his sufferings, and his death;

* See Bp. Sherlock's Difc. on the use and intent of prophecy, &c.
† Gen. iii. 15.  ‡ Gen. xxii. 18.  Ⅱb. xxvii. 19.  xliv. 1.  § 2 Sam. i. 11.
death; that by such characteristic marks and notices he might when he should come, be readily and plainly known. These prophecies, some of them at least, were not only at the time of their delivery, but even to that of their accomplishment, very dark and obscure; but that obscurity proceeded not so much from the terms in which they were expressed, as from the things foretold; which were so seemingly inconsistent, that no human wisdom could reconcile them with each other. For as they sometimes represented the Messiah under the character of a deliverer, a "prince whose throne shall endure for ever, the desire of all nations, the holy one," etc., so at other times they spake of him as "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with griefs, as despised and rejected of men; as afflicted, smitten, wounded, bruised, and scourged; numbered with the transgressors, cut off out of the land of the living; and making his grave with the wicked," and yet, "with the rich in his death." So much however of these prophecies was at all times clear, that from them the Jews, to whom they were delivered, were encouraged to expect a redeemer to come at a certain limited time; and so exactly were they able to compute the period prefixed by the prophet Daniel, that at the birth of Christ there was a general expectation among the Jews, which from them spread into other nations, of a great king being about that time to be born in Judea. The place also of his birth, and the stock from which he was to spring, were as clearly understood: but the Jews, too much attached to the temporal covenant, proud of being the chosen and peculiar people of God, and, from that pride, not comprehending the full extent of the promise made to Abraham, that "in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed," expected a temporal deliverer, a king of the Jews only, considered still as a separate and distinct nation. The Jews, they imagined, were alone to be redeemed, and that from their temporal enemies, and under their Messiah were to reign for ever over the other kings and nations of the earth: and from this imagination, than which nothing could be more contrary to the express promises made to Abraham, nor more injurious to the character of that God whose mercy is universally over all his works, proceeded their blindness and and backwardness in seeing and believing all that the Prophets had spoken, and their indignation against Jesus, for assuming the title, without afflicting, what they seemed to be, the kingdom of the Messiah, the throne of David. With the same prejudices were the disciples and apostles themselves so strongly prejudiced, that when he told them of his sufferings and death, "Peter rebuked him, saying, 'Be it far from thee, Lord, this shall not be unto thee.'" Jesus however suffered and died, and rose again from the dead, as he had foretold; and, notwithstanding his sufferings, still claimed to be the Messiah, nay, and even founded his claim upon those very sufferings, affecting, that, according to the prophets, "thus it behoved the Messiah to suffer." To the prophets he therefore tends them for their conviction, and for the removing those prejudices, which, as long as

* Matt xvi. 20.
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they subsisted, must have kept them effectually from ever acknowledg- ing his claim, unless they would renounce those Scriptures upon whose authority alone their expectations of a Messiah were grounded. or if the prophets spake only of a victorious triumphant redeemer of Israel, a king who should never die, it is certain Jesus could not be at redeemer; for he was oppressed and afflicted, and, instead of de- ering the Jews, was himself delivered up to their enemies, and by em put to death. What the prophets have written about the suf- rings, &c. of the Messiah, we have just now seen; and cannot, think, but acknowledge their predictions to be very clear and expressive; and to have been most circumstantially accomplished in Christ Jesus: and perhaps to us, who are not blinded with the vain imaginations of the Jews, it may seem matter of wonder that the apostles should dashing and so obstinately shut their eyes against so strong a light. The truth is, they were unwilling to give up the pleasing and flattering ex- pectations of a temporal kingdom, which they understood to be plainly spoken of by the Prophets, and knew to be incompatible with a suf- ering, dying Messiah. By expounding, therefore, "in Moses and in all the Prophets the things concerning himself, and by opening their understandings, that they might understand the Scripture," Jesus at length brought them to perceive that the kingdom of the Messiah was not a temporal, but a spiritual and eternal kingdom; that the redemption promised to Adam and the patriarchs was not the redemption of the children of Israel only from their carnal enemies and oppressors, (an event in which the first Father of the world, and even the patriarchs themselves, could have little or no interest,) but the redemption of all mankind from the power and penalty of sin; to be effected on the one hand by "Christ's fulfilling all righteousness," the original co- venant, upon which happiness and immortality was promised to Adam; and, on the other, by his "offering up his soul a sacrifice for sin, i.e. paying the penalty of death, which all sinners, all man- kinds, had incurred; paying it not as a debtor, for he was without sin," but as a surety, who willingly and freely took upon himself to make good the failings, and discharge the obligations of others. Of this plan the death of Christ was a necessary part; and so was his resurrection from the dead, by which, having vanquished that enemy who brought death and sin into the world, he was put into possession of that throne which was "to endure for ever," and was, like Da- vid, appointed by God to reign, not over the Jewish nation exclusive of the rest of mankind, but over all those of every nation of the world, who should, like the Jews, make themselves the people of God, by entering into a covenant with him to keep his command- ments; the sole tenure by which the children of Israel became originally the people of God; over whom, as such, God, their legal, their constitutional king, if I may so speak, set David as a ruler under him, and promised to continue that delegated vicarial sceptre of righteousness in his posterity for ever. Of all these points there are frequent intimations in the books of Moses, in the Prophets, and in the Psalms; by a fair and unprejudiced examination of which, the disciples
disciples and apostles might be certainly convinced, that, according to the scheme of the redemption of mankind promised to Adam and the patriarchs, as well as by the express words of prophecy, the Messiah was to die and rise again from the dead. And as, on the one part, had the Scriptures been silent upon the latter of these two articles, they had, from the testimony of their own senses, &c. sufficient proofs of Christ's being risen from the dead; so, on the other, from the exact accomplishment of all the predictions relating to his life, his sufferings, his death and burial, they might, without any farther evidence than that of his body's being no where to be found, have infallibly collected from the Scriptures only, that he was risen from the dead. And therefore, when all these testimonies concurring to prove the resurrection, how was it possible for them to withhold their assent?

The prophecies of Jesus himself concerning his rising from the dead on the third day, were another proof of the same kind, upon which they might as reasonably and as certainly depend, as upon that grounded on the predictions of Moses and the prophets. Moses had foretold that the Messiah should be a prophet, and they had been convinced that Jesus was one in the largest sense of that word, by many instances which had fallen under their own observation, those particularly relating to his passion and crucifixion, most of the minute and extraordinary circumstances of which he had acquainted them with before they came to pass: such as, the treachery of Judas, the desertion of his disciples, Peter's disowning him thrice, the insults and abuses he underwent from the Chief Priests and Elders, and the cruel mockery of the Roman soldiery. The exact correspondence of each of these events with their several predictions, afforded the strongest presumption imaginable in favour of the resurrection, as it was in like manner foretold by him, of whose precedence they had just then received so many convincing proofs; especially as some of the predicted events were of such a nature as not to be foreseen but by that eye which penetrates into the inmost recesses of the heart of man, and spied out all his thoughts even before they are conceived. For although the Chief Priests and Pharisees had for some time "fought how they might "put him to death," yet they had resolved against doing it on the "Feast-day, for fear of the people," who but a very few days before had, in a sort of triumphal procession, attended his entry into Jerusalem, "cutting down branches of palm, throwing them be- "fore him, spreading their garments in the way, and crying Ho-"vinannah, blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." Yet on the Feast-day was he put to death at the instance of the Chief Priests and Pharisees; and by the clamours of this very people, against the inclination and endeavours of Pilate, in whom the power of life and death reposed; and who, as his judge, declared him innocent again and again; and when he gave him up to be crucified,

* Matth. xv.  
† Mark xi. 8—9.
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"Crucified," "took water and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person; see ye to it." This sudden change of the counsels of the Chief Priests in the hearts of the multitude, and in the manners of Pontius Pilate, who was a man of a haughty, rough, untractable, and implacable spirit, who, so far from having any complaisance for the Jewish nation, or regard for their customs or religion, had all along treated them with the most cruel and tyrannical insolence, and who more than once had contemptuously acted in direct opposition to their most just and reasonable demands; a change, I say, so sudden, from one extreme to another, could not with any certainty be previously deduced from the consideration of the instability of human counsels, and the fickleness of the mind of man. The same thing may be said concerning the desertion of his disciples, and Peter's disowning him thrice, each of which events came to pass within a few hours after they were foretold, and within the very time prefixed; contrary to their express and confident declarations, that though they "should die with him, they would never deny" [renounce] "him," made at the time and upon the occasion of this very prophecy. Add to this the inhuman abuses, insults, and mockery, he endured from the Chief Priests, and from the Roman soldiers; for these, surely, were no usual part of the punishment inflicted upon criminals; the most flagitious of whom are seldom treated with more severity than their sentence requires, especially when that sentence extends to taking away their lives by a lingering and painful death. And our Saviour's case, undoubtedly, deserved more than ordinary compassion, especially from the Roman soldiers, as he had been pronounced innocent by the Roman governor himself, and was known to be sacrificed only to the envy and malice of the Jews. Therefore that Jesus, who foretold all these extraordinary particulars, was endowed with the all-precient spirit of God, the disciples could have no reason to doubt; and consequently could have as little cause to call his resurrection in question, which he had foreseen and foretold by the same divine spirit, from whom no event, how remote or uncommon soever, can be concealed, and who can never deceive or lie. And therefore the Apostles, even without the testimony of those who had seen him after he was risen, without the authority of the Scriptures foretelling his resurrection, and without the infallible proofs of his being alive after his passion, which they themselves received from seeing him, handling him, and conversing with him, might and ought to have believed that he was risen from the dead, upon the single evidence of his having predicted it, joined to that of his body's being no where to be found; as St. John in fact did, and was therefore pronounced blessed by our Saviour himself, in these words spoken to St. Thomas upon the occasion of his refusing to believe without the attestation of his senses: "Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast..."  

*C Math. xxvii. 24.  
† Pearson on the Creed, p. 160.  
‡ Matt. xxvi. 35.
"have believed; blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed." Upon which more hereafter.

I shall here rest the cause, and close the evidence of the resurrection of Jesus; since it is manifest that the apostles, who were to be witnesses of this great event, and preachers of the Gospel to all the world, had no doubt or scruple left concerning his being really (i.e. bodily) risen from the dead, after his appearing to St. Thomas; for they went into "Galilee, to a mountain where Jesus had appointed them," in obedience to his command, and in expectation of meeting him there according to his promise, "where, when they saw him, they worshipped him," from thence they returned again to Jerusalem, and continued in that city in obedience to another command, "waiting for the promise of the Father," which within a few days after was made good to them by the coming of the Holy Ghost. Upon these two points I beg leave to say a few words, for the better understanding some passages relating to them in St. Matthew, St. Luke, and the Acts of the Apostles.

§ 20. All the males among the Jews were, by the law of Moses, commanded to repair thrice every year to Jerusalem, "to appear," as it is expressed, "before the Lord," viz. at the three great feasts: the Passover, called also the feast of unleavened bread; the feast of the weeks, named Pentecost; and the Feast of Tabernacles. Each of these solemnities lasted a whole week. The apostles, therefore, and disciples, who had come up to Jerusalem from Galilee, their native country, not merely to attend upon their master, but in obedience to the above-cited law of Moses, to keep the Passover, continued, as they were obliged to do, at Jerusalem, till the end of that festival; and there Jesus appeared to them a second time (eight days after his first appearance), St. Thomas§ being with them. The next appearance of Christ to any number of his disciples together, was at the sea of Tiberias, called also the sea of Galilee; and this is expressly said by St. John, "to be the third time that Jesus shewed himself to his disciples; after that he was risen from the dead;" from whence it is evident, that the appearance on a mountain in Galilee, mentioned by St. Matthew, was subsequent to this spoken of by St. John, and was also in a different place, on a mountain, whereas the latter was by the sea of Tiberias. Three reasons may be assigned for our Saviour's meeting his disciples in Galilee. Galilee was the country in which he had refided above thirty years, from his infancy to the time when he first began to preach the kingdom of God; there did he first begin to declare and evidence his mission by miracles, and in the cities of that region did he perform the greatest part of his mighty works; so that he must necessarily have been more known, and have had more followers in that country, than in any other region of Judea. And therefore, one reason for his shewing himself in Galilee after he was risen from

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From the dead, seems to have been, that where he was personally known to so many people, he might have the greater number of competent witnesses to his resurrection. Accordingly, St. Paul tells us he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once, which therefore, in all probability, happened at the mountain in Galilee, where St. Matthew says, Jesus appointed his disciples to meet him, as I have observed once before. 2dly, Galilee was also the native country of the greatest part, if not of all the apostles and disciples. There they dwelt—and supported themselves and families, some of them at least, by mean and laborious occupations. So strict and so necessary a condition of life must needs have rendered a long absence from their own homes highly inconvenient to them at that time especially, when the barley-harvest, which always fell out about the time of the passover, was either begun, or upon the point of beginning. As soon, therefore, as the paschal solemnity was over, which detained them necelarily at Jerusalem for a whole week, it was natural to suppose that they would return into Galilee. Upon which supposition, our Saviour, before his death, promised, after he was risen, "he would go before them into Galilee;" which remarkable expression was again made of by the angel after his resurrection, who bade the women tell his disciples, that he [Jesus] "would go before them into Galilee;" i.e. would be in Galilee before them, and would meet them there. Christ, indeed, afterwards commands them by the same women to go into Galilee, adding a promise, that they should see him. But this command must not be understood to imply a suspicion, that without these peremptory orders of their master, they would have continued at Jerusalem, where, after the festival was over, they had nothing to do. It ought rather to be taken as a confirmation of his promise of meeting them in Galilee, and a strong encouragement to them to depend upon the performance of it in the due place and season. The time of their entering upon the apostolical office, of preaching the Gospel to all the world, was not yet come; neither were they yet fully prepared or qualified for that important work, which, after they had once undertaken it, was to be not only the sole employment of their lives, but the occasion of their leaving their fathers, their children, their country, and their friends, to travel up and down the world, exposed to hardships, dangers, persecution, and death, in unknown and remote corners of the earth; of all which their master had frequently forewarned them before his death, and particularly in that affectionate discourse he held to them—the night in which he was betrayed. To prepare them, therefore, by degrees for a state of so much affliction and mortification, and to give them an opportunity of seeing and providing, in the best manner they were able, for their relations and families, to whom they were soon to bid adieu for ever, their gracious Lord, who knew how to indulge, because he had himself felt the afflictions and infirmities of human nature.
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and who, by recommending his mother, even from the cross, to the care of his beloved disciple, had taught them what regards were due to those tender ties of nature, not only permitted them to return into Galilee, but promised to meet them there, and did, in fact, meet them there, not only once, but several times, as may be inferred from what St. Luke says of his having shewn himself to them + "for forty days after his passion," compared with what St. John says of his appearance by the lake of Tiberias, which he expressly calls the "third time" that Christ shewed himself to his disciples after his resurrection. After this, St. Matthew speaks of another appearance in Galilee, on a mountain, where, adds he, "Jesus had appointed his disciples." When this appointment was made, there is no intimation given in any of the evangelists. If it was not at the appearance at the lake of Tiberias, which there is no reason to imagine it was, St. John saying nothing of any such matter, it was probably at some other appearance in Galilee, between this last and that mentioned by St. Matthew; and as there was a great number of brethren present upon that occasion, it is rational to conclude, that timely notice was given, as well of the day as of the place of meeting. But, however this might have been, I am persuaded that the greatest part of the appearances of Christ "for the forty days after his passion" were in Galilee, since the reason that required the Apostles to return thither were as strong for their continuing there, till the approach of the feast of Weeks or Pentecost should call them back to Jerusalem.

Another reason for meeting his disciples in Galilee, and for concluding that the appearances mentioned in the Acts were chiefly in that country, and that there were many of them, may be deduced from what St. Luke ‡ tells us of the subjects upon which our Saviour spake to his disciples on these occasions, viz. "Of things pertaining to the kingdom of God." Before they set out upon the great work of preaching the kingdom of God to all the world, it was necessary that they should be fully instructed in the doctrines they were to preach, and in the several functions of the apostolic office; that they should thoroughly understand the intentions of their matter, and have some view of the means and assistances by which they should be enabled to perform a task so apparently above their abilities, and some hopes and encouragement to support them under the prospect of these difficulties and dangers they were given to expect in propagating the Gospel. In order to all this, many inveterate prejudices relating to the law of Moses and the Jewish nation were to be rooted out; the scheme of God in the universal redemption of mankind was to be laid open to them; many human affections, reluctances, and terrors, were to be subdued, and their hearts to be fortified with courage and constancy, a disregard and contempt of hardships, perils, pain, and death. To these several purposes nothing could more conduce than frequent

* John xxi. 26, 27. ‡ Acts 1. ‡ Acts 1. 7.
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quent visits from their Lord; whose resurrection (of which every appearance was a fresh proof) was an unquestionable evidence of his power; whose every appearance was an instance of his affection and condescension to them, and of his fidelity in performing the promise he had made before his passion, of coming to them again after his death, and being with them for a "little while before he went "to his Father," and whose fidelity and exactness, in thus performing his promise, was an infallible earnest and security for the coming of that Comforter who was to supply his place, "to guide them "into all truth, to bring to their remembrance whatever he had "spoken to them, to enable them to do greater works than he had "done," and to fill their hearts "with that joy, which it should "not be in the power of man to take from them." Add to this the weight and authority derived to his precepts and instructions from their being delivered by himself in person; and the great measure of strength accruing to their faith, from their having frequently before their eyes the "captain of their salvation," who, after having fought with the powers of darkness, and triumphed over sin and death, was to "fit down thenceforth at the right-hand of God," invested with the power of afflicting those who should fight under his banner, and rewarding their toils, their sufferings, and their death, with a crown of immortal life. And if nothing could more effectually bring about all these great effects than Christ's frequently meeting his Apostles, it will evidently appear that no place could be more proper for those meetings than Galilee; if we consider that the Apostles, having their habitations in that country, might reside there without any suspicion, and assemble without any fear of the persecutors and murderers of their master, the Chief Priests and the Roman Governor*: for Galilee was under the jurisdiction of Herod. Whereas, had they remained in Jerusalem, and continued to assemble frequently together, while the report of their master's being risen from the dead was fresh and in every body's mouth, the chief priests and elders, whose hatred or apprehensions of Jesus Christ were not extinguished by his blood, as appears by their persecuting and murdering his followers long after; these rulers of the Jews, I say, would undoubtedly have given such interruptions to those meetings, and thrown such obstacles in the way, as must have necessitated our Lord to interpose his miraculous power to prevent or remove them. Now, as all these inconveniences might be avoided by our Saviour's meeting his disciples in Galilee, it is more agreeable to the wisdom of God ("which," as Mr. Locke observes †, "is not usually at the expense of miracles, but "only in cases that require them"), to suppose these frequent meetings to have been in Galilee rather than in Jerusalem, and more analogous to the proceedings of our Lord himself, who, being in danger from the Scribes and Pharisees, refrained from appearing publicly in Jerusalem for some time before the hour appointed for his

† Real. of Christ, p. 508, col. edit.
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his sufferings and death was come, and "walked in Galilee," as St. John * tells us; "for he would not walk in Jewry, because the "Jews sought to kill him." From these considerations I think it clear, that all the appearances of Christ to his disciples, from that to St. Thomas mentioned in St. John, to that last in Jerusalem, on the day of his ascending, mentioned by St. Luke both in his Gospel and in the Acts, were in Galilee: from whence when the Apostles returned afterwards to Jerusalem, they were covered from the apprehensions of giving any umbrage by residing there, for the short space to come between their return and the time of their entering upon their apostolical office, by the obligation they were under, in common with the rest of their brethren the Jews, to repair to that city for the celebration of the feast of Pentecost; upon the most solemn day of which festival they were, according to the promise of their master, filled with the Holy Ghost, and endued with power from above to defy all danger, and surmount all opposition in preaching the Gospel of Christ.

