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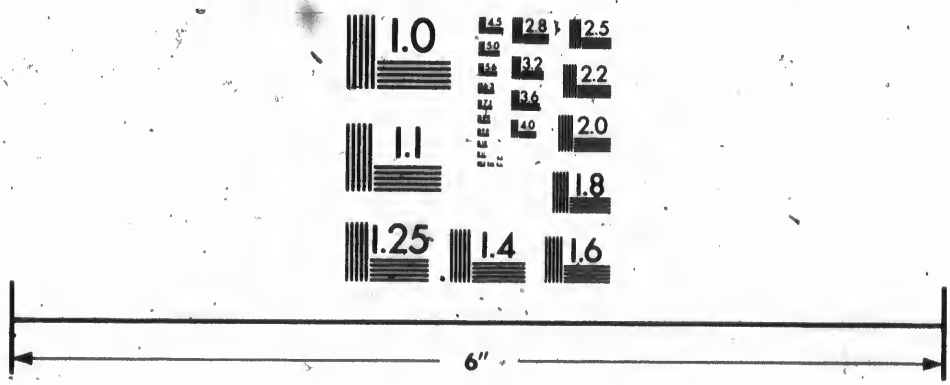

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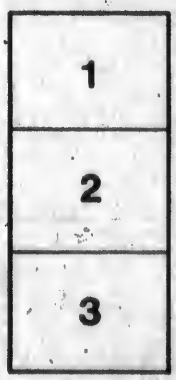

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A

SUMMARY

OF THE

PRINCIPAL EVIDENCES

FOR THE

TRUTH AND DIVINE ORIGIN

OF THE

Christian Revelation.

...

DESIGNED PARTICULARLY

FOR THE USE OF YOUNG PERSONS.

.....

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

A POEM ON DEATH.

BY BIELBY PORTEUS, D. D.

BISHOP OF LONDON.

A NEW EDITION.

MONTREAL:

PRINTED BY NAHUM MOWER.

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1810.

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PREFACE.

FOR readers of a mature age and judgment, there are ſo many excellent treatiſes on the Evidences of the Chriſtian Religion already publiſhed, that it is perfectly needleſs to add to their number; but it appeared to me, that there was ſtill wanting ſomething in a ſhorter, a cheaper, a more methodical and familiar form. This is a time, when it is peculiarly proper to communicate to young people the chief grounds of their faith, and to lay the foundations of a firm belief in the Chriſtian Revelation; leaving it to

themselves to add to these primary evidences which reason furnishes in favor of Christianity, those further proofs of its truth, which I trust they will hereafter derive from still higher and better sources; from an intimate acquaintance with the sacred writings; from the illuminating and sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit upon their understandings and their hearts; and from the experimental conviction which I hope they will hereafter have, of the divine efficacy of the gospel in purifying their affections, in remedying the disorders of their corrupt nature, and in communicating to them those two invaluable blessings, peace of conscience, and holiness of life.

In a concern of such infinite importance, no species of evidence ought to be discouraged, depreciated, or withheld. And at this time more particularly, when new compendiums of infidelity, and new libels on Christianity

are diſperſed continually, with indefatigable induſtry, through every part of the kingdom, and every claſs of the community, it ſeems highly expedient to meet theſe hoſtile attempts with publications of an oppoſite tendency, and to fortify the minds of thoſe who are juſt entering into the world, by plain and conciſe ſtatements of the principal arguments in favor of Chriſtianity, againſt the efforts that will be made to miſlead their judgments, corrupt their principles, and ſhake their belief in the goſpel of Chriſt.

With a view therefore of fulfilling this duty towards the youth, more immediately under my care, I have drawn up the following little tract. My chief object has been to collect together into one view, and to compreſs together in a narrow compaſs, all the moſt forcible arguments for the truth of our religion, which are to be found in our beſt writers, with the ad-

dition of ſuch obſervations of my own as occurred to me in the proſecution of the work. All theſe I have claſſed under a few ſhort, clear, diſtinct propoſitions; an arrangement which I have always found moſt convenient for the inſtruction of youth, and beſt calculated to aſſiſt their memories, to make ſtrong and durable impreſſions on their underſtandings, and to render the important truths of religion moſt eaſy to be comprehended and retained in their minds. After this, I would recommend it to my young readeas, as they advance in life, to have recourſe to one or more of the well known treatiſes of Grotius, Addiſon, Clarke, Leſlie, Lardner, Beattie and Paley, on the Evidences of Chriſtianity; to ſome of whom I am myſelf much indebted, and to whoſe maſterly writing on that ſubject, this little work was meant only as a kind of elementary introduction.

