

Jewish synagogue in Damascus the Jewish prophets must be circumstantially adduced; but before the Areopagus in the city of Athens, Aretus, a Grecian poet, was better evidence than Isaiah or Daniel—better adapted to the audience and to the design of the speaker.

To return to the design of these four testimonies. The *immediate design* of these writings is to convince men that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah, the Son of God; and the *ultimate design* of them is to put men in possession of life! Matthew's design was, in the first instance, to convince the Jews in Judea—Mark's design was, to convince the Italians or Romans—Luke's design was to convince the Grecians—and John's design was to convince the Asiatics in general of this fact; and if you please, through these finally all nations. Now as the Saviour did not exhibit all the evidence of his mission in any one town, village, or city, or to any one people, it was quite compatible with his example, and with all circumstances, that none of his ambassadors should attempt to lay all the evidences before any one people, whether they preached as Paul, in all nations; or wrote, as these writers, did, for the conviction of different nations and people.

Now to bring all these remarks to bear upon a national and profitable *art of reading* these memoirs, we shall for example, take the testimony of Matthew Levi, and show how a knowledge of his *design* illuminates every page, and contributes to clear and comprehensive views of that religion, in the accomplishment of which he was an active and honored agent. Let the reader suppose that he was possessed of all the facts and documents with which Matthew was furnished, and that he designed to address his countrymen, the Jews, in order to convince them that Jesus of Nazareth, who had, at the time of his writing, finished his earthly career, was that Messiah, the Son of God, which God had long and often promised, and they expected. That he might write with the most effect, he would take into view the circumstances of the Jews at his time of writing. He would place before them their different sects and prejudices, the popular errors and the popular truths of the time; and being fully acquainted with these, he would select out of the information with which he was furnished such facts and documents as would suit all the circumstances of the case. Being aware that the whole nation expected a prince and a deliverer to arise from among them, and from the house of King David, he would conclude, that unless he could satisfactorily prove that this Jesus was legitimately descended from Abraham through David, all further attempts to convince his countrymen would be in vain. For this purpose, then, he would apply to the Registrar's office for a copy of the roll of the lineage of the house of David, well attested; and from this trace Jesus to David, and thus prove that, in as far as pedigree was concerned, this person had the most legitimate claim upon their faith, as being unquestionably, from the most public and well-attested documents, a descendant of King David. In the next place he would remember, that not only his descent from David, but many circumstances of his nativity and infancy, had been pointed out by the Prophets of his nation; and that the people of his time expected those to be fulfilled in the Messiah. He would therefore introduce those circumstances which had been foretold—such as the character of his mother, the place of his nativity, the slaughter of the infants in Ramah, his flight into Egypt, his