And hence we learn, that all the latter part of the 24th chapter of St. Luke's gospel, from the 49th verse to the end inclusive, relates to what happened at Jerusalem, &c. after the return of the apostles from Galilee: of whole departure into Galilee after the resurrection of Christ, or of his promise of going thither before them, this evangelist, having not thought it to his purpose to make any mention, thought it as needless to say anything of their leaving Jerusalem; since the scene of their last appearance, as well as of the former related by him, was in that city; and since to those who by any other means should come to be acquainted with the whole history of our Saviour, there would be no danger of confounding those two appearances. As to those who should happen to meet with no other account but his gospel (if such a thing could be supposed), no great damage could arise from their mistaking them to be one and the same.

§ 21. By this long and scrupulous examination of the several particulars which constitute the evidence of the resurrection, I have endeavour'd to shew, that "never were there any facts that could better abide the test." And, if I have in any degree succeeded in my endeavours, I shall neither repent my own labour, nor apologize to the reader for having dwelt so long upon this subject; since the conclusion that will inevitably follow from this proposition is, that "never was there a fact more fully proved than the resurrection of Jesus Christ." For, besides the testimony of some, who may be supposed to have had no prejudices either for or against the resurrection, I mean the Roman soldiers, who reported that his sepulchre was miraculously opened by an angel, or a divinity (for so they must have styled that celestial apparition); and besides the testimony of others, who were apparently prepossessed with notions contrary to the belief of Christ's being risen from the dead, and yet affirmed that they were not only told by angels that he was risen,
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If men, but that they themselves had seen him, talked with him, and handled him; besides this human testimony, I say, which, considering all the circumstances attending it, must be allowed to have been sufficient to prove any event that was not either impossible or improbable in the highest degree, there were (as it was reasonable to expect there should be) other evidences as extraordinary and miraculous as the resurrection itself. Of this kind are the predictions contained in the writings of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms; setting forth the design and purpose of God to redeem mankind by the righteousness, sufferings, death, and resurrection, of the "seed of the woman." Without the resurrection, this great scheme of divine mercy had been incomplete; by that it was perfected, and the triumph over death added to that over sin; the Messiah thereby accomplishing all that the Scriptures foretold of his glory and power. When therefore one part of the promises relating to Jesus had been so exactly made good in his life and death, it is reasonable to conclude, that God did not fail to fulfill the others in his resurrection.

"In the same class of evidence may also be ranked the prophecies of Jesus himself, relating to his rising from the dead, which coming from one whose other predictions (of which there had been many) had always been accomplished, deferred to be credited more lest than the others, and were not only verified by the event itself, but confirmed by other subsequent events, foretold likewise by him before his passion, and depending with and depending upon that great proof of his divine power. Such, for instance, were his meeting his disciples in Galilee, his being with them a little while before he went to his Father, his ascension into heaven, and his sending unto them the promised Comforter, with all the glorious faculties and powers they received upon his coming. With so various, so astonishing, so well-connected and irrefragable a chain of evidence, is this important article of the resurrection bound up and fortified.

But all these proofs were not exhibited to all the Jews; for "not to all the people was Jesus shewn" alive after his passion, but "to witnesses chosen before of God; to us" (faith St. Peter) "who did eat and drink with him after that he arose from the dead." That Christ made choice of a select number of disciples, and particularly of twelve (who were called apostles), to be witnesses of the great actions of his life, and especially of his resurrection, and preachers of his gospel to all the world, is a thing too well known to need any proof. To qualify them for this double office, he not only, upon many occasions both before and after his crucifixion, discoursed to them in particular "of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God," and poured upon them all the various gifts of the Holy Spirit, but gave them every kind of evidence of his being risen from the dead, which the most scrupulous and sceptical could imagine or require; "shewing himself alive" to them "by many infallible proofs," such as eating and drinking with them, &c. C c 4

9 Acts x. 41.
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"for forty days after his passion." And, indeed, it is highly expedient that those upon whose testimony and credit the truth of any fact is to be established, should have the fullest and most unexceptional evidence of it, that can be had; because their having had all possible means of information must needs add great weight and authority to their deposition. Hence then we may learn the reason of our Saviour's appearing so often to his disciples after his resurrection, of his requiring them to handle him, and see that it was he himself; of his eating and drinking with them; of his referring them to the Scriptures, to his own predictions, and to the testimony of those to whom he had appeared before he came to them; and, lastly, of his satisfying the unreasonable scruples of St. Thomas, who being one of the chosen witnesses (one of the twelve), it was proper he should have an equal knowledge of the fact he was to attest with his other brethren the apostles. That this perfect knowledge of the things they were to give testimony to, was necessary for those who were ordained to be apostles, is farther evident from the following words of St. Peter: who, after the ascension of our Lord, propoing to the rest of the disciples to fill up the vacancy made by the transgression and death of Judas, by electing one to take part with them in their ministry and apostleship, describes the qualifications requisite in an apostle, by limiting their choice in these words: "Wherefore of these men, that have accompanied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out amongst us, beginning from the baptism of John, unto that fame day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be witness with us of his resurrection." Hence also it is plain, that all these infallible proofs were not vouchsafed by Christ to his disciples merely out of a particular favour and regard to them, that they might believe and be saved; but with a farther view, that others also through their testimony, founded on the completest and exactest information, might likewise believe and be saved. The reproof of Christ to St. Thomas, for not believing without the attestation of his senses, implied in the blessing pronounced by him on those "who having not seen had yet believed," is a clear argument, that our Saviour thought his disciples had sufficient cause to believe he was risen from the dead, even before he shewed himself to them. And that they had so in fact, I have above endeavoured to prove; and that St. John did believe, before he saw his master, he himself affirms us. Had Christ, therefore, intended nothing more than to bring his disciples to a belief of his resurrection, he might have left them to the testimony of the Roman soldiers; to that of the women; to the writings of Moses and the Prophets; to his own predictions; to the state of the sepulchre, and that wonderful circumstance of his body's being no where to be found; to all this evidence he might, I say, have left them, without appearing to them himself, and left them without excuse, had they still continued faithless and unbelieving. But though the apostles had upon this evidence believed their master to be

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be risen from the dead; yet, without those other infallible proofs mentioned by St. Luke, they would certainly have not been so well qualified for witnesses of the resurrection to all the world; that is to say, the reasons upon which they believed would not have appeared so convincing. The Heatheans would not have admitted the testimony of Moses and the Prophets; of whole writings they knew nothing, and of whose divine authority they had no proof. And as to the depositions of the women, besides that they were strangers to their characters, they might, from Christ’s appearing to them, with some colour have demanded why he did not appear likewise to those whom he commissioned to preach his gospel, and to be witnesses of his resurrection. But when, on the contrary, the apostles could tell them that they themselves had seen Christ, had handled him, eaten and drunk with him, and conversed with him for forty days after that he was risen from the dead, they could not but allow them to have had the fullest evidence of the resurrection, supposing what they told them to be true; and of this, the purity of their doctrine, the holiness of their lives, their courage and constancy in defying and undergoing all kinds of hardships, dangers, pain, and death, in advancing a cause which every worldly interest obliged them to desert, joined to the attestation of the Holy Spirit, “working with them, and confirming the word with signs following,” were such assurances as no other man could give of his veracity.

From what has been said, it may appear, how little ground there is for the cavils that have been raised upon our Lord’s forbidding Mary Magdalene to “touch him” and upon his not shewing himself, after he was risen, to the Jews, to the chief priests and elders, to the Scribes and Pharisees: the one of which has been interpreted as a refusal to Mary Magdalene, of the necessary evidence of his being risen from the dead; and the other, as a breach of the promise implied in these words.* "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign, and there shall be no sign given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas; for as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale’s belly, so shall the son of man.” &c. In which (it is said) Christ promised to appear, after he was risen, to that evil and adulterous generation,” that is, to the Jews, &c., as contra-distinguished from his disciples and apostles. That Christ promised by these words to give that “evil generation” sufficient proof of his rising from the grave after having lain in it three days, I readily allow; but that he promised to appear to them, I absolutely deny, and think it impossible to prove he did, from the above-cited passage. Of his rising again from the grave on the third day, the Jews had the testimony of the prophets, of the predictions of Christ himself, the evidence of the Roman soldiers, of his body’s being nowhere to be found, of the women and disciples, and apostles, to whom he had appeared, and who, before the Sanhedrin, bore witness to his resurrection, and, having just before wrought a miracle upon a lame man, declared that they had done it in the name of Jesus

* Matt. xii. 39, 40. † Act. iv. 10.
"Jesu of Nazareth, whom," say they, "ye crucified, whom God raiseth from the dead." This surely was evidence sufficient to convince any reasonable and unprejudiced person; and, consequently, to acquit our Lord of the promise of giving that "evil generation" satisfactory proofs of his being risen from the dead. To the evidence vouchsafed by Christ, either out of favour to those "who had forsook all and followed him," or to those whom he had chosen to be "witnesses of him to all the world," they certainly could have no just pretensions; who, instead of being his disciples, had rejected his doctrine, and put him to death as an impostor and blasphemer; and, instead of shewing any disposition to embrace or propagate his gospel, opposed it with all their power; and by threats and punishments forbade his apostles to preach any more in his name. That Mary Magdalene was convinced that it was Jesus who appeared to her, I have already shewn very fully; and that was all that was necessary for her single self: supposing, therefore, that she never had afterwards the permission of touching or embracing her master (which by the way cannot be proved); neither had she, nor any one else, reason to complain or cavil, since neither her own faith, nor that of any other person, depended upon her having that proof of the resurrection of Christ; for she was not an apostle, nor one of the "chosen witnesses." And it is very remarkable, that none of the apostles, either in preaching to the unconverted Jews or Gentiles, or in their epistles to the church, ever make any mention of the appearances of Christ to the women: and the evangelists seem to have related them only upon account of their being connected with other more important parts of the history of the resurrection. The truth is, the testimony of the women, though of great weight with the apostles, and with those who received it from their own mouths, was but second-hand hear-say evidence to those who had it only from the apostles' report; who, for that reason, infested always upon their having themselves seen their master, "after that he was risen from the dead;" a circumstance, as far as I can recollect, not omitted by any of them, in their arguments upon the resurrection of Jesus; as may be seen in the passages of Scripture that give any particular account of those discourses. And thus St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Corinthians, after enumerating many appearances of Christ to the twelve apostles, and others, closes all with saying, "And last of all he was seen of me also." So much care did they take to give reasonable evidence for the reasonable faith they required.

§ 22. All that has hitherto been said, relates chiefly to the proofs of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, as they were laid before the apostles, those "chosen witnesses" of that great and astonishing event. And I hope, upon a serious and attentive view of the fair and unimposing manner in which those proofs were offered to their consideration, and of the number and certainty of the facts upon which they were grounded, every judicious and candid enquirer after truth

1 Cor. xv. 2.
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truth will allow, that to the apostles at least, the resurrection of Jesus was most fully and most unexceptionably proved. I shall now proceed to lay before the reader some arguments (for I cannot enter into all) that may induce us, who live at so remote a distance of time from that age of evidence and miracles, to believe that Christ rose from the dead.

The first and principal argument is, the testimony of those chosen witnesses, transmitted down in writing, either penned by themselves, or authorized by their inspection and approbation.

The second is, the existence of the Christian religion.

Before we admit the testimony of these "chosen witnesses", contained in the Gospels, the Acts, the Epistles, and the Revelations, it may be proper to consider, in the first place, what reasons there are for our believing this testimony to be genuine; or, in other words, believing them to be the authors of those books which are now received under their names: and, in the next place, what arguments can be offered to induce us to give credit to this testimony, supposing it genuine.

To prove the apostles * and evangelists to be the authors of those Scriptures which are now received under their names, we have the concurrent attestation of all the earliest writers of the church, deduced by an uninterrupted and uncontrolled tradition, from the very times of the apostles; which is such an authentication of these sacred records, as is not to be overturned by bare preconceptions, and a furmised and unproved charge of forgery. But for the proofs of this proposition, I shall refer the reader to the first discourses of those learned men who have treated more particularly upon this subject, and shall content myself with offering in support of those proofs the following considerations; in which I shall endeavour to show, 1st. The probability of the apostles having left in writing the evidences and doctrines of the religion they preached, and of their disciples having preserved and transmitted those writings to posterity; 2dly. The improbability of any books forged in the names of the apostles escaping detection.

First, If the precepts and examples of Jesus Christ and his apostles were to be the rules by which all those who in succeeding ages should believe in him, were required to govern themselves, it seems most consonant to the wisdom of God, because agreeable to what he

* I use these two words Apostles and Evangelists in this place, to denote and distinguish the authors of the four Gospels, the Acts, and the Epistles, &c. though they might all have been comprehended under the general term Apostles, by which title not only the twelve, so called by Christ himself, but Matthias afterwards and Paul, and all the seventy or seventy-two disciples, are mentioned by some of the fathers. Of this last number were the evangelists Mark and Luke (as Dr. Whitby has shown from Origen and Epiphanius), and as such were qualified by their own personal knowledge of most of the facts, and by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, to write their gospels, without the inspection of the two great apostles Peter and Paul, which yet (as we are told by some of the fathers) was a farther authority given to them, and such as would have sufficed, though they had not been themselves particularly inspired.

† See Dr. Whitby's Prefatory Discourses to his Annotations upon the Gospels, Acts, &c. See also L'Abbé de la Religion Chrétienne, Tom. II.
he himself professed when he gave the law to the Israelites, to commit those rules of salvation to writing, rather than to the unwise and treacherous conveyance of oral tradition; which cannot with any safety be depended upon for scarce so much as one or two generations. It is, therefore, highly reasonable to suppose that the same Spirit which incited and enabled the apostles to preach the gospel, and bear witnesses to the resurrection of Jesus Christ in every nation of the known world, should likewise incite and enable them to deliver down to posterity, in a method the least liable to uncertainty and error, that testimony, and those precepts, upon which the faith and practice of after-times were: to be establisht, especially when it is (in the second place) considered, that all revelation (revelation I mean of the doctrines and system of the Gospel) was confined to the apostles, and consequently ended with them. The power of working miracles, speaking with other tongues, casting out unclean spirits, &c. was frequently, if not universally, given to the first converts to Christiаниty; and some of these gifts were continued for many generations in the church. But to the apostles only was our Saviour pleased to reveal his will. Accordingly, in the epistles of St. Paul, we see that those Christians who were endued with many and various gifts of the Holy Spirit, stood however in need of the instructions and directions of that apostle, in many points both of faith and practice; and the earliest writers after the apostles, though poffeffed themselves of many of those miraculous powers, instead of pretending to immediate revelation, have upon all occasions recourse to the Holy Scriptures, which they acknowledge to have been written by the assistance of the Divine Spirit, as to that fountain from whence alone they could derive the waters of life: both which appeals, as well that made to the apostles by their contemporaries, as those made by succeeding Christians to the Scriptures, would have been unnecessary, had they, like the apostles, been taught all things by revelation, and been guided into all truth by the Holy Spirit.

