

judices, what blindness, must they have, who dare to draw a comparison between the son of *Sophroniscus* and the son of Mary; what distance is there between the one and the other; as *Socrates* died without pain and without disgrace, he found no difficulty in supporting his character to the end; and, if his easy death had not shed a lustre on his life, we might have doubted whether *Socrates* with all his genius was any thing but a sophist. They say he invented morality. Others before him had practised it: he only said what they had done, he only read lessons on their examples. *Aristides* had been just, before *Socrates* explained the nature of justness; *Leonidas* had died for his country, before *Socrates* made it the duty of men to love their country; *Sparta* had been temperate, before *Socrates* praised temperance; Greece had abounded in virtuous men, before he defined virtue. But where could *JESUS* have taken among his countrymen that elevated and pure morality, of which he alone furnished both the precepts and the examples? The most lofty wisdom was heard from the bosom of the most furious fanaticism; and the simplicity of the most heroic virtues honoured the vilest of all people.

The death of *Socrates*, serenely philosophising with his friends, is the most gentle that one can desire; that of *JESUS* expiring in torments, injured, derided, reviled by a whole people, is the most horrible that one can fear. When *Socrates* takes the *poisoned cup*, he blesses him who presents it, and who at the same time *weeps*: *JESUS* in the midst of a horrid punishment prays for his executioners.—Yes: if the life and death of *JESUS CHRIST* are those of a God: shall we say that the history of the gospel is invented at pleasure? My friends, it