I muſt however warn my young diſciples, that when they have, by the courſe of reading here ſuggeſted, arrived at a full conviction of the divine origin of the Chriſtian Religion, they muſt not imagine that their taſk is finiſhed, and that nothing more is required at their hands. The moſt important part of their buſineſs ſtill remains to be accompliſhed. After being ſatisfied that the Chriſtian Religion comes from God, their next ſtep is to inquire carefully what that religion is, what the doctrines are which it requires to be believed, and what the duties which it requires to be performed. For this purpoſe it may be uſeful for them to begin with Gaſtrell's Chriſtian Inſtitutes, and Archbiſhop Secker's Lectures on the church catechism. In the firſt they will find the doctrines and duties of the Chriſtian Religion ranged under their proper heads in the very words of ſcripture, and in the other they will ſee moſt of

them clearly and concisely explained by a most able, pious, and judicious divine. After this they may proceed to study the scriptures themselves, and more particularly the New Testament, with the assistance of Dr. Doddridge's Family Expositor, to which they should add some of the sermons of our best divines, Bishop Taylor, Barrow, Sherlock and Secker.

When they have thus learnt what Christianity is, and what it demands from them, they will feel it to be their indispensible duty (as it is unquestionably their truest interest) to believe implicitly all the doctrines, and obey with cheerfulness all the commands, of their Maker and Redeemer; to sacrifice to them, and to their own future eternal welfare, all their corrupt passions and irregular desires; to preserve themselves unspotted from the world, and to implore the assistance of divine grace, co-operating

with their own moſt earneſt endeavors, to render their belief in the goſpel effectual to the ſanctification of their hearts, the regulation of their lives, and the ſalvation of their ſouls.

I have only to add, that although this little treatiſe is deſigned principally for the inſtruction of Youth, yet conſidered as a kind of recapitulation of the Evidences of Chriſtianity, it may be found of ſome uſe to perſons of a more mature age, by refreſhing their memories, and bringing back to their recollection thoſe proofs of their religion, which they have formerly read in larger and more elaborate works, and which they will here ſee brought together into one point of view.

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SUMMARY

OF THE

PRINCIPAL EVIDENCES

FOR THE

TRUTH AND DIVINE ORIGIN

OF THE

CHRISTIAN REVELATION.

THE method I intend to purſue in this treatiſe, is to preſent to my young readers the following ſeries of propoſitions, and then to prove diſtinctly the truth of each.

I. From considering the state of the heathen world, before the appearance of our Lord upon earth, it is evident that there was an absolute necessity for a revelation of God's will, and, of course, a great probability beforehand that such a revelation would be granted.

II. At the very time when there was a general expectation in the world of some extraordinary personage making his appearance in it, a person called Jesus Christ did actually appear upon earth, asserting that he was the Son of God, and that he was sent from heaven to teach mankind true religion; and he did accordingly found a religion, which from him was called the Christian Religion, and which has been professed by great numbers of people from that time to the present.

III. The books of the New Testament were written by those persons to

whom they are aſcribed, and contain a faithful hiſtory of Chriſt and his religion: and the account there given of both, may be ſecurely relied upon as ſtrictly true.

IV. The ſcriptures of the Old Teſtament (which are connected with thoſe of the New) are the genuine writings of thoſe whoſe names they bear, and give a true account of the Moſaic diſpenſation, of the hiſtorical facts, the divine commands, the moral precepts, and the prophecies which they contain.

V. The character of Chriſt, as repreſented in the goſpels, affords very ſtrong ground for believing that he was a divine perſon.

VI. The ſublimity of his doctrines and the purity of his moral precepts confirm this belief.

VII. The rapid and ſucceſsful propagation of the goſpel by the firſt teachers of it, through a large part of the world, is a proof that they were favored with divine aſſiſtance and ſupport.

VIII. A compariſon betwixt Chriſt and Mahomet and their reſpective religions, leads us to conclude, that as the religion of the latter was confeſſedly the invention of man, that of the former was derived from God.

IX. The predictions delivered by the ancient prophets, and fulfilled in our Saviour, ſhow that he was the Meſſiah expected by the Jews, and that he came into the world by divine appointment, to be the great deliverer and redeemer of mankind.

X. The prophecies delivered by our Saviour himſelf, prove that he was endued with the foreknowledge

of future events, which belongs only to God and to those inspired by him.

XI. The miracles performed by our Lord, demonstrate him to have possessed divine power.

XII. The resurrection of our Lord from the dead, is a fact fully proved by the clearest evidence, and is the seal and confirmation of his divinity, and of the truth of his religion.