This being the case with those Christians who were converted to the faith by the preaching of the apostles themselves, and who were to transmit to succeeding ages that Gospel upon which, according to their belief, the salvation of mankind depended; is it not natural to imagine they would take the most effectual means to supply those defects which they were sensible of in themselves, and to guard against these errors which, through the imbecility of the human mind, they had fallen into, even while the voices of the apostles still sounded in their ears, and to which their posterity must of necessity be still more liable? And what more effectual means could they pursue, than either to obtain in writing, from the apostles themselves, the evidence and doctrines of the Christian faith, or, which amounted to much the same thing, to write them down from their mouths, or under their inspection and approbation; or, lastly, to transcribe from their own memories what they could recollect of the doctrines

See particularly the Epistles to the Corinthians.
doctrines and instructions of the apostles? Of these three methods, the two first were unquestionably the best; the last was subject to many imperfections and mistakes; for though our Saviour promised to enable his apostles, by the Holy Spirit, "to call to mind whatever he had said unto them," I do not find, that the memories of those who heard the apostles were ever assisted in the like miraculous manner. If the apostles, therefore, had not, either from their care for the "household of faith," or from the suggeffions of the Holy Spirit, transmitted the proofs and doctrines of the Gospel to posterity in one of the two first-mentioned ways, it is to be presumed they would have been called upon to do it by those who looked upon them as teachers commissioned and inspired by the Spirit of Truth, and "who alone had the words of eternal life." And if neither of those two desirable things could have been obtained, recourse would undoubtedly have been had to the last. And, indeed, it is evident, from St. Luke's preface to his Gospel, that many writings of this kind were current among the Christians of those times; none of which, that I know of, having come down to us, it is to be presumed they were superseded by writings of greater authority; that is to say, writings either penned by the apostles themselves, or authorized by their inspection and approbation; because this seems to be the best account that can be given for the different fate that hath attended these several writings; the former having disappeared and died soon after their birth; and the latter having survived now almost seventeen centuries, in the same degree of esteem and veneration with which they were at first received by the converts of the apostolic age: for that the difference between these writings was made in that age, is very probable; 1st, because these very contemporaries of the apostles found themselves in need of their instructions, admonitions, and exhortations, for their own direction and encouragement: and, 2dly, for the conviction of the next age, who were to receive the gospel from their hands, they wanted the testimony and authority of those persons to whom the facts upon which their faith depended were the most completely proved; and who alone, in matters of doctrine, were "guided into all truth" by the infallible "Spirit of God." For by their own evidence they could prove no more than what fell within the compass of their own knowledge, which could extend no farther than to what they had themselves seen of the apostles, or heard from their mouths: and this evidence of theirs could acquire no further authority by having been committed to writing. The apostles alone could prove what they only knew, and were the only authentic preachers of those doctrines which they alone received from Christ, or after his ascension from the Holy Spirit. Their successors, besides bearing testimony to their characters, and giving evidence perhaps of some collateral facts which had fallen under their own observations, could do no more than "witness their depositions," that is, that these and these were the facts, and these and these were the doctrines delivered by the apostles. "If the apostles, therefore, either
either from the secret instigation of the Holy Ghost, or from their paternal care and affection for the household of faith, or at the request of their children in Christ Jesus, did commit to writing the proofs and doctrines of the Christian religion (as it is reasonable to suppose they did), it is as reasonable to conclude, that what they either wrote or approved must necessarily have been preferred to all other writings whatever.

And as the writings of the apostles must, for the reasons above-mentioned, have been of great weight and importance to the Christians of their times; and of still greater to those of the succeeding ages, who could not, like their predecessors, upon any occasion, have recourse to the living and infallible oracles of God; it is natural to imagine that the persons in whose hands those sacred and invaluable treasures were deposited, would preserve and guard them with the utmost fidelity and care; would impart copies of them to such of their brethren who could not have access to the originals; and would, from the same principle of Christian benevolence and fidelity, see that those copies were transcribed with all that exactness which human nature, ever liable to slips and errors, was capable of. The same care, under the same allowances, it is to be supposed, would be also taken by those who should translate them into the several languages spoken by Christians of different nations, who did not understand that in which the apostles wrote.

These several steps appear to me so natural and obvious, that I cannot but think any set of reasonable and honest men could not fail of making them, under the same circumstances as attended the first preachers and converts of Christianity. And from hence arises a strong presumption in favour of those accounts which inform us,—that the apostles and evangelists were the genuine authors of those writings which are now received under their names.—That although many, even in the apostles times, “had taken in hand,” as St. Luke expresses it, “to set forth in order a declaration of those things which were most surely believed amongst Christians, even as they delivered them, who were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word;” and although, some years after the death of the apostles, many gospels, epistles, &c. appeared, which were ascribed to them, to the Virgin Mary, and even to Jesus Christ himself; yet those only which we now account canonical, were admitted as such from the very earliest ages of Christianity.—That these canonical books were preserved and kept, with the most scrupulous and religious care, by the several churches or societies of Christians, who did not, and indeed upon their principles could not presume to add to them, or to take from them the least tittle.—That copies of them were immediately dispersed throughout the whole Christian world; “the apostles” (Saint Irenæus, lib. 3. 1. i.) “first preaching the Gospel, and afterwards, by the will of God, delivering it to us in the Scriptures, to be thenceforward the pillar and foundation of our faith. And the first successors of the apostles, (as Eusebius informs us, Hift. Ecclef. lib. iii. c. 37.) leaving their countries, preached to them who had not heard of the
the Christian faith, and then delivered to them, as the foundation of their faith, the writings of the holy evangelists. — That the originals of the epistles were still preferred in the respective churches to which they were directed in the time of Tertullian, who, writing to the heretics of his age, viz. of the third century, bids them "go to the apostolical churches, where the authentic epistles of the Apostles (faith he) are still recited." — That, lastly, translations of these scriptures were made so early as to precede the general admission of some parts of them, which were afterwards received as genuine; the Syriac version for instance being so ancient, that it leaves out the second epistle of Peter, the second and third epistle of John, and the Revelations, as being for a time controverted in some of the eastern churches; which, by the way, shews how scrupulous the first Christians were about admitting into the canon of Scripture, writings which, though bearing the names of the apostles, and received by some churches as genuine, were yet questioned and suspected by others. To all which we may add still farther, that these several accounts relating merely to facts tend only to establish another fact, viz. that the apostles and evangelists did compose the Gospels, Epistles, &c. ascribed to them, which fact is capable of being proved by the same kind of evidence as any other fact of the same nature. — That the evidences of this fact cannot be overthrown but upon such principles as will equally subvert the proofs of all facts that existed at any great distance of time from the present.— That we ought therefore either to admit this fact, to reject all those without distinction which stand only upon the credit of histories and records, of the truth of any of which we can have no stronger assurances than we have of the authenticity of these holy writings.

§ 23. The next point to be considered, is the improbability of any books forged in the names of the apostles escaping detection. The reasons given under the foregoing article, to shew the probability of the apostles having left in writing the evidences and doctrines of Christianity, and of their disciples having preferred and transmitted those writings to their successors, will lead us to discover the improbability of any books forged in the names of the apostles escaping detection. For if it was necessary for the Christians, even of the apostolic age, to have in writing the directions and instructions of the apostles in many points both of faith and practice, as is evident it was from almost all the epistles, it was as necessary for them to be ascertained, that what was delivered to them in the name of an apostle was certainly of his inditing. And this was to be known in many ways; for surely we may have undoubted proofs of such a one's being the author of such a book or letter, without having seen him write it with his own hand, or having heard from his own mouth that he wrote it. — The apostles (faith Irenæus), having first preached the Gospel, delivered it afterwards to us in the Scriptures. Now, as

The reader who is inclined to see the authorities upon which these several articles were founded, may consult Whitby's Preface to the Gospels, &c.
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as we have no reason to believe, from any accounts that can be depended upon, that any of those styled apostles, besides the six whole works we now have, left any thing in writing, if these words of Irenæus be taken to relate to the whole number of the apostles, it will follow from them that even those apostles who wrote nothing themselves, did yet deliver to their children in Christ such parts of the Scriptures as had come to their hands. In which case those Scriptures, thus delivered and recommended by the apostle, must have been allowed to have the same authority, as if they had been written by that apostle himself; since he, as well as his brethren who wrote them, was under the inspiration and guidance of that Holy Spirit who, according to the promise of Christ, was to lead them into all "truth"; and therefore could not be ignorant whether the matters contained in those Scriptures were true or false. But if the general term "apostles" be limited to such of them only as composed the writings called by Irenæus "the Scriptures," the meaning of his words will be, that the apostles, when they had preached the Gospel, (i.e. the whole system of facts and doctrines which it was necessary for Christians to know and believe), committed it to writing for the use of the churches, to serve thenceforward, as he expresses it, for the "pillar and foundation" of their faith in Christ Jesus. These churches therefore were the proper evidences to prove the apostles to be the authors of those writings, which they received from them. And the testimony they gave to that matter of fact, as, on the one hand, it does not appear to have been liable to any suspicion of fraud; so, on the other, it seems equally free from any probability of error, or misinformation. For they must have had certain knowledge of the character and credit of the persons who delivered those writings to them in the name of any of the apostles, and many other indubitable proofs, both external and internal, to convince them of their being genuine, or to discover the falsehood if they were not. Allowing, for instance, the epistles, which now pass under the name of St. Paul, to have been received during his life by the churches to which they were directed, there are in all of them many circumstances by which they might certainly have known him to be the author. These circumstances, the reader, if he has either received or written any letters of business to or from his acquaintance and friends, may easily suggest to himself, and may as easily discover them upon perusing those epistles. But it will, say it must, be said by those who deny these Scriptures to have been written by the apostles.

1 Thes. ix are Matthew, John, Peter, Paul, James, and Jude. Mark and Luke, though supposed with good reason to be of the number of the seventy-two disciples, were not apostles, in the strict and limited sense of that word.

† Thus Tychicus, mentioned by St. Paul in his epistle to the Ephesians, as sent by him, and must probably be the bearer of that epistle and of that to the Colossians; where he is also mentioned as sent to them by that apostle, together with Onesimus; Tychicus, I say, and Onesimus, were doubtless able to give such proofs of St. Paul's being the author of those two epistles, as the Christians of those nations must have been satisfied with, could it be supposed that they wanted other reasons to convince them of it; but this supposition, I believe, no one will think it reasonable to make.
tles, whose names they bear, that they were forged after their deaths, and consequently could not have been received by the churches during their lives. This, doubtless, infidels will say (for what else can they pretend?). But I am at a loss to think how they can support their assertion, since not only the testimony of all the earliest writers of the church, but common sense itself, is against them. For can it be imagined that the Corinthians, for example, would have received as genuine an epistle not delivered to them till after the death of the apostle whose name it bore, and yet appearing, from any circumstances therein mentioned, to have been written several years before, unless such an extraordinary delay was very satisfactorily accounted for? Is it not to be presumed, that, in a matter of such importance, not only to themselves, but to all Christians, they would have demanded of the person who first produced it, how he came by it? How he knew it was written by St. Paul, and addressed to them? Why it was not sent at the time it was written, especially as it was evident, upon the face of the epistle itself, that it was written upon occasion of some disturbances and irregularities crept into that church, and in answer to some questions proposed to that apostle, which required a speedy reformation and reply? These questions, and many more which the particulars referred to in the epistle must have suggested, the Corinthians would in common prudence have asked; and, if the impostor could not (as it is most reasonable to conclude he could not) return a satisfactory answer to those questions, can we believe the Corinthians would have admitted, upon his bare word, or even upon probable presumptions, an epistle which, if they acknowledged it to have been written by St. Paul, they must thenceforward have regarded as the infallible rule of their faith and practice? This is supposing that the first Christians (as their candid adversaries are indeed apt to suppose) acted with much less wisdom and common-sense, than any men would now act upon any momentous affair in ordinary life. And let it not be forgotten, that Christianity, at its first appearance in the world, very deeply affected the temporal concerns of its professors. The profession of Christianity did not then, as it does now in some parts of the world, intitle men to, and qualify them for, honour and preferments. Christians, upon barely confessing themselves such, were many times, without any crime alleged, put immediately to death; all the advantages they reaped from a life of faith and virtue were the peace of a quiet conscience here, and the hopes of a blessed immortality hereafter. The professing Christianity therefore was a matter of temporal deliberation. And why is it more reasonable to imagine that the people of those ages would give up all their worldly views and interests, without being convinced that it was worth their while to do it, than it is to imagine that a man in his senses, either of this or any past age, would without a valuable consideration surrender his estate to a stranger, and leave himself a beggar? I say this to those people who seem to consider all the primitive Christians either as fools or knaves, enthusiasts or impostors; without being able to assign any reason for their opinion, but that
there have been fools and knaves, enthusiasts and impostors, among the professors of all religions whatsoever. But in order to prove a man a fool, or an enthusiast, for embracing this or that religion, it will be necessary to shew, in the first place, that he took up his faith without duly examining the principles or facts upon which it is founded, that his faith was not properly deducible from those facts or principles, or that those principles and facts were in themselves absurd and false. These points, I say, are not to be presumed, but proved. And, with regard to the question now under consideration, unless it is proved by positive and undeniable evidence, that the Scriptures upon which the Christians who lived immediately after the times of the apostles, built their faith, were either forged or falsified (that is, forged in part), it cannot, I apprehend, be fairly concluded, that they acted like fools or madmen, in forsaking all, and taking up the cross of Christ." Let this point be once proved, and it will readily be allowed that they took up their faith without due examination; since it must be owned, that if we, at this distance, are able to discover the forgery, they who lived at the very time when those writings first appeared, could not have wanted the means of detecting it, and they thought proper to make use of them; for as it is evident from the testimonies of the oldest Christian writers, some of whom lived very near the times of the apostles themselves, that those Scriptures were cited, read, and generally received as genuine, by the Christians of their age, and even before, they must have been forged, either in the life-time of the apostles, or very soon after their deaths. That they were forged and generally received as authentic, while the apostles were yet living, nobody, I imagine, will venture to affirm, who considers the many circumstances and facts therein related concerning the apostles themselves, and numberless other people then living, any one of which being falsified must have utterly destroyed the pretence of their having been composed by an apostle, whom some of those Scriptures affirmed to have been under the guidance and inspiration of the Spirit of Truth. If they were forged and published soon after the deaths of the apostles, there was still great danger of the fraud's being detected, if not by many living witneses, yet by such a tradition of facts and doctrines, whether oral or written, as, if it had been found to clash with that supposed Gospel or epistle, must have rendered its authenticity suspected, unless supported by better evidence than the bare name of an apostle prefixed to it. And if it could be supposed that the bare name of an apostle was, in those times, of weight sufficient to establish the authority of any writing, though otherwise liable to suspicion, how came it to pass that those cunning impostors, who wrote the Gospels of Mark and Luke, did not publish them under the venerable and all-sanctifying names of the apostles! If these Scriptures therefore were forged and published in either of the above-mentioned periods (and, for the reasons before given, the forgery could not have been of a later date) it is highly improbable, that the imposture should have escaped detection; and, had it been detected, it is equally improbable, that Christians, who flaked
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Aflaked their all upon the truth of the Gospel, should receive as gê-
nune, and acknowledge as divinely inspired, writings which were
known or even suspected to be forged. But it will perhaps be urged,
that the cheat was discovered and known only by a few of the wiser
sort, who for the advancement of a good cause, thinking it at least
a venial sin, a fraud which might even be styled pious, to impose
upon their weaker brethren, recommended to them, under the name
of an apostle, a religious treatise, which tended only to improve
their piety, and strengthen their faith. But this suspicion will appear
as groundless and improbable as any of the former, if it be considered
that the abettors, as well as the authors of the forgery, must have
been Christians (Christians, I mean, as contra-distinguished from
Jews, Heathens, and Heretics), and men of capacities and knowledge
superior to the vulgar. As Christians, they could not, in those ages
of perfecion, have any worldly interest in promoting the cause of
Christianity, and therefore could have no motive to induce them to
impose upon their brethren, but a persuasion that it was lawful at
least to "do evil, that good might come on it:" a principle which,
as men of parts and knowledge, they could not but be sensible was
unworthy of a disciple of the Lord of truth and righteousness, and
which is expressly condemned in the epistle to the Romans*; which
epistle therefore cannot be supposed to have been forged by men who
acknowledged that principle and proceeded upon it. Besides, as
far the greater number of the books of Scripture contain facts, as well
as precepts and doctrines, these impostors, however well-intentioned,
could not be assured that their imposture would not turn more to the
prejudice than advantage of Christianity, since, though they might
think themselves secure in the acquiescence of their weaker brethren,
and the fidelity of their partners in the fraud, they had reason to ap-
prehend the zeal and abilities of their open and avowed enemies,
Heathens, Jews, and Heretics, who, wanting neither the means nor
Inclination to examine the principles of a religion which with their
utmost power they endeavoured to subvert, might very probably dis-
cover their imposture, and would certainly take every advantage
which such a discovery could furnish them with, of decrying a re-
ligion which they might then with some colour have suggested, could
not be maintained without fraud. This danger, which with the
same penetration that enabled them to discover a cheat that had passed
upon the vulgar, they must undoubtedly have foreseen, would, it
may be supposed, have checked their zeal, and rendered them cau-
tious how they ventured upon an imposture, the success of which
was so very precarious.

Since therefore no motive can be assigned, of force sufficient to in-
duce any Christians of those times, either to contrive or support a
forgery of this kind, since, had any of those Scriptures attributed to
the apostles, and especially the epistles of St. Paul, been forged and
published so early as the writings of the most ancient fathers shew them
so have been known and received, it is next to impossible that the

* Rom. ii. 8.
fraud should have escaped detection; and since the Christians of those ages must, in consequence of such a detection, have necessarily disowned and rejected those Scriptures as spurious, may we not, from their having acknowledged them as authentic, conclude, for the several reasons above given, that the apostles and evangelists were the undoubted authors of the writings now received under their names?

But allowing the Christians of those early ages to have been able to discover the genuine works of the apostles from any spurious writings forged in their names; and allowing those books, now received into the canon of the Holy Scriptures, to have been written by those authors whose names they bear; it may be demanded how we at this time can be assured, that, among the great number which have since been ascribed to them, they wrote only these? or that in such a succession of ages these are come down to us pure and uncorrupted? To the first of these questions I answer, that, as the Christians of those early ages must be acknowledged for competent judges of the authority of any books or writings ascribed to the Apostles, such book or writing as they allowed to be genuine hath an indubitable title to that character. But to this title no other writings ascribed to the apostles, besides those now received into the canon of Scripture, can pretend; since of most of them, especially the false gospels, we find no mention till the fourth century.

For an answer to the second question, I shall refer the learned reader to Dr. Whitby's "Examen variantium Lecctionum D. Millii," published at the end of the second volume of annotations on the New Testament; where he will find that the various readings, upon which the adversaries of Christianity (among whom I reckon the clergy of the church of Rome) have laid so great a stress, will be of little service to their cause, the greatest part of them being absolutely insignificant, and none of them, faith that learned writer, "either changing or corrupting any article of faith, or rule of life."

And although, considering the great length of time that is past since the Scriptures were written, and the number of copies and translations that have been made of them, it is no wonder that many errors should have crept into them, either from the ignorance or inadvertency of transcribers and translators, all of which have helped to swell the sum of various readings; yet considering, on the other hand, the number of heresies that have sprung up in every age of Christianity, all of which pretended to derive their opinions from the Scriptures; considering also the watchfulness of the Jews and Heathens, those avowed enemies of the Gospel, who, as appears from their writings, were no strangers to the Scriptures, it would still be a greater wonder that any material alteration should have been made in them; since whoever had attempted any such alteration, whether Christian, Heretic, Jew, or Heathen, could not but know it was impossible

* See Whitby's prefatory Discourse to the four Gospels.
impossible it should escape the observation of so many eyes as were continually prying, though with different views, into these important writings. And this seems to me the only reason for their having palled uncorrupted through the treacherous hands of the church of Rome, who had them so long in her keeping. She was restrained from altering the Scriptures by the fear of being detected by the Eastern churches, who disowned her authority; and yet there is little question to be made that she would have done it, had she not fallen upon that less dangerous, though more absurd, expedient of locking them up from the laity, and assuming to herself the sole right of expounding them; a right which she hath asserted and maintained with all the artifices and cruelty that fraud and tyranny could invent. This expedient, however, though it hath hitherto preserved Popery; hath saved the Scriptures, and with them Christianity. For, considering the duration, extent, and aboluteness of her power in the West, had she altered the text of Scripture, according to the comments she had made upon it, Christians (could there have been any really such at this time, and in these parts of the world) must have been reduced to contend with the church of Rome, not from the Scriptures, but for the Scriptures themselves. And what advantages infidelity and scepticism would have had in the mean time, is easy to imagine; since they are bold enough to dispute even now the genuineness of those Scriptures, which the very persons, whose doctrines are the most opposite to them, have been necessitated to acknowledge and maintain.

§ 24. I am now to consider what arguments can be offered to induce us to give credit to the testimony of the apostles and evangelists.

Two qualities are requisite to establish the credit of a witness, viz., a perfect knowledge of the fact he gives testimony to; and a fair and unblemished character.

After what has been said in the preceding parts of this discourse concerning the evidences of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, it will, I hope, be granted that the apostles were duly qualified to be witnesses, in point of knowledge of the fact which they are brought to give testimony to. It remains then that we enquire into their characters, which may very clearly be collected from the tenor of their lives and conduct, as preachers of the Gospel, and the purity of the doctrines they taught; not to insin in favour of them upon the conclusion which may be drawn from their very enemies not having been able to fix upon them any stain or blemish, which they themselves have not acknowledged and lamented.

Their lives, then, after they had embraced Christianity, were not only irreproachable, but holy; and their conduct, as preachers of the Gospel, disinterested, noble, and generous, in the most exalted degree. For they not only quitted their houses, their lands, their occupations, their friends, kindred, parents, wives and children, but their countries also, every pursuit, and every endearment of life, in
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order to propagate, with infinite labour, through innumerable difficulties, and with the utmost danger, in every corner of the known world, the salvation of mankind; certain of meeting, in every new region, with new enemies and opposers; and yet requiring of those who through their preaching were become their friends and brethren, nothing but a bare subsistence; and sometimes labouring with their own hands, to save them even from that light and reasonable burden, disclaiming for themselves all authority, pre-eminence, and power; and teaching those ignorant and superstitious people, who, taking them for Gods, would have worshipped them, and sacrificed to them, that they were men like themselves, and servants of that one God to whom alone worship was due. Would impostors, who are most commonly interred, vain-glorious, and ambitious, have acted in this manner? No, certainly; but it may be said, Enthusiasts would. Be it so. But how can it be made appear that the apostles were Enthusiasts? If Christ did not rise from the dead, most assuredly he did not preach to them after his crucifixion: upon which supposition, I apprehend, it will be very difficult to account for their returning to their faith in that matter whom in his distress they had abandoned and disowned. But if Christ did rise from the dead, and did, after his resurrection, converse with his apostles, I suppose it will be easily granted, that they had sufficient reason for believing in him, and for acting in obedience to the command given them by him, to preach the gospel throughout the world, especially when they found themselves so well qualified for that important commission, by the miraculous powers conferred upon them by the Holy Ghost, and particularly the gift of tongues, so apparently and so wisely calculated to carry on that great, that universal service. If this, I say, was the case, then surely the apostles were no Enthusiasts, since they neither believed themselves without reasonable proof, nor pretended to inspiration and a divine commission, without being able to give to others sufficient evidences of both.

Of all the admirably pure and truly divine doctrines taught by the apostles, I shall consider only two, as more peculiarly relative to the present argument, and they are, the belief of a judgment to come, and the obligation of speaking truth. That God will judge the world by Jesus Christ, is a necessary article of the Christian faith; and, as such, is strongly and frequently inculcated in the writings of the apostles and evangelists, of which it is needles for produce instances. And that Christians were required by these preachers of holiness to speak truth upon all occasions, the following texts will clearly evince. In Ephes. iv. 25, the apostle commands that, "putting away lying, they speak every man truth with his neighbour." And again, Coloss. iii. 9. "Lie not one to another." Nay, that even the man who lies through zeal for the glory of God, is, according to their estimation, to be accounted a sinner, may be inferred from these words in Rom. iii. 7, 8. "If the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory, why yet am I also..."
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I also judged as a sinner? And not rather as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say, Let us do evil that good may come? Whole damnation is just. That the apostles themselves were fully persuaded of the truth of those two propositions, nobody can deny, who will call to mind that they chose to suffer persecution and death itself, rather than not speak the things which they had seen and heard; and that, if in this life only they had hope, they were of all men the most miserable. Now, that any men, who firmly believed that God would punish them for speaking an untruth, though for the advancement of a good cause, should, at the hazard of their lives, and without any prospect of gain or advantage, assert facts which at the same time they knew to be false, should, for instance, affirm, that they saw and conversed with Jesus Christ after his resurrection, knowing or believing that he was not risen from the dead, and yet expect to be judged hereafter by that very same Jesus, is too improbable to gain credit with any but those great believers of absurdities the Infidels and Sceptics.

§ 25. But, besides the many infallible tokens and evidences of the integrity of the apostles and evangelists, that may be collected from their lives and doctrines, there are also in their writings several internal marks of their veracity, some of which I shall now endeavour to point out, confining myself to such parts of their writings as belong to the present subject.

The contradictions and inconsistencies which some imagine they have discovered in the evangelical accounts of the resurrection, have been urged as arguments for setting aside the authority, and rejecting the evidence of the gospels. But these supposed contradictions having been considered in the foregoing parts of this discourse, and having, upon a close inspection, and comparing the several narratives with each other, been shewn to be shadowy and imaginary, and to lie no deeper than the superficialities and surface of the words; we need not be afraid of admitting these appearances of inconsistency, since from them it may be inferred, to the advantage of the evangelists, that they did not write in concert. For, had they agreed together upon giving an account of the resurrection of Christ, and each of them taken, by allotment, his several portion of that history, it is probable they would somewhere or other have dropped some intimations, that the particulars omitted by them were supplied by others; and that such and such parts of their narrations were to be connected with such and such facts, related by their brethren; or they would have distinguished the several incidents by such strong and visible marks, and circumstances of time and place, &c. as might have been sufficient, at first sight, to discover their order, and keep them from being confounded with each other; some, or all, of these things, I say, they would probably have done, had they written in concert. And doubtless they would, say they must have written in concert, had they endeavoured to impose upon the world a cunningly-devised fable; and had they

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not trusted to the truth and notoriety of the facts they related. Truth, like honesty, oftentimes neglects appearances. Hypocrisy and imposture are always guarded.

And as, from these seeming discordances in their accounts, we may conclude they did not write in concert, so, from their agreeing in the principal and most material facts, we may infer that they wrote after the truth. *In Xiphillin and Theodotius, the two abbreviators of Dio Cassius, may be observed the like agreement and disagreement; the one taking notice of many particulars which the other passes over in silence, and both of them relating the chief and most remarkable events. And as from their both frequently making use of the very same words and expressions, when they speak of the same thing, it is apparent that they both copied from the same original; so I believe nobody was ever absurd enough to imagine, that the particulars mentioned by the one were not taken out of Dio Cassius, merely because they are omitted by the other. And still more absurd would it be to say, as some have lately done of the evangelists, that the facts related by Theodotius are contradicted by Xiphillin, because the latter says nothing of them. But against the evangelists, it seems, all kinds of arguments may not only be employed, but applauded. The case, however, of the sacred historians is exactly parallel to that of these two abbreviators. The latter extracted the particulars related in their sever al abridgments from the history of Dio Cassius, as the former drew the materials of their gospels from the life of Jesus Christ. The two last transcribed their relations from a certain collection of facts contained in one and the same history; the four first, from a certain collection of facts contained in the life of one and the same person, laid before them by that Spirit which was to lead them into all truth: and why the fidelity of the four transcribers should be called in question for reasons which hold equally strong against the two who are not suspected, I leave thine to determine who lay such a weight upon this objection.

Another mark of the veracity of the evangelists appears in their naming the time, the scene of action, the actors, and the witn esses, of most of the facts mentioned by them; which I shall give a remarkable instance of in one relating to the present subject, the resurrection; viz. the guarding the sepulchre of Christ. The time was that of the celebration of the pasover, the most solemn festival of the Jews; the scene was in Jerusalem, the metropolis of Judea, and at that time crowded with Jews, who came thither from all parts of the earth to keep the pasover: the actors and witnesses were the chief priests and elders, Pontius Pilate the Roman governor, and the Roman soldiers who guarded the sepulchre. Now, if the story of guarding the sepulchre had been false, it is not to be doubted but the chief priests and elders, who are said to have obtained the guard and sealed the door of the sepulchre, would by some authentic act have cleared themselves of the folly and guilt imputed

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It is to them by the evangelists, who charges the chief priests with having bribed the soldiers to tell not only a lie, but an absurd lie, that carried its own confusion with it; the soldiers, confessing a breach of discipline, that by the military law was punishable with death; and the governor, with the suspicion at least of being capable of overlooking so heinous a crime, at the instigation of the chief priests, &c. All these several charges upon the whole government of Judea might have been answered at once by any attestation from the chief priests, setting forth, that they never demanded a guard to be set at the sepulchre, confirmed by the testimony of all the Roman officers and soldiers (many of whom were probably at Jerusalem when this gospel was written) denying that they were ever upon that guard. This not only the reputation of the chief priests, but their avowed malice to Christ, and aversion to his doctrine and religion, required; and this, even upon the supposition of the story of guarding the sepulchre being true, they would probably have done, had they been at liberty to propagate and invent what lie they pleased: but that a guard was set at the sepulchre was in all likelihood, by the dispersion and flight of the soldiers into the city, too well known in Jerusalem for them to venture at denying it; for which reason, as I have before observed, they were obliged to invent a lie consistent with that known fact, however absurd and improbable it might appear when it came to be considered and examined. Now as the report, put into the mouths of the Roman soldiers by the chief priests and elders, is no proof of the falsehood of this fact, but rather of the contrary; so does the naming the time, the scene, the actors, and the witnesses, form a very strong presumption of its being true, since no forger of lies willingly and wittingly furnishes out the means of his own detection; especially when we consider, that this story is related by that evangelist who is said to have written nearest the time, and to have composed his gospel for those Christians who dwelt in Judea, many of whom then living were probably at Jerusalem when this thing was done.

The strict attachment and regard to truth, of all the evangelists, is farther manifested in their relating of themselves and their brethren many things that, in the opinion of the world, could not but turn much to their dishonour and discredit; such as their denying and defecting their matter in his extremity, and their dullest in not understanding his predictions about his rising from the dead, though expressed in the plainest and most intelligible words. A man's confession against himself, or his friends, is generally presumed to be true. If the evangelists, therefore, be allowed to be the authors of those gospels which bear their names, or if those writings are supposed to have been forged by some friends of Christianity, they must in these instances at least be acknowledged to relate the truth, till some other good reason, besides that of their attachment to the truth, can be assigned for their inventing such disgraceful and dishonourable accounts of themselves and their friends.
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But there is nothing that sets the veracity of the sacred written so much above all question and suspicion, as what they tell us about the low condition, the infirmities, the sufferings, and the death of the great author and finisher of their faith, Christ Jesus. He hungered, they say; he was poor, so poor, as not to "have where to lay his head;" he wept, hid himself for fear of the Jews who sought to kill him; and when his hour drew nigh, he was dejected, sorrowful, "exceeding sorrowful, even unto death:" he prayed, that the cup of affliction, which was then mixing for him, might, if possible, pass from him. And though he was "strengthened by an angel from heaven," yet, "being in agony, he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground." After this, he was feigned like a common malefactor, abandoned by all his followers and friends; led bound, first to Annas, then to Caiaphas, then to Pilate, then to Herod, then back again to Pilate; and, lastly, after enduring a thousand insults and indignities, after having been buffeted, spit upon, and scourged, was carried to suffer upon the cross the infamous and painful death of offending slaves, and the vilest criminals. And yet this hungry, houseless, suffering, dying Jesus, is by the same writers said to have fed a multitude of many thousands with five loaves and two fishes; to have commanded the filth of the sea to provide him money to pay the tribute; to have been ministered unto by angels; to have been obeyed by the winds and seas; to have had in himself, and to have imparted to his disciples, authority over unclean spirits, and the power of healing all manner of diseases; to have raised the dead by a touch, a word; to have been able to have obtained from God, whom he called his Father, an army of more than twelve legions of angels, a force sufficient not only to have subdued him from the sufferings and death he deprecated, but to have acquired him the empire of the world; and, lastly, as an instance of his being endowed with a power superior even to destruction itself, he is said to have risen from the dead, to have ascended into heaven, and to sit down for ever at the right-hand of God. From these accounts it is plain, that the character of Jesus Christ, as drawn up by the evangelists, is a mixture of such feeming inconformities, so wonderful a composition of weaknesses and power, humiliation and glory, humanity and divinity, that as no mere mortal could pretend to come up to it, so the wit of man would never have conceived and proposed such a one for the founder of any sect or religion. The sufferings and crosses of Christ were, as St. Paul confesseth, "to the Jews a stumbling-block, and foolishness to the Greeks." The Jews, it is well known, expected a temporal deliverer, an earthly prince, a glorious conquering Messiah; and were therefore so scandalized at the low condition and abject fortunes of Jesus, so ill-proportioned, as they imagined, to the sublime character of the Son of God, that upon account of those human blemishes only, they rejected all the miraculous evidences of his divine mission, and put him to death as a blasphemer, for taking upon him the name, without the temporal
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Splendor and power of the Messiah. That the disciples of Jesus were tainted with the like prejudices with their unbelieving brethren, the Jews, is very natural to believe, and may certainly be collected from the writings of the evangellists, from whom we learn, that when convinced by his miracles, his doctrine, and his life, they acknowledged him to be the Messiah, they were so offended at what he told them of his sufferings and death, that they refused to believe him; "and Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, 'Be it far from thee, Lord, this shall not be unto thee.'" The despicable condition, the sufferings and death of Christ, being admitted, I think it impossible to give one probable reason forsupposing that the apostles and the evangellists invented the other more than human part of his character. Had he wrought no miracles, had he not riven from the dead, their religious prejudices, as they were Jews, must have withheld them for ever from acknowledging him for their Messiah; and yet it is notorious, that not only they themselves acknowledged him as such, but endeavoured to persuade their unbelieving brethren, that "God had made that same Jesus, whom they had crucified, both Lord and Christ." This was the great article, the foundation-stone, upon which the whole superstructure of Christianity was raised; and, to prove this article, they appealed to his miracles, as so many evidences of his divine mission. But here modern unbelievers (for Celsus, who lived nearest those times, admits all the miracles of Christ, but imputes them to his skill in magic) come in with their suspicions, and pretend to call in question the accounts given us of these miracles in the evangellists, which, without any proof, they are pleased to take for forgeries: in answer to which (not to inflit upon the improbability that any man, or any set of men in their fenest, should venture to appeal to their enemies for the truth of facts, which they themselves knew to be false, especially when those enemies had not only the means of detecting them, but the inclination and power to punish them for their impostures; not to inflit, I say, upon this topic, nor upon that which I just now mentioned of its being impossible to assign any motive that could induce them to be guilty of such a forgery), I shall only observe, that, allowing them to have been so shameless and so wicked as to invent and propagate a set of lies in order to get credit to their matter and his religion, it is strange they should not go one step farther, and suppress at least, if not deny, his infirmities, his sufferings, and his crucifixion, and so remove that stumbling-block, which they could not but know would be the greatest obstacle to the advancement of their religion, as well among the Gentiles as the Jews. But it will be urged, perhaps, that his sufferings and crucifixion were too public to be denied; and so, say the evangellists, were most of his miracles: and this undoubtedly was the reason why they were acknowledged by Celsus. To suppose, therefore, that the evangellists, for fear of being detected, would confess truths, which manifestly prejudiced their great design of propagating the.

9 Matt. xvi. 22.
the faith in Christ Jesus, and yet would not by the same fear of detection be restrained from relating untruths, because they might imagine them to be advantageous to their cause, is no mark of equity and candour, but of partiality and prejudice. But it will possibly be said (for what will not infidels "say?" and I will add, how strange forever it may found, what will they not "believe?") that the Scriptures were forged long after the events recorded in them, and consequently long after all the evidences of their truth or falsehood were extinct or lost. In answer to this it may be again demanded, as in the case of the evangelists, how came these later forgers to choose the suffering crucified Jesus for the author of their religion? And why, since they were at liberty to say what they pleased, without any apprehension of being discovered, why, I say, did they relate such things both of him and his disciples, as, in the opinion of the world, could not fail of discrediting the faith they preached in his name, and by an authority pretended to be derived from him and his disciples? But, without entering into these considerations, it may be sufficient barely to deny this charge, till they who insist upon it shall be able to make it good by shewing either from authentic testimonies, or even probable and presumptuous arguments, when they were forged; by whom; and to what end. Till they are able to do this (which I will venture to pronounce will never be), we have a right to insist, for the reasons above given, that the Scriptures of the New Testament were written by those whose names they bear, and that all the facts related in them are most unquestionably true.

Before I quit this subject, I cannot forbear taking notice of one other mark of integrity which appears in all the compositions of the sacred writers, and particularly the evangelists; and that is, the simple, unaffected, unornamental, and unostentatious manner, in which they deliver truths so important and sublime, and facts so magnificent and wonderful, as are capable, one would think, of lighting up a flame of oratory, even in the dullest and coldest breasts. They speak of an angel descending from heaven to foretell the miraculous conception of Jesus; of another proclaiming his birth, attended by "a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, "and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, "good-will towards men;" of his star appearing in the East; of angels ministering to him in the wilderness; of his glory in the mount; of a voice twice heard from heaven, saying, "This is my "beloved Son," of innumerable miracles performed by him, and by his disciples in his name; of his knowing the thoughts of men; of his foretelling future events; of prodigies and wonders accompanying his crucifixion and death; of an angel descending in terror, opening his sepulchre, and frightening away the soldiers who were set to guard it; of his rising from the dead, ascending into heaven, and pouring down, according to his promise, the various and marvelous gifts of the Holy Spirit upon his apostles and disciples. All these amazing incidents do these inspired historians relate nakedly
and plainly, without any of the colourings and heightenings of rhetoric, or so much as a single note of admiration; without making any comment or remark upon them, or drawing from them any conclusion in honour either of their matter or themselves, or to the advantage of the religion they preached in his name; but contenting themselves with relating the naked truth, whether it seems to make for them or against them, without either magnifying on the one hand, or palliating on the other, they leave their cause to the unbiassed judgment of mankind, seeking, like genuine apostles of the Lord of truth, to convince rather than to persuade; and therefore "coming," as St. Paul speaks of his own preaching, "not with "excellence of speech,—not with enticing words of man's wisdom," "but with demonstration of the Spirit, and of power," that," adds he, "your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in "the power of God." And let it be remembered that he who speaks this, wanted not learning, art, or eloquence, as is evident from his speeches recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, and from the testimony of that great critic Longinus, who, in reckoning up the Grecian orators, places among them Paul of Tarsus; and surely, had they been left solely to the suggestions and guidance of human wisdom, they would not have failed to lay hold on such topics, as the wonders of their master's life, and the transcendent purity and perfection of the noble, generous, benevolent morality contained in his precepts, furnished them with. These topics, I say, greater than ever Tully, or Demosthenes, or Plato, were possessed of, mere human wisdom would doubtless have prompted them to make use of, in order to recommend in the strongest manner the religion of Christ Jesus to mankind, by turning their attention to the divine part of his character, and hiding, as it were in a blaze of heavenly light and glory, his infirmities, his sufferings, and his death. And had they upon such topics as these, and in such a cause, called in to their assistance all the arts of composition, rhetoric, and logic, who would have blamed them for it? Not those persons, I presume, who, dazzled and captivated with the glittering ornaments of human wisdom, make a mock at the simplicity of the gospel, and think it witty to ridicule the style and language of the Holy Scriptures. But the all-wise Spirit of God, by whom these sacred writers were guided into all truth, thought fit to direct or permit them to proceed in a different method; a method, however, very analogous to that in which he hath been pleased to reveal himself to us in the great book of nature, the stupendous frame of the universe; all whose wonders he hath judged it sufficient to lay before us in silence, and expects from our observations the proper comments and deductions, which, having endowed us with reason, he hath enabled us to make. And though a careless and superficial spectator may fancy he perceives even in this fair volume many inconformities, defects, and superfluities; yet to a diligent, unprejudiced, and rational inquirer, who will take pains to examine the laws, consider...
confider and compare the several parts, and regard their use and ten-
dency, with reference to the whole design of this amazing struc-
ture, as far as his short abilities can carry him, there will appear, in
those inftances which he is capable of knowing, such evident cha-
acters of wisdom, goodnefs, and power, as will leave him no room
to doubt of their author, or to fufpeét that in thofe particulars
which he hath not examined, or to a thorough knowledge of which
he cannot perhaps attain, there is nothing but folly, weaknefs, and
malignity. The fame thing might be faid of the written book,
the fecond volume (if I may fo spea;k) of the revelation of God,
the Holy Scriptures. For as in the Firft, fo also in this are there
many paffages, that to a curfory unobferving reader appear idle,
unconnected, unaccountable, and inconfiftent with thofe marks of
truth, wisdom, justice, mercy, and benevolence, which in others
are fo visible, that the moft careless and inattentive cannot but dif-
cern them. And even thefe, many of them at leaft, will often be
found, upon a clofer and stricter examination, to accord and con-
cide with the other more plain and more intelligible paffages, and to
be no heterogeneous parts of one and the fame wife and harmonious
composition. In both, indeed, in the "Natural" as well as the
"Moral Book of God," there are, and ever will be many difficulties,
which the wit of man may never be able to reconcile; but will a wise
philosopher, because he cannot comprehend every thing he sees, re-
ject for that reason all the truths that lie within his reach, and let a
few inexplicable difficulties over-balance the many plain and infalli-
ble evidences of the finger of God, which appear in all parts, both
of his "created" and "written works?" Or will he presume so far
upon his own wisdom, as to say, God ought to have exprefled him-
self more clearly? The point and exact degree of clearnefs, which
will equally fit the different capacities of men in different ages and
countries, will, I believe, be found more difficult to fix than is
imagined; since what is clear to one man in a certain situation of
mind, time, and place, will inevitably be obfcur to another, who
views it in other poftitions, and under other circumstances. How
various and even contradictory are the readings and comments
which several men, in the several ages and climates of the
world, have made upon nature! And yet her characters are
equally legible, and her laws equally intelligible, in all times
and in all places. "There is no speech nor language where her
"voice is not heard. Her found is gone out through all the
"earth, and her words to the ends of the world." All thes
mifinterpretations therefore, and misconstructions, of her works,
are chargeable only upon mankind, who have let themselves to
study them with various degrees of capacity, application, and
impartiality. The question then should be, Why hath God given
men such various talents? And not, Why hath God expressed
himself more clearly? And the anfwer to this question, as far as it
concerns man to know, is, that God will require of him according
to what he hath, and not according to what he hath not. If what
is necessary for all to know, is knowable by all; those men upon whom God hath pleased to bestow capacities and faculties superior to the vulgar, have certainly no just reason to complain of his having left them materials for the exercise of those talents, which, if all things were equally plain to all men, would be of no great advantage to the possessors. If, therefore, there are in the sacred writings, as well as in the works of nature, many passages hard to be understood, it were to be wished that the wife and learned, instead of being offended at them, and teaching others to be so too, would be persuaded that both God and man expect that they would set themselves to consider and examine them carefully and impartially, and with a sincere desire of discovering and embracing the truth, not with an arrogant unphilosophical conceit of their being already sufficiently wise and knowing. And then I doubt not but most of those objections to revelation, which are now urged with the greatest confidence, would be cleared up and removed, like those formerly made to Creation, and the being and providence of God, by those most ignorant, most absurd, and yet most self-sufficient pretenders to reason and philosophy, the Atheists and Sceptics.

§ 26. To these internal evidences of the veracity (and may I not add, inspiration?) of the Apostles and Evangelists, I shall beg leave to subjoin two external proofs of great weight in an enquiry into the reasons we have for giving credit to their testimony; the one negative, the other positive.

The negative proof is contained in this proposition, viz. That out of the great number of facts related by the sacred writers, public and extraordinary as they are said to have been, not one in the course of now almost seventeen hundred years hath ever been disproved or falsified. Denied, indeed, many of them have been, and still are; but there is a great deal of difference between "denying" and "disproving." To prove a fact to be false, it is necessary that the positive and probable evidence brought against it should overbalance that produced in support of it. In opposition to the testimony of the disciples of Jesus Christ, asserting that he was risen from the dead, the chief priests and elders of the Jews affirmed, that his disciples stole away his body, and then gave out that he was risen; in maintenance of which charge they produced, as St. Matthew tells us*, the Roman Soldiers, who were set to guard the sepulchre, who deposed, that "his disciples came by night and stole him away while they slept." Not to insist again upon the absurdity of this report as it stands in the Evangelist, and taking it as it was afterwards prudently amended by the Sanhedrim, and propagated by an express deputation from them to all the synagogues of the Jews throughout the world, in which, without making any mention of the Roman guard, they say no more than that the disciples came by night, and stole away the body; taking it, I say, in

* Ch. xxviii. 13.
the manner in which those wise counsellors were upon matuer de-
liberation pleased to put it, it may be sufficient to observe, that this
theft charged upon the disciples, was so far from being proved, that
it was not so much as ever enquired into. And yet the accusers were
the chief priests and elders of the Jews; men in high reverence and
authority with the people, yel led with all the power of the state,
and consequently furnished with all the means of procuring infor-
manions, and of gaining or extorting a confession. And what were the
accused? Men of low birth, mean fortunes, without learning, with-
out credit, without support; and who, out of pusillinamity and fear,
had deflected their master, upon the first occasion offered of shewing
their fidelity and attachment to him. And can it be imagined that
the chief priests and council would have made no enquiry into a fact,
the belief of which they took so much pains to propagate, had they
themselves been persuaded of the truth of it? And had they en-
quired into it, can it be supposed that out of such a number of mean
persons as much have been privy to it, no one, either from honesty or
religion, the fear of punishment or hope of reward, would have
betrayed the secret, and given them such intelligence as might have
enabled them to put the question of the resurrection out of all dis-
pute? For had it been once proved that the disciples stole away the
body of Jesus, their words would hardly have been taken for his
resurrection. But how did these poor men act? Conscious of no
fraud and imposture, they remained in Jerusalem a week or more
after the report of their having stolen their master's body, was spread
over the city; and in about a month returned thither again: not
long after which they affected boldly to the face of their powerful
enemies and accusers, the Chief Priests and Elders, that "God had
raised from the dead that same Jesus whom they had crucified."
And what was the behaviour of these learned Rabbins, these watch-
ful guardians of the Jewish church and state? Why, they suf-
fered the disciples of Jesus, charged by their order with an im-
posture tending to disturb the government, to continue unquestion-
tioned at Jerusalem, and to depart from thence unmolested. And
when, upon their return thither, they had caused them to be seized
and brought before them, for "preaching through Jesus the re-
surrection of the dead," what did they say to them? Did they
charge them with having stolen away the body of their master?
Nothing like it. On the contrary, not being able to gain the testi
mony given by the Apostles to the resurrection of Jesus, vouched
by a miracle jult then performed by them in his name, they or-
ted them to withdraw, and "confessed among themselves, saying.
What shall we do to these men? for that, indeed, a notable
miracle hath been done by them, is manifest to all that dwell in Je-
rusalem, and we cannot deny it. But that it spread no farther
among the people, let us strictly threaten them, that they speak
henceforth to no man in this name: And they called them, and
"com-
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commanded them not to speak at all, nor teach in the name of Jesus. Peter and John answered, and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye: For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard. So, when they had farther threatened them, they let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them." Who, after hearing this account, could ever imagine that the disciples stole the body of Jesus; or that the Chief Priests and Elders themselves believed they did? But it may, perhaps, be objected, that this account comes from Christian writers: And could the objectors expect to meet with it in Jewish authors? We might, indeed, expect to find in their writings some proofs of this charge upon the disciples; and, had there been any, the Chief Priests, and the other adversaries of Christ, would, doubtless, not have failed to produce them. But the progress that Christianity made at that time in Jerusalem is a stronger argument than even their silence, that no proof of this charge either was or could be made. Could the Apostles have had the imprudence to preach, and could so many thousand Jews have been weak enough to believe upon their testimony, that Christ was risen from the dead, had it been proved that his disciples stole away his body? An infidel may, if he pleases, believe this; but let him account for it, if he can.

I have dwelt the longer upon the examination of this pretended theft of the disciples, because it is the only fact I know of that hath been set up in opposition to the many facts upon which the evidence of the resurrection is founded. How defective it is in point of proof, whether probable or positive, I need not point out to the reader. But I cannot help observing, that those who deny that any guard was placed at the sepulchre, take from it the only positive evidence that was ever brought to support it, viz. the depositions of the Roman soldiers.

Among the many extraordinary particulars related by the sacred writers, the miracles performed by Christ and his Apostles, as they were almost without number, and wrought most commonly in public, in the presence of unbelieving Jews and Gentiles, yielded the fairest occasion to the opposers of the Gospel, of overturning the credit of the evangelical historians. And yet the pitiful solutions which Pagan and Jewish writers have been reduced to make use of, in order to take off the conclusion drawn from these miracles by the Christians, form a very strong presumption, that they were not to be disapproved. Some, as * Celsus, have imputed them to magic; others, as the Jews, have attributed them to the ineffable name of God, which, say they, Jesus stole out of the temple. Both of them have admitted the facts. I shall not go about to shew the absurdity of either of these two ways of accounting for these miraculous operations: but I must hence take occasion to beg the reader-to reflect a little upon the strange perverseness of the human mind, the

* See Origen contra Celsum, † See Univ. Hist. vol. IV. p. 300, note T.
vanity of reason, and the force of prejudice. Celsus believed magic, the Jews had faith in amulets; and yet both one and the other disbelieved Christianity!

§ 27. The positive proof of the veracity of the sacred writers is founded on the exact accomplishment of the predictions of our Saviour and his Apostles recorded in the New Testament. That I may not draw out this article into an excessive and unnecessary length, I shall make no remarks upon those predictions, whose accomplishment is to be found in the Scriptures themselves; some of which I have already taken notice of. The Scriptures, infidels perhaps will say, were written after these events, and the predictions, therefore, probably adapted to them. But they who make this objection, will gain little by it; since, if they admit the events, it will be no difficult matter to demonstrate the truth of Christianity. Besides, the reader himself may, with very little pains, find out and compare these predictions with their several completions.

The prophecies I shall produce, relate to the different states of the Jews and Gentiles; different not only from each other, but very different from that in which they both were at the time when these prophecies were written; to have a perfect understanding of which, it will be necessary to take a general view of the religious state (for that is principally regarded in these prophecies) of the nations distinguished by the names of Jews and Gentiles.

From the time of the covenant (or compact) which God was pleased to make with Abraham and his descendents, and to renew with the whole body of the Israelites under Moses, the Jews became the peculiar "people of God:" a phrase sufficiently justified and explained by the terms or conditions of the covenant which, on the part of the Israelites, were the taking God only for their Lord, and paying obedience to the law, the ceremonial as well as moral law, which he had given them. On the part of God, were stipulated temporal blessings, and his almighty protection to the Jews, as long as they should adhere to the conditions entered into by them. By virtue of this covenant, the Jews acknowledged God for their king, and God governed them as his subjects, by his deputies and vicereys, the prophets, judges, and kings of Israel. Moses, the mediator of this covenant, was the first of these deputies; and the Messiah, who was to be the mediator of a new covenant, was to be the last. By him the new covenant was to be offered, first indeed to the Jews, with whom the covenant mediated by Moses was till then to be in force. But the other was not to be limited to that people only. The Gentiles, that is, all the nations of the earth, who were no parties to the former covenant, were to be invited to accede to this; and all those of whatsoever nation they were, who should acknowledge the Messiah as a king appointed by God to reign over them, were to be admitted into this covenant, and be reputed thenceforward the "people of God." But as the limits of this divine empire were to be altered and enlarged, it became necessary to alter and enlarge the terms of government. The ceremonial
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monial law was national and local: and though, without some such religion and political bond of union, the Jews would not, in all probability, have long continued the separate and peculiar people of God, yet, as most of the duties prescribed by that law were confined to the Holy Land, and even to the holy city of Jerusalem, the Gentiles, who were now to be taken into the covenant, could not possibly comply with it. This, therefore, was of necessity to be abolished. But the moral law, the basis and end of the former covenant, was in like manner to be the end and basis of the new one. To this both the Gentiles and Jews could pay obedience, as well as to the other terms super-added to it in the new covenant, viz. the acknowledging the Messiah for their king; and, as an outward token of their allegiance and accession to this covenant, receiving baptism, and commemorating from time to time, by the celebration of the eucharist, the sealing this covenant on the part of God by the death of Christ; which two sacraments, properly so called, may be styled the ceremonial law of the Christians, as circumcision and other ritual duties were of the Jews.

Of the twelve tribes of Israel, who were parties of the Mosaical covenant, ten fell at once from their allegiance to God under Jeboam; and ceasing from that time to be the people or subjects of God, he ceased to be their king; and, withdrawing his protection, suffered them to be drawn into a captivity, from which they never afterwards returned; but, being lost and confounded with the nations among whom they were transplanted, were thenceforward no more heard of as a distinct and separate people. The two remaining tribes were then the only people of God; and as such, though often punished by him for their frequent transgressions of his laws, and even carried captive to Babylonia, were by his providence brought back again to the land of Canaan, and restored to a capacity of complying with the terms of their covenant, by the rebuilding the city and temple of Jerusalem. From that time they were very exact in their observance of the ceremonial law, but had most grossly corrupted the moral law, and rendered it, as Christ told them, of no effect, by the comments and traditions of their Scribes and Pharisees. This was the state of the Jews when Jesus the Messiah, that great prophet and king foretold by Moses and all the Prophets, came to offer them a new covenant.

The state of the Gentiles was far more deplorable. They had for many ages transferred their obedience from the one supreme God, Creator of Heaven and earth, to his creatures, or to deities of their own devising, under whose imaginary protection they had ranged themselves by nations and communities, and had become, almost in the same sense as the Israelites were styled the people of God, the people of the "Egyptian Isis, Assyrian Belus, Athenian Pallas, " Ephesian Diana, and Capitolin Jove," &c. But there was this farther difference between them: the God of the Israelites, like a righteous and equitable sovereign, had given his people a law, to be 

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the rule of their obedience, or rather had confirmed and enforced the original law, which, from the very beginning, he had written in the hearts, i.e. the reason of all mankind, adding to it such other institutions as their particular situation then required: while the Gentiles, having by their idolatry fallen from their obedience to that original universal law, were left, thenceforward, like out-laws and rebels, to frame to themselves such rules, both moral and religious, as the fancied caprice of their deities or their own perverted reason should suggest; whence it came to pass, that they were overrun with immorality and superstition. And though some of the wisest among them, by following the yet glimmering light of reason, had become sensible of many of their grossest errors, and had endeavoured to reform some abuses, yet had superstition taken such a hold on the majority, that, till that was entirely rooted out, it was impossible to bring them back to what is called the religion of nature, i.e. the religion of reason, were we to allow those wise men to have been as well acquainted with it, in all its branches, as since Christianity some have pretended to be. But with the superstition of their countries those wise men thought it better to comply than to contend. And had they attacked it with the intrepidity and industry of the apostles, it is much to be questioned, whether, with all their eloquence and logic, they would have gained the victory. Such was the dark and hopeless condition of the Gentiles.

In this state of the Jews and Gentiles, our Saviour, after having represented to the former, under the parable of a certain householder who planted a vineyard, and let it out to husbandmen, the righteous dealings of God to them, and the ill returns they had made to him, by not only refusing him the fruits, but murdering the servants he had sent to demand them, and lastly his son; and after having extorted from them a confession that thes wicked husbandmen ought to be miserably punished, and the vineyard taken from them, and given to other husbandmen, who should render him the fruits in their season, spoke to them the following words: Did you never read in the Scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? Therefore say I unto you, the kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof: and whosoever shall fall on this stone, shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder. By these words are plainly signified, 1st, the transferring the kingdom of God from the Jews to the Gentiles; 2dly, the obedience of the Gentiles; and, 3dly, the miserable punishment of the Jews, for their having rejected and murdered the Son of God. There are many other prophecies relating to each of these events scattered up and down the Gospel, which I think it needess to produce, this being so very full and explicit. I shall therefore,
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therefore set about shewing the exact accomplishment of it in its several parts.

The kingdom of God, as may be collected from what is said above; denotes the spiritual or moral dominion of God over moral subjects; i.e. free agents: and by the people of God are signified such free agents as freely and voluntarily acknowledge the sovereignty of God; by worshipping him, and receiving and obeying all those laws, whether natural or revealed, which appear to have been enacted by him. The Jews therefore, by rejecting Jesus Christ, who proved himself to have been commissioned and sent by God, not only from the testimony of Moses and all their prophets, the holiness of his life and doctrine, and the numberless miracles he wrought among them; but still more plainly, if possible, by his rising from the dead, and empowering his disciples to work the same mighty signs and wonders in his name; the Jews, I say, by rejecting this messenger, this Son of God, and refusing to receive the laws which he proposed to them in his Father’s name, evidently renounced their allegiance to God, and ceased to be his people or subjects. And the Gentiles; on the other hand, by renouncing their vices and idolatrous superstitions, returning to the worship of God, and receiving his Messiah; together with the laws proposed to them by him in the name of God; as evidently put themselves under the dominion of God, acknowledged his empire, and became the people or subjects of God. And hence appears what is meant by the “Kingdom of God being taken from the Jews, and given to the Gentiles.” God removed the throne, whereon David and his posterity had sat as his substitutes and viceroys, from among the Jews, who renounced his authority; and from earth to heaven; and placing it at his right hand, and setting upon it his Messiah, his only Son, gave him for his subjects not one nation only, but all nations, and kindreds, and people, and all the ends of the earth; for his dominion. That the kingdom of God was in this sense, and in this manner, actually transferred from the Jews to the Gentiles, is too notorious to need any proof. The Jews, as a nation, rejected the Gospel, and perished in their refusal of the Messiah, till the final destruction of their holy city and temple; and, what is yet more strange, still persevere in their obstinacy. Whereas the Gentiles embraced it so universally, that, within a few centuries after Christ, almost the whole Roman empire, that is, almost the then known world, forsook idolatry, and became Christians. And God, on his part, testified that he entered into covenant with them, and accepted the allegiance, by pouring upon them the gifts of his Holy Spirit; as he testified, on the other hand, his renunciation of the Mosaic covenant, by not only suffering the seat of his empire, the city and temple of Jerusalem, to be utterly destroyed, but permitting the Jews also to be banished from the holy land; and scattered through all the nations of the earth. And thus was this prophecy most exactly accomplished in all its parts.

§ 28. Besides the general change in the state of the Jews and Gentiles expressed in this prophecy, many particulars relating to the con-
dition of the Jewish nation were most precisely foretold by our Saviour Christ: as, first, the destruction of the city and temple of Jerusalem; secondly, the signs and wonders preceding that destruction; thirdly, the miseries of the Jews before, at, and after, the famous siege of that city; fourthly, the dispersion of that reprotested people; fifthly, the duration of their calamity; and, sixthly, their restoration.

"Our Saviour foretold the destruction of the temple, after it had withstood almost 500 years, in these words: 'See and thou these great buildings? There shall not be left one stone upon another, which shall not be thrown down.' And this prediction was completed by Titus, who, faith Josephus, commanded his soldiers 'to dig up the foundation both of the temple and the city.' And both the Jewish Talmud and Maimonides add, that Terentius Rufus, the captain of his army, did with a plough-shaft tear up the foundation of the temple.

"With like exactness and particularity did our Lord foretell the ruin of the city of Jerusalem: 'The days,' faith he, 'shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and shall not leave thee one stone upon another.' Now that the event completely answered the prediction is evident from the Jewish historian, who tells us expressly, that 'Titus having commanded his soldiers to dig up the city, this was so fully done, by levelling the whole compass of the city, except three towers, that they who came to see it, were persuaded it would never be built again.' The same historian informs us, that when Vespasian besieged Jerusalem, his army compassed the city round about, and kept them in on every side: and though it was judged a great and almost impracticable work to compass the whole city with a wall, 'yet Titus animating his soldiers to attempt it, they in three days built a wall of thirty-nine furlongs, having thirteen castles on it, and so cut off all hopes that any of the Jews within the city should escape.'

"In the 21st chapter of St. Luke, Christ, speaking of the destruction of Jerusalem, says, (ver. 11.) 'And great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences, and fearful sights, and great signs shall there be from heaven.'

"Now, to omit the frequent earthquakes that happened in other places, in the times of Claudius and Nero, Josephus informs us, that there happened in Judea and Jerusalem an immense tempest, and vehement winds with rain, and frequent lightnings and dreadful thundering, and extreme roarings of the quaking earth, which manifested to all that the world was disturbed at the destruction of..."
of men; and that these prodigies portended no small mischiefs. Josephus hath a particular chapter of the manifest signs of the approaching desolation of the Jews; which Tacitus, a Roman historian of that age, almost epitomizes in these words: "armies seemed to meet in the clouds, and glittering weapons were there seen; the temple seemed to be in a flame, with fire issuing from the clouds, and a voice more than human was heard, declaring that the deities were quitting the place; which was attended with the found of a great motion, as if they were departing." Josephus adds, what Tacitus also touches upon, that the great gate of the temple, which many could fearlessly shut, and which was made fast by bolts and bars, was seen to open of its own accord; that a sword appeared hanging over the city; that a comet was seen pointing down upon it for a whole year together; and that, before the sun went down, there were seen armies in battle-array, and chariots compassing the country, and investing the cities: a thing so strange, faith he, that it would pass for a fable, were there not men living to attest it." So particular an account have we of the fearful sights and signs from heaven mentioned by our Lord.

"Our blessed Lord is as express in the predictions of the miseries which should befall that sinful nation: miseries so great, as to admit no parallel. * There shall be, faith he, great tribulation, such as never happened from the beginning of the world to this time." Which words Josephus seems to have transcribed, when he says, "never was any nation more wicked, nor ever did a city suffer as they did." Nay, in another place, he goes so far as to say, "all the miseries which all mankind had suffered from the beginning of the world were not to be compared with those the Jewish nation did then suffer." And, indeed, the account he gives of the number who perished in that siege is almost incredible; and much more so is what the Talmud and other Jewish writers mention of the slaughter which Hadrian's army made of them fifty-two years after, when they rebelled under Barchocoebas, and were besieged in the city Bitter. And yet our Saviour having farther said, that "wherever the carcasses were, &c. the Romans had no enemies left in Judea, the danger reached to many of them living the remotest from it: for many of them perished at Alexandrina, at Cyrene, and in other cities of Egypt, to the number of sixty thousand, in all the cities of Syria. In a word, Eleazar, in Josephus, having reckoned many places where they were cruelly slaughtered, concludes with saying, "It would be too long to speak of all these places in particular."

"Again: our Saviour adds, that they should be led captive into all nations." Accordingly, Josephus informs us, that the number

number of Jewish captives was ninety-seven thousand; that of
them Titus sent many to Egypt, and most of them he dif-
perforinto the Roman provinces; and so exactly fulfilled this
prediction."

The duration of the calamity of the Jews, and their restoration,
are signified in these words: "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of
the Gentiles, till the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." This
so exactly came to pass, that Vespasian commanded the whole land
of Judea to be sold to those Gentiles that would buy it; and Ha-
drian, about sixty-three years after, made a law, that no Jew
should come into the region round about Jerusalem, as Arilo
Pelleus, who was himself a Jew, and flourished in the very time
of Hadrian, relates. Thus, faith Eusebius, it came to pass,
that the Jews being banished thence, and there being a conflux
thither of Aliens, it became a city and colony of the Romans, and
was in honour of the emperor (Hadrian) named Aelia. Jerusa-
lem, faith Chrift, shall be thus trodden down, or subject to
the Gentiles, till the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled; that is,
till, by the conversion of the Jews to the Christian faith, the fulness
of the Gentiles to be converted to it should come in with them;
for blindness, faith the apostle, hath happened to the Jews,
till the fulness of the Gentiles shall come in, and then all Israel
shall be saved; and with them also the yet Heathen Gentiles. For
if, faith he, the casting away of the Jews was the reconciling
of the world, what shall the receiving of them be to it, but even
life from the dead? and again, If the fall of them were the
riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of
the Gentiles, how much more shall their fulness be the fulness of the
Gentiles? Now here it is especially observable, that Julian the
apostate, designing to defeat this prophecy of Christ, resolved on the
rebuilding of the city and the temple of Jerusalem in its old sta-
tion, which was till this time left in ruins, Aelia being built with-
out the circuit of it. For, in his epistle to the community of the
Jews, he writes thus: 'The holy city of Jerusalem, which you
have so long desired to see inhabited, rebuilding by my own la-
bours, I will dwell in.' Thus he began with an endeavour to
build that temple, in which alone the Jews would offer up their
prayers and sacrifices: but the immediate hand of Providence soon
forced the workmen to desist from that unhappy enterprise.
Am-
mianus Marcellinus, an Heathen who lived in those very times,
gives us the story thus: that 'Julian endeavoured to rebuild the
temple at Jerusalem with vast expense, and gave it up to
Alpius of Antioch to halt the work, and to the governor of
the province to assist him in it; in which work when Alpius was
earnestly employed, and the governor of the province was assisting,
terrible balls of flame bursting forth near the foundations with
frequent insults, and burning divers times the workmen, rendered
the

† The Greek word is παρεμβαίνει, possessed and trodden by the
feet of the Gentiles.
‡ Rom. xi. 25, 26.
§ Ibid. ver. 13.
|| Ver. 12.
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the place inaccessible; and thus the fire obstinately repelling them,
the work ceased.

The story is very signal, and remarkable for many circum-
tances: as, 1st, the persons that relate; Ammianus Marcellinus, an
Heathen; Zemuch David, a Jew, who confesses that Julian was
' divinitus impeditus,' hindered by God in this attempt; Nazi-
anzen and Chrysothem among the Greeks; St. Ambrose and Ruf-
finus among the Latins, who flourished at the very time when this
was done; Theodoret and Sozomen, orthodox historians; Phil-
loforgius, an Arian; Socrates, a favourite of the Novations, who
writ the history within the space of fifty years after the thing
was done, and whilst the eye-witnesses of the fact were yet sur-
viving.

2dly, The time when it was performed; not in the reign of
Christian emperors, but of the most bitter enemies of Christians,
when they were forced to hide, and had not liberty of speaking for
themselves. Observe,

3dly, With what confidence Christians urge this matter of fact
against the Jews, as a convincing demonstration of the expiration
of their legal worship, and of the certainty of Christian faith
against the Heathen philosophers, inquiring 'what the wife
men of the world can say to these things?' and against the
emperor Theodosius, to deter him from requiring them to re-
build a synagogue, which had lately been burnt by a Christian
bishop.

4thly and lastly, The unquestionable evidence of the thing:
'This,' say the Christians, 'all men freely do believe and speak of:
'tis in the mouths of all men, and is not denied even by the
Atheists themselves; and if it seem yet incredible to any one, he
may repair for the truth of it, both to the witnesses of it yet living,
and to them who have heard it from their mouths; yea, they may
view the foundations lying still bare and naked; and, if you ask the
reason, you will meet with no other account, besides that which I
have given; and of this all we Christians are witnesses, these
things being done not long since in our own times.' So St. Chry-
sothem.

The reader who is inclined to see many particulars of the predic-
tions of our Saviour, which relate to this remarkable catastrophe, and
which I have omitted for brevity's sake, and how they were verified
by the event, will do well to consult Dr. Whitby's preface, from
whence the above articles are taken.

The observations I have to make on these prophecies are as follow:
1st, The common objection made to prophecies in general,
that they are so obscure and figurative as not to be expounded
but by the event, cannot be urged against these, which are con-
ceived in words as simple and intelligible as those made use of
by the historian, who relates the events corresponding with them.

2dly,
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3dly, It is very remarkable, that, of the four evangelists, St. John alone, who is said to have survived the destruction of Jerusalem, makes no mention either of these prophecies or their accomplishment. Of the other three, in whose Gospels they are to be found, St. Matthew and St. Mark died confessedly before that period; the time of St. Luke’s death is uncertain. May we not then from hence very fairly conclude, that this remarkable silence of the beloved disciple, with regard to prophecies of such importance to the credit of his Lord and his religion, was ordered from above, lest unbelievers should say, what some had said of the predictions of Daniel, that they were written after the event?

3dly, As to the prediction relating to the duration of the calamity of the Jewish people and their restoration, though that is the only one of all those above-cited, not yet perfectly accomplished, I beg leave however to observe, that not only the miraculous defeating of the emperor Julian’s attempt to rebuild the city and temple of Jerusalem, but the present extraordinary condition of the Jews, is such a warrant and proof, that this prophecy also will have its accomplishment in due time, as cannot fail of powerfully striking those who will open their eyes to view it. To induce the unobservant and unthinking people of this age to do this, and to assist them in considering this living evidence of the truth of Christianity, which lies within their notice, and even at their very doors, I shall lay before them some observations of an excellent French author upon this subject, whom I choose rather to translate than to give his arguments in my own words.

§ 29. * But neither the dispersion of the Jews into all nations, nor the general contempt into which they are fallen, are so extraordinary, as their preservation for so many ages, notwithstanding this their dispersion throughout the earth, and the universal contempt which all nations have for them.

* Without a singular providence, a people diffracted and divided into an infinite number of distinct families, banished into countries whose language and customs were different from theirs, must have been mingled and confounded with other nations, and all traces of them must these many ages past have entirely disappeared.

* For they not only sub sist no longer in a body politic, but there is not a single city, where they are allowed to live according to their own laws, or to create magistrates of their own; neither are they held together by any public exercise of religion. Their priests are without employment, their sacrifices are suppressed; their feasts cannot be solemnized but in one only place, and to that they are not permitted to repair.

* By what miracle then have they been preserved amid so many nations, without any of those means which keep other people united? How comes it to pass, that having been scattered like so many imperceptible grains of dusts, among all nations, they have notwith-
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notwithstanding been able to subsist longer than any; and even to
survive the extinction of them all?

Who can at this day pick out the ancient Romans from the
numerous crowds of people who have thrown themselves into
Italy? Who can point out one single family of old Gaul, from
those of another original? Who can make the like separation in
Spain, between the ancient Spaniards, and Goths who conquered
it? The face of the world is changed, both in the East and West;
and all nations are mixed and blended in a hundred different man-
ners; it is only upon conjectures, and those oftentimes very frivo-
rous, that a single family can trace up its original beyond the pub-
lic revolutions of the state.

But the Jews, by a tradition which no calamity, whether
public or private, hath been able to interrupt, can go back as
far as the ancient flock of Abraham. They may be mistaken in
allotting themselves to this or that tribe, because since their dis-
appearance they have not any public registers (which by the way
is a proof that their law is abolished, since neither the Priests nor
Levites can ascertain by any certain monuments that they are of
the family of Aaron, and of the tribe of Levi); but every father
hath taken care to tell his children, that he had an original different
from that of the Gentiles; and that he descended from the Patri-
archs, who are celebrated in the Scriptures.

The general contempt into which they have fallen should, one
would think, have induced them to confound themselves with
those people under whose dominion they lived, and to suppress
everything that tended to distinguish them. By separating them-
selves from those who were in power, they only drew upon
themselves their hatred and derision. In many places they ex-
posed themselves to death, by bearing the exterior mark of circu-
cision. Every human interest led them to efface the ignominious
stain of their original.

They saw every day their Messiah still farther removed from
them; that the promises of their doctors about his speedy mani-
festations were false; that the predictions of the prophets, whom
they could now no longer understand, were covered with obscurity;
that all the fupputations of time either terminated in Jesus Christ,
or were without a period; that some among them lost all hope, and
fell into incredulity with regard to the Scriptures.

And yet, notwithstanding all this, they still subsist, they multi-
ply, they remain visibly separated from all other people; and, in
spite of the general aversion, in spite of the efforts of all those na-
tions who hate them, and who have them in their power, in spite
of every human obstacle, they are preserved by a supernatural pro-
tection, which hath not in like manner preserved any other nation
of the earth.

One must surely have very little sense of what ought to give one
astonishment and admiration, if this prodigy does not strike one;
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"and one must have a strange idea of the providence of God, to think he had no hand in all this.

"But the Holy Spirit was not willing to leave us under any uncertainty upon this head; and hath declared to us by his prophets, that the preservation of the Jews is his work. 'Fear thou not, O Jacob, my Servant, faith the Lord, for I am with thee, for I will make a full end of all the nations, whither I have driven thee; but I will not make a full end of thee, but correct thee in measure, yet will I not leave thee wholly unpunished.'

"This promise was made to the old Patriarchs, to whom God hath referred children, heirs of their faith, and to the remnant of Israel, who in the end of the ages shall believe in Jesus Christ.

"It is for their sakes that the unworthy posterity of the unbelieving is suffered; and it is to maintain the communication between the first fathers and their latest successors, that the nation is preferred notwithstanding their iniquity, and in the midst of punishments that threatened to overwhelm them.

"But let it be observed, that this promise was made to the nation of the Jews only; that all others shall be either exterminated, or so confounded with each other, as to be no longer distinguished; and that it is the efficacy of the word of God, which preserves the Jews amidst every thing that in all appearance would otherwise have sunk them entirely, and swallowed them up.

"Thus faith the Lord, If my covenant be not with day and night, and if I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth; Then will I cast away the seed of Jacob and David my Servant;—for I will cause their captivity to return, and have mercy on them.† This, I say, is the promise, and the end of the promise. The Jews shall one day be recalled through mercy; and for the sake of those who shall one day be recalled, the patience of God suffers all the rest, and his power preserves them.

"Thus faith the Lord, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night; which divideth the sea, when the waves thereof roar; the Lord of Hosts is his name. If those ordinances depart from before me, faith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever. Thus faith the Lord, If Heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cut off all the seed of Israel, for all that they have done, faith the Lord.‡

"That is to say, heaven and earth shall pass away sooner than the Jews shall cease to be a distinct people. The same power which hath given laws to nature, watches over their preservation. And the unheard-of crime which they have committed, in crucifying

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fying the Saviour promised to their fathers, and which hath filled
up the measure of their former iniquity, will not move God to
retract his promise, and to reject entirely, and without resource,
the potestity of Jacob.

With what light were the prophets—illuminated to presume to
speak in so great and lofty a strain of a thing so little probable as
the duration of a people, weak, dispersed, universally hated, and
guilty of the greatest of all crimes!

Who would question the other prophecies, after seeing the ac-
complishment of this? What more astonishing proof can any one
desire of the truth of the Christian religion, than these two events
joined together, the dispersion of the Jews into all nations, and
their preservation for sixteen hundred years? One of these things,
taken separately and by itself, was incredible; and they became still
more so, by being united; but both these prodigies were necessary
to prove that Jesus Christ was the Messiah.

It was necessary that those who had rejected him should be
banished into all regions, should into all parts carry with them the
Scriptures, and should everywhere be covered with ignornomy.

But that the promises made their fathers might be accomplished,
it was necessary that their banished family should be recalled, and
that their blindness being dissipated, they should adore him whom
Abraham had desired to see, and whom he had adored with a holy
transport of joy and gratitude.

The Jews punished and dispersed bear witness to Jesus Christ.
The Jews recalled and converted will render him a testimony still
more awful and striking. The Jews preferred by a continual mir-
acle, that they may preferve to Jesus Christ the flock and succes-
sion of those who shall one day believe in him, bear witness to him
continually.

Had they been only punished, they would have proved his
justice only: had they only been preferred, they could have
proved nothing but his power. Had they not been referred to
worship him one day, they could not have proved his mercy and
fidelity, nor have made him any reparation for their outrageous
crimes.

Their dispersion proves that he is come, but they have rejected
him: their preservation demonstrates that he hath not rejected
them for ever, and that they shall one day believe in him; and they,
declare by both, that he is the Messiah, and the promised Saviour;
that their miseries proceed from their not having known him; and
that the only hope they have left is, that they shall one day come
to the knowledge of him.

We ought not to demand why God supports them so long
without enlightening them; and why he leaves so great an inter-
val between the faithful fathers, and the children that will hereafter
become so too. To pretend to examine the impenetrable judg-
ments

* John viii. 56.
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ments of God, and the abysses of his wisdom, is to pretend to measure the height of heaven, and to search out the foundations of the earth. God hath set bounds to the incredulity of the Jews, and to the ingratitude of the Gentiles: his mercy and his justice succeed each other; and no one knows at what time he will execute what he hath promised to the latest posterity of Israel, although his promises are infallible.

† Thus faith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel: Fear not, for I have redeemed thee; I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou paskest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee. When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. Fear not, for I am with thee: I will bring thy feed from the East, and gather thee from the West. I will say to the North, Give up: and to the South, Keep not back: Bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth: even every one that is called by my name. For I have created him for my glory, I have formed him, yea I have made him. Bring forth the blind people that have eyes, and the deaf that have ears.

This prophecy, truly admirable in all its parts, is addrest to Jacob, the head of the tribes of Israel, and the heir of the promises of the Messiah and Salvation.

His posterity is dispersed into all the Quarters of the world. This is the state of the Jews since the coming of Jesus Christ.

Their dispersion is the punishment of their spiritual deafness and blindness. And with how great a blindness, with how great a deafness, may one not devoutly reproach the Jews, for not having known Jesus Christ, and not having heard him, though he proved his divine mission by an infinity of miracles!

Their condition seems desperate: the waters are ready to overwhelm them; the flames surround them on all sides; but the protection of God follows them throughout, and delivers them.

This protection is vouchsafed to the whole body of the nation, in favour of those who shall one day call upon that name which the rest have disowned with their blasphemies.

God, out of mere mercy, will give a docile and faithful heart to those who shall renounce their former incredulity. They will be the creatures of his grace, to which alone they will stand indebted for their repentance and return.

They will not then begin to see a new object, but an object which their blindness had concealed from them. They will not then hear a teacher, who began but a few days before to make his appearance, but one whom their voluntary and obstinate deafness had kept them from hearing before.

* Rom. xi. 33, 34.
† Isaiah xliii. 1—8.
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"The change will be in their persons, and not in his religion; that will remain what it is, but they will then begin to see it. Jesus Christ will take away the veil that is upon their eyes; but he will be the same. He will cure their deafness; but he will speak the same things.

"It is evident, then, that the Jews are preferred for him; and that the whole body of the nation subsists only by the efficacy of that promise which is to lead the remains of Israel to Jesus Christ: bring forth the blind people that have eyes, and the deaf that have ears."

Can any one, after reading these several prophecies above quoted, question the veracity of the sacred writers; who, by publishing them in this manner, put their master's credit and their own upon contingencies very remote, and seemingly improbable? And doth not the exact accomplishment of these, and several other predictions, which might have been produced, sufficiently establish the authority of the Scriptures, and ascertain the truth of all the facts related in them?

§ 30. I come now to consider the second argument to induce us to believe that Christ rose from the dead, viz. The existence of the Christian religion.

From the existence of the Christian religion, may be drawn the same kind of evidence of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the wonders attending it, as is exhibited to us of the deluge by the many petrifactions of shells and bones of fishes, and other animals of distant regions, &c. found often in the bottoms of the deepest mines, and the bowels of the highest mountains; for, as it is impossible to account for those various petrifactions being lodged in so many parts of the earth, some many leagues distant from the sea, others very much above the level of it, without admitting such a subversion and confusion of this globe, as could not have been occasioned by a less violent cause than the "breaking up the fountains of the great deep, and the waters flowing above the tops of the highest hills," so will it, I apprehend, be extremely difficult to account for the propagation and present existence of Christianitv in so many regions of the world, without supposing that Christ rose from the dead, ascended into heaven, and enabled his disciples, by the miraculous gifts of his Holy Spirit, to surmount such obstacles as no mere human abilities could possibly overcome. In the former case, a cause superior to the ordinary operations of nature must be assigned for the production of effects plainly above, and contrary to those operations; and for a solution of the latter, recourse in like manner must be had to an agent of power and wisdom transcending and controlling the natural faculties and wisdom of man; and this cause, this agent, can be no other than the great Lawgiver of nature, the All-wise and All-mighty Creator of heaven and earth. He alone could "break up the fountains of the great deep, open the windows of heaven, and cover the whole earth with water;" that is, bring on that universal deluge which alone furnishes us with
with a solution of many phenomena, otherwise unaccountable; and he alone could break the jaws of death, and the prison of the grave, "open the kingdom of heaven," and shower down upon mortals such mighty gifts and powers, as are the only adequate causes that can be assigned of the astonishing and preternatural birth and increase of Christianity. This will not appear exaggerated, if we consider the difficulties the Gospel had to struggle with at its first appearance, and the inabilities, the human insufficiencies I mean, of its first preachers, to oppose and overcome those obstacles.

The difficulties they had to encounter were no less than the superstition, the prejudices, and the vices of the whole world; difficulties of so much the harder conquest, as being derived, though by corruption, from good principles, namely, the religion, the nature, and the reason of mankind. How powerful an opposition all these formed against the Gospel, will best appear from a short view of the state of the world under the first ages of Christianity.

The Jews, though possessed of a body of laws framed, as they acknowledged, by God himself, had, however, by lightening to the comments and traditions of the scholastic and casuistical Scribes and Rabbins, so far departed from the spirit and intention of their law-giver, as to place almost the whole of their religion in the observance of ritual purities and ceremonies, to the neglect of the "greater and weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith," which, as our Saviour told them, they ought to have regarded, and not to have disregarded the others: that is, the Jews were fallen from true religion into a superstition, which differed from that of the Gentiles principally, in that the Gentiles worshipped a number of deities, the Jews acknowledged and worshipped one alone; but still they worshipped him superstitiously, with exterior services only, ablutions, sacrifices, observation of days, and other ceremonial duties; not perceiving, or not remembering, the great and wise end of those ceremonial institutions; which, by not allowing any forms of worship but those prescribed by the law, and not admitting to that worship any but those who by circumcision would become perfect Israelites, not only tended to keep them from being mingled with the Gentiles, and learning from them their idolatrous polytheism, by which means that fundamental article of all true religion, the belief of one God, though lost in all other nations, was for many centuries preserved among the Jews; but by the sabbaths and festivals, the purifications, offerings, and propitiatory sacrifices appointed in the ritual, put them perpetually in mind of the duties of prayer and thanksgiving to God; of the importance of moral purity, the obligation of repentance, and the necessity of an expiation for sin. But as holiness of life was of more difficult practice than the observance of ceremonies, numerous and burdensome as they seem to have been, they soon became willing to commute; and, repining their chief hopes of obtaining the favour and protection of God

* Matth. xxiii. 25.
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God in their compliance with the ceremonial law, they turned their attention principally to that; and attached themselves to it so strongly, that though they did not scruple to commit a thousand immoralities, they would sooner die than eat any unclean meats, or suffer their temple to be profaned.

From this attachment to what they esteemed the law of Moses, they presumed upon the special favour and protection of God, and looked upon themselves as sole heirs of the promises made to Abraham and David, and repeated and confirmed by all their prophets. But the same blindness that with-held them from seeing the spiritual intent and meaning of the ceremonial institutions, kept them likewise from understanding the spiritual sense of those prophecies. The blessing, therefore, promised through the seed of Abraham to all the nations of the earth, and the kingdom stipulated to the posterity of David, they preposterously interpreted to belong to themselves alone; and expounding the deliverance of Israel intimated by the prophets, and the victories and dominion of the Son of David, in a carnal sense, they expected, at the time of Christ's coming, a Messiah, who should not only deliver them from their subjection to the Romans, but even conquer and subdue them, and all the other powers of the earth, to the empire of the Jews, the sole favourites of Heaven, and destined lords of the universe, under their invincible glorious king. These expectations, so flattering to the whole nation, had so infected the minds of all orders and degrees, that even the disciples of Jesus, who were (some of them at least) of the lowest of the people, were a long while tainted with them, notwithstanding the spiritual instructions and plain declarations of their master to the contrary. And though, soon after his ascension, they seem to have given up all thoughts of a temporal kingdom, yet could they not for some time, nor without an express miracle, be convinced that the Gentiles had any title to the mercies of God, or any share in the kingdom of the Messiah. Such was the superstitition, and such the prejudices, of the whole Jewish nation.

To these national prejudices may be added others arising from the peculiar tenets of the different sects that divided among them almost the whole people of the Jews. The most powerful of these were the Pharisees and Sadducees; of whose chief doctrines some notice is taken by the Evangelists, as well as of their rancorous opposition to the Gospel of Christ. The reader who is desirous of seeing a more particular account of the opinions of these and the other sects, may consult the Universal History. It may be sufficient to observe here, that they had all of them many followers, had great authority with the people, and had, especially the Pharisees, a large share in the government of the Jewish state. And though there was a constant hatred and rivalry between them, and consequently so great a zeal in each for the advancement of their particular opinions, that they would compass heaven and earth to gain one
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"proselyte," yet they all agreed with the same ardour to oppose the progress of Christianity.

The idolatrous superstitious of the Heathen world, and the zealous attachment of every nation and city to the worship of their respective tutelary Deities, are too well known to be enlarged upon in this place: but I must observe, that, besides the prejudices of the ignorant and bigoted multitude, there sprung up from these superstitions other obstacles to Christianity no less formidable, though of a different kind: for many religious rites and ceremonies having, either by prescription, or the policy of legislators, been mixed and interwoven with the administration of civil affairs, the worship of the Gods was become not only an essential part of the constitution, but the great engine of government in most states and kingdoms. Thus, among the Greeks and other nations, omens and oracles; among the Romans, auspices, auguries, and sacrifices, either of thanksgiving, or propitiation; were often very successfully employed upon great and important occasions: on which account, all the Roman emperors, who had appropriated to themselves the authority of the whole empire, formerly divided among several officers, after the examples of Julius Cæsar and Augustus, either actually took upon them the office, or at least the title, of "Pontifex Maximus," chief priest; that is, according to the definition of Feustus, "Judex atque arbiter rerum humanarum divinarumque;" the judge and arbitrator of human and divine affairs. And hence those wise, as well as humane emperors, Trajan and the two Antonines, might possibly think themselves under a double obligation as chief magistrates and chief priests, of persecuting the Christians, whom they apparently considered as innovators with regard to the constitution as well as religion of the empire. This, though no sufficient excuse for such barbarous and inhuman proceedings, may serve, however, to let down the attonishment we are apt to fall into, upon hearing that so virtuous a religion as that of the Christians was persecuted by so virtuous a prince as Antoninus the Philosopher; though it must at the same time be acknowledged, that there was in him a great mixture of superstition, however incompatible that is thought to be with philosophy. This may also serve to shew us the distressful situation of Christianity, against whose progress not only the superstitious zeal of the multitude, the laws and policy of almost every state and kingdom, but the seeming duty of even good and just magistrates, were fatally combined.

If, to politic and pious princes, religion and the laws of the state might serve for a reason or pretence for opposing Christianity, to wicked emperors there was yet another motive distinct from any consideration either of duty or policy, or even of their vices; and that was, their own divinity. After all the power and divinity of the Roman people, and their several magistrates, was devolved upon the single person of the emperor, the senators, by a transition natural enough to slaves, from counsellors becoming flatterers, had not only established by law the absolute authority of their tyrants, but
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but so far consecrated their persons, even in their life-time, as to erect altars to their names, to place their statues among those of the Gods, and to offer to them sacrifices and incense. Though these impious honours were conferred upon all alike, without any distinction of good or bad; yet the latter, not being able from their own merit to acquire to themselves any respect or veneration, had nothing to stand upon but the power and prerogatives of their office; of which, therefore, they became so jealous, as to make it dangerous for any one to neglect paying them those outward honours, however extravagant and profane, which either the laws or their own mad pride required. And hence adoring the image of the emperors, swearing by their names, &c. became a mark and test of fidelity, with which all who fought their favour, or feared their power, most religiously complied; all those especially who held any magistracy under them, or governed the provinces. And these, by their offices, were yet farther obliged to take care that, within the limits of their jurisdiction, that most essential part of the duty of subjects to bad princes, exterior respect and veneration, was most punctually paid. Now, as the doctrines of Christ were entirely opposite to all kinds of idolatry, Christians were by this test, with which they could by no means comply, rendered liable to the guilt of that kind of treason which tyrants and their ministers never pardon, how apt sooner they may be to overlook crimes against religion or the state. And that this test was among others made use of against the professors of Christianity, even in the best reigns, is evident from a passage in the famous epistle of Pliny to Trajan, in which he relates his manner of proceeding with those who offered to clear themselves of the charge or suspicion of being Christians, in the following words: "Propositus est bellius sine auctore, multorum nonima continens, qui negarent se esse Christianos, aut fuisset: cum praebente me Deos appellaret, & imaginis tuæ (quam propter hoc jusséram cum simulacris numinum afféribi) thure ac vino supplicaret; præterea maledicerent Christo; quo-rum nihil cogi posse dicuntur, qui sunt revera Christiani. Ergo dimittendos putavi. Alii ab indicem nominati, eis se Christianos dixerunt, & max negaverunt; fuisset quidem, sed deistis; qui-dam ante triumnum, quidam ante plures annos: non nemo etiam ante viginti quoque. Omnes, & imaginem tuam, deorumque simulacra, venerati sunt; it & Christo maledixerunt. — A paper was set forth, without a name, containing a list of many people, who denied that they either were or ever had been Christians. Now these persons having, after my example, invoked the Gods, 'and with wine and incense paid their devotions to your image, which I had caused to be brought forth for that purpose, with the images of the Gods'), and having moreover blasphemed Christ ('any one of which things it is said no real Christian can be compelled to do'), I thought proper to dismiss them. Others, who had been informed against, confessed that

* Epist. xxvii. 1. 10.
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"they
they were once Christians, but denied their being so now, say: ing they had quitted that religion, some three years, others more, and some few even twenty years ago. All these worshiped both your image, and those of the Gods, and did also blaspheme Christ.

To these powerful patrons of superstition, and enemies of the gospel, may be added others, whose authority, though inferior and servile to the former, at least within the limits of the Roman empire, was, however, of very great and extensive influence; I mean the priests, diviners, augurs, and managers of oracles, with all the subordinate attendants upon the temples and worship of almost an infinite number of deities; and many trades, if not entirely depending upon that worship, yet very much encouraged and enriched by it, such as flutuaries, shrine-makers, breeders of victims, dealers in frankincense, &c. All of whom were by interest, to say nothing of religion, strongly devoted to idolatry.

It may not be improper also, under the article of religion, to mention the Circensian, and other spectacles exhibited among the Romans, the four great games of Greece, the Olympian, Pythian, Ithomian, and Nemean; with many others of the same kind, celebrated with great magnificence in every country, and almost every city of Greece both in Europe and Asia; all of which were so many religious festivals, which by the allurements of pomp and pleasure, not to mention the glory and advantages acquired by the conquerors in those games, attached many to the cause of superstition.

But superstition, universal and powerful as it was, by its union with the interests and pleasures of a considerable part of mankind, was not the only nor the greatest obstacle that Christianity had to contend with. Vice leagued against it a still greater number. The ambitious and luxurious, the debauched and lewd, the avaricious and extortioner, the unjust and oppressive, the proud and the revengeful, the fraudulent and rapacious, were all foes to a religion that taught humility and moderation, temperance and purity even of thought, liberality and clemency, justice, benevolence, and meekness, the forgiving of injuries, and "the doing that only to others, which we would have them to do to us." Virtue agreeable indeed to reason, and discoverable in part by the clear light of nature; but the difficulty lay in the bringing thse to bear reason, who had abandoned themselves to superstition. And how was the almost extinguished ray of nature to be perceived, among the many false and glaring lights of religion, opinion, and philosophy, which recommended and sanctified many enormous vices? The Gods, like dissolute and despotic princes, who have often been very properly compared to them, were themselves the great patrons and examples of tyranny, lewdness, and revenge, and almost all kinds of vice. And opinion had magnified Alexander, and deified Julius Caesar, for an ambition, which ought to have hindered them the object of the detestation and curfes of all mankind.

Neither
Neither was philosophy so great a friend to virtue, or enemy to vice, as the pretended to be. Some philosophers, on the contrary, denied the being, at least the providence of God, and future rewards and punishments; and, as a just consequence of that opinion, placed the felicity of mankind in the enjoyments of this world, that is, in sensual pleasures. Others, affecting to doubt and question every thing, took away the distinction of virtue and vice, and left their disciples to follow either as their inclination directed. These were, at least indirectly, preachers of vice. And among those who undertook to lead their disciples to the temple of virtue, there were so many different, and even inconsistent opinions, some of them so paradoxical and absurd, others so subtitled and mysterious, and all of them so erroneous in their first principles, and so defective in many great points of religion and morality, that it is no wonder that philosophy, however venerable in her original, and noble in her pretensions, degenerated into speculation, sophistry, and a science of disputation, and from a guide of life became a pedantic president of the schools, from whence arose another kind of adversaries to the Gospel; a set of men, who, from seeing farther than the vulgar, came to fancy they could see every thing, and to think every thing subject to the discussion of reason, and carrying their inquiries into the nature of God, the production of the universe, and the essence of the human soul, either framed upon each of these, or adopted some quaint or mysterious system, by which they pretended to account for all the operations of nature, and measure all the actions of God and man. And as every sect had a system peculiar to itself, so did each endeavour to advance their own upon the ruins of all the rest; and this engaged them in a perpetual war with one another; in which, for want of real strength and solid arguments, they were reduced to defend themselves and attack their adversaries with all those arts which are commonly made use of to cover or supply the deficiency of sense and reason; sophistry, declamation, and ridicule, obstinacy, pride, and rancour. Men of this turn, accustomed to reason upon topics in which reason is bewildered; so proud of the sufficiency of reason, as to think they could account for every thing; so fond of their own systems, as to dread conviction more than error; and so habituated to dispute pertinaciously, to assert boldly, and to decide magisterially upon every question, that they were almost incapable of any instruction; could not but be averse to the receiving for their master a crucified Jew, and for teachers a parcel of low obscure persons of the fame nation, who professed to “glory in the crofs of Christ, to know nothing but him crucified,” and to neglect and despise the so-much-admired wisdom of this world, and who moreover taught points never thought of by the philosophers, such as the redemption of mankind, and the resurrection of the dead, and who, though far from forbidding the due exercise of reason, yet confined it within its proper bounds, and exhorted their disciples to submit with all humility, and to rely with all confidence upon the wisdom of God, instead of pretending to arraign
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arraign his proceedings, "whose judgments are unsearchable, and whose ways are past finding out."

From this view of the Jewish and Gentile world, it is evident that every thing that most strongly influences and tyrannizes over the mind of man, religion, custom, law, policy, pride, interest, vice, and even philosophy, was united against the gospel; enemies in their own nature very formidable and difficult to be subdued, had they even suffered themselves to be attacked upon equal ground, and come to a fair engagement. But not relying upon their own strength only (for prejudice and falsehood are always diffident and fearful), they entrenched themselves behind that power which they were in possession of, and rendered themselves inaccessible, as they imagined, to Christianity, by planting round them not only all kinds of civil discouragements, but even torments, chains, and death; terrors, which no one could despise, who had any views of ambition or interest, and who was not even contented to resign what he might otherwise have enjoyed in peace, and without a crime, his reputation, his ease, his fortune, and his life. These were the difficulties which Christianity had to struggle with for many ages, and over which she at length so far prevailed as to change the whole face of things, overturn the temples and altars of the gods, silence the oracles, humble the impious pride of emperors, those earthly and more powerful deities, confound the presumptuous wisdom of philosophers, and introduce into the greatest part of the known world a new principle of religion and virtue: an event apparently too unwieldy and stupendous to have been brought about by mere human means, though all the accomplishments of learning, all the insinuating and persuasive powers of eloquence, joined to the profoundest knowledge of the nature and duty of man, and a long practice and experience in the ways of the world, had all met in the apostles. But the apostles, excepting Paul, were ignorant and illiterate, bred up for the most part in mean occupations, natives and inhabitants of a remote province of Judea, and sprung from a nation hated and despised by the rest of mankind. So that allowing it possible, that a change so total and universal might have been effected by the natural powers and faculties of men, yet had the apostles none of those powers, St. Paul alone excepted, who was indeed eloquent and well versed in all the learning of the Jews; that is, in the traditions and doctrines of the Pharisees (of which hef he was); a learning, which, instead of afflicting him in making converts to the Gospel, gave him the strongest prejudices against it, and rendered him a furious persecutor of the Christians. Yet of this eloquence, and of this learning, he made no use in preaching the Gospel: on the contrary, * "When I came to you," says he to the Corinthians, "I came not with excellency of speech, or of wisdom, declaring to you the testimony of God: for I des-" terminated not to know any thing among you, save Jesu Christ, * and him crucified: and I was with you in weakness and in fear,

* 1 Cor. ii. 1-4.
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and in much trembling; and my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom. And in the preceding chapter, comparing the insufficiency of the preachers of the Gospel with the success of their preaching, he attributes the latter to the true cause, the wisdom and power of God, in these expressive words:—

"For Christ sent me to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, but with the power of God. For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us, who are saved, it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom. But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God; because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men: for ye see your calling, brethren, that not many wise men after the flesh, nor many mighty, nor many noble, are called. But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty; and the base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen; yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are, that no flesh should glory in his presence."

This is a true representation of the condition of the first preachers of the Gospel, and their opposers. The latter were possessed of all the wisdom, authority, and power of the world; the former were ignorant, contemptible, and weak. Which of them, then, according to the natural course of human affairs, ought to have prevailed? The latter, without all doubt. And yet not the apostles only, but all history and our own experience assure us, that the ignorant, the contemptible, and the weak, gained the victory from the wise, the mighty, and the noble. To what other cause, then, can we attribute a success so contrary to all the laws by which the events of this world are governed, than to the interposition of God, manifested in the resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ, and the miraculous powers conferred upon his apostles and disciples? a cause adequate to all the effects, however great and astonishing. For, with these ample credentials from the King of Heaven, even a poor fisherman of Galilee might appear with dignity before the high priest and Sanhedrim of the Jews; and boldly that "God had made that name "Jesus, whom they had crucified, both Lord and Christ;" and make good his assertion by proving that he was risen from the dead, strange..."
and supernatural as it might seem, not only by his own testimony and that of his brethren the apostles and disciples of Jesus, by whom he was seen "for forty days after his passion," but by innumerable instances of a power, superior in like manner to nature, derived upon them from him, and exercised by them in his name. From the Scriptures also might the same ignorant and illiterate Galileans shew, against the traditions of the Elders, the learning of the Scribes, and the prejudices of the whole Jewish nation, that the humble suffering Jesus was the mighty triumphant Messiah, spoken of by the prophets; since if, with reference to the interpretations of those prophecies, any doubt could have arisen among the people to whose expositions they should submit, to those of the Scribes and Elders, or those of the Apostles; the latter had to produce, in support of their authority, the attestation of that Holy Spirit, by whom those prophets were inspired, now speaking through their mouths in all the languages of the earth. And with regard to that other point, of still harder digestion to the Jews, namely, the calling the uncircumcised Gentiles to an equal participation of the kingdom of God, and consequently the abolishing circumcision, and the whole ceremonial law, the Apostles were furnished with an argument, to which all the Rabbins were not able to reply, by the Holy Ghost beconfig upon the Gentile converts to Christianity the same heavenly gifts as he had conferred at the beginning upon the believing Jews.

Invested with such full powers from on high, might these same obscure Jews, notwithstanding the contempt and hatred which all other nations had for that people, undertake and accomplish the arduous and amazing task of preaching the Gospel to all the world. The belief of one God is the fundamental article of all true religion; and the unity of the Godhead is certainly discoverable, and even to be demonstrated by reason. But this article of belief (as I have said before) was not to be found in the religion of any nation, besides the Jews; and long arguments and deductions of reason, by which it was to be demonstrated, were above the capacity of the greatest part of mankind. To prove this important truth, therefore, in a manner easy to be comprehended by the weakest, and yet not to be refuted by the strongest understanding, the apostles and their followers were for many ages endowed, besides all their other miraculous gifts, with a power over devils or demons (the only deities of the Pagans that had any real being), permitted perhaps to shew themselves at that time in extraordinary operations, for the sake of illustrating and proving this great truth. By this power they cast them out of many who were possessed by them, drove them from their temples, groves, and oracles, obliged them to confess their own inferiority, to acknowledge the dominion of Jesus Christ, and to declare his apostles to be "the servants of the most high God, sent to shew "mankind the way of salvation." This power they exercised in the name of Jesus Christ, in order to prove his mediation and intercession.

Acts xvi. 17. See, for many other instances, Whitby's General Preface to the Epistles.
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between God and man, the second article of the Christian creed. And as by this power, thus exercised in the name of Christ, the apostles and their followers were enabled to prove, even to the senses of all mankind, that there is but one God, and one mediator; to from that and other miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit, healing all manner of diseases, speaking with various tongues, prophesying, &c. did they derive to themselves authority to teach the great doctrines of Christianity, repentance, remission of sins, holiness of life, future rewards and punishments, and the resurrection of the dead: of which last, the resurrection of Christ was both an instance and a pledge; as the effusion of the Holy Ghost upon believers was a clear evidence of the efficacy of repentance, and the remission of their sins. And of the necessity of a holy life, and the certainty of future rewards and punishments, nothing could afford a stronger and more convincing argument than the lives and deaths of these ambassadors of God, who were apparently guided into all truth by his inspiration, and who, upon the assurance of a blessed immortality, not only practised all the virtues they preached, but cheerfully underwent all kinds of sufferings, and even death itself.

After this manner were the first preachers of the Gospel weak, ignorant, and contemptible as they were, furnished with strength sufficient to overthrow the "strong holds of Satan," the superstitions, prejudices, and vices of mankind; and by the "demonstration of the power of God," an argument whose conclusiveness was visible to the dullest capacity, enabled to confound the subtleties of the most disputatious, and surpass the wisdom of the wisest philosophers, in establishing religion upon the belief of one God; grounding the obligation to virtue upon its true principle, the command of God; and deriving the encouragement to holiness of life from the promises of God, to reward those who should obey his will with eternal happiness, obtained by the sacrifice and mediation of Jesus Christ. Which last point, together with the doctrine of providence, the free agency of man, and afflicting grace, how muchsoever beyond the ken of reason, yet could not but be admitted by all reasonable men for certain truths, as standing upon the authority of persons visibly commissioned and inspired by God. For what conclusion of reason, what maxim in philosophy, is more evident, than that "men speaking by the immediate inspiration of God, cannot lie?" And is not the divine inspiration of the apostles to be inferred with as much certainty, from the mighty wonders they performed, as the divine creation of the world from the stupendous beauty, order, and magnificence, of the universe? Every effect must have a cause; and a supernatural effect must have a cause superior to nature; and this cause can be no other than God. There may be, indeed, and we are authorized by the Scriptures to say there are, many beings both good and bad, endowed with faculties and powers exceeding those of man; but these beings are, doubtless, limited as well as man in the exercise of those powers, and subjected to laws prescribed to them by their
great Creator; which, in respect to them, may be likewise styled the laws of nature. From whence it follows, that they cannot break in upon or disturb the laws of any other system of creatures, though inferior to them, without the permission of the Universal King; who, nevertheless, may certainly make use of them as instruments to bring about his wise purposes, even beyond the bounds of their proper spheres. Thus, in establishing Christianity, he thought fit to employ the ministration not of angels only, but of demons, though in such a manner as to leave no doubt of their subjection to his sovereignty. The angels were, upon many occasions, affixing to Christ and his apostles; the demons trembled, and fled at their command; and both of them, the one by their suberviency, and the other by the fertility of their obdience, manifestly declared Christ and his apostles to be vested with an authority and power derived from their Lord and King. So that mankind, seeing the apostles possessed of a power plainly paramount to the powers of all other known beings, whether angels or demons, could no more question their being commissioned and inspired by God, than doubt whether the magnificent frame of the universe, with all the various natures belonging to it, was the workmanship of his Almighty hands.

Thus by arguing from effects, notorious and visible effects, to causes, the surest methods of investigating and proving some kinds of truths, I have endeavoured to demonstrate (if I may speak without offence) the certainty of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, upon which the whole system of Christianity depends. For if Christ is not risen from the dead, then, as St. Paul says, vain is the hope of Christians, and the preaching of the apostles vain; nay, we may go still farther, and pronounce vain the preaching of Christ himself: For had he not risen, and proved himself by many infallible tokens to have risen from the dead, the apostles and disciples could have had no inducement to believe in him, that is, to acknowledge him for a Messiah, the “anointed of God;” on the contrary, they must have taken him for an impostor, and under that persuasion could never have become preachers of the gospel, without becoming enthuasiasts or impostors; in either of which characters it is impossible they should have succeeded to the degree which we are assured they did, considering their natural insufficiency, the strong opposition of all the world to the doctrines of Christianity, and their own high pretensions to miraculous powers, about which they could neither have been deceived themselves, nor have deceived others. Supposing therefore that Christ did not rise from the dead, it is certain, according to all human probability, there could never have been any such thing at all as Christianity, or it must have been stifled soon after its birth. But we know, on the contrary, that Christianity hath already existed above seventeen hundred years. This is a fact about which there is no dispute; but Christians and infidels disagree in accounting for this fact. Christians affirm their religion to be of divine original, and to have grown up and prevailed...
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under the miraculous assistance and protection of God; and this they not only affirm, and offer to prove by the same kind of evidence by which all remote facts are proved, but think it may very fairly be inferred from the wonderful circumstances of its growth and increase, and its present existence. Infidels, on the other hand, assert Christianity to be an imposture, invented and carried on by men. In the maintenance of which assertion, their great argument against the credibility of the resurrection, and the other miraculous proofs of the divine original of the gospel, founded in their being miraculous, that is, out of the ordinary course of nature, will be of no service to them, since they will still find a miracle in their way, namely, the amazing birth, growth, and increase of Christianity. Which facts, though they should not be able to account for them, they cannot however deny. In order, therefore, to destroy the evidence drawn from them by Christians, they must prove them not to have been miraculous, by shewing how they could have been effected in the natural course of human affairs, by such weak instruments as Christ and his apostles (taking them to be what they are pleased to call them, enthusiasts or impostors), and by such means as they were possessed of and employed. But this I imagine to be as much above the capacity of the greatest philosophers to shew, as it is to prove the possibility of executing the proud boast of Archimedes (even granting his postulatum) of moving and wielding the globe of this earth by machines of human invention, and composed of such materials only as nature furnishes for the ordinary use of man.

END OF VOL. V.