These are the several points I shall undertake to prove in the following pages: and if these are clearly made out, there can be nothing more wanting to satisfy every reasonable man, that the Christian Religion is a true revelation from God.

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PROPOSITION I.

From considering the state of the heathen world, before the appearance of our Lord upon earth, it is evident that there was an absolute necessity for a divine revelation of God's will, and, of course, a great probability beforehand, that such a revelation would be granted.

THEY who are acquainted with ancient history, know perfectly well that there is no one fact more certain and more notorious than this: That for many ages before our Saviour appeared upon earth, and at the time he actually did appear, the whole heathen world, even the politest and most civilized, and most learned nations, were, with a very few exceptions, sunk in the most deplorable ignorance of every

thing relating to God and to religion; in the groſſeſt ſuperſtition and idolatry, and in the moſt abominable corruption and depravity of manners.— They neither underſtood the true nature of God, nor the attributes and perfections which belong to him, nor the worſhip that was acceptable to him, nor the moral duties which he required from his creatures; nor had they any clear notions or firm belief of the immortality of the ſoul, and a ſtate of rewards and puniſhments in another life. They believed the world to be under the direction of a vast multitude of gods and goddeſſes, to whom they aſcribed the worſt paſſions and the worſt vices, that ever diſgraced human nature. They worſhipped alſo dead men and women, birds and beaſts, inſects and reptiles, (eſpecially that moſt odious and diſguſting reptile the ſerpent) together with an infinite number of idols, the work of their own hands, from vari-

ous materials, gold, silver, wood, and stone. With respect to their own conduct, they were almost universally addicted to the most shocking and abominable vices; even many of their solemn religious ceremonies and acts of devotion were scenes of the grossest sensuality and licentiousness. Others of them were attended with the most savage and cruel superstitions, and sometimes even with human sacrifices.

The description given of the ancient Pagans by St. Paul, in the first chapter of his epistle to the Romans, is strictly and literally true. "They were filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, uncleanness, maliciousness, full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventers of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, cove-

nant breakers, without natual affection, implacable, unmerciful."

These are not the mere general declamations of a pious man against the wickedness of the times; they are faithful and exact pictures of the manners of the age, and they are fully and amply confirmed by contemporary heathen writers. They are applied also to a people, highly civilived, ingenious, learned, and celebrated for their proficiency in all liberal arts and sciences. What, then, must have been the depravity of the most barbarous nations, when such were the morals of the most polite and virtuous?

There were, it is true, among all the ancient nations, and especially among the Greeks and Romans, some wise and comparatively good men, called philosophers, who had juster notions of morality and religion than the rest of the world, and preserved

themselves to a certain degree unpolluted by the general corruption of the times. But these were few in proportion to the great bulk of mankind, and were utterly unable to produce any considerable change in the prevailing principles and manners of their countrymen. They themselves had but very imperfect and erroneous notions respecting the nature and attributes of God, the worship he required, the duties and obligations of morality, the method of God's governing the world, his design in creating mankind, the original dignity of human nature, the state of corruption and depravity into which it afterwards fell; the particular mode of divine interposition necessary for the recovery of the human race; the means of regaining the favor of their offended Maker, and the glorious end to which God intended finally to conduct them. Even with respect to those great and important doctrines abovementioned, the im-

mortality of the ſoul, the reality of a future ſtate, and the diſtribution of rewards and puniſhments hereafter, they were full of doubt, uncertainty, and heſitation; and rather ardently wiſhed and hoped for, than confidently expected and believed, them. But even what they *did* know with any degree of clearneſs and certainty, they either would not condeſcend, or wanted the ability, to render plain and intelligible to the lower orders of the people. They were deſtitute alſo of proper authority to enforce the virtues they recommended; they had no motives to propoſe powerful enough to overrule ſtrong temptations and corrupt inclinations; their own example, inſtead of recommending their precepts, tended to counteract them; for it was generally (even in the very beſt of them) in direct oppoſition to their doctrines; and the deteſtable vices to which many of them were addicted,

entirely deſtroyed the efficacy of what they taught.

Above all, they were deſtitute of thoſe awful ſanctions of religion, which are the moſt effectual reſtraints on the paſſions and vices of mankind, and the moſt powerful incentives to virtue, the rewards and puniſhments of a future ſtate, which form ſo eſſential and important a part of the Chriſtian diſpenſation.

There was, therefore, a plain and abſolute neceſſity for a divine revelation, to reſcue mankind from that gulf of ignorance, ſuperſtition, idolatry, wickedneſs, and miſery, in which they were almoſt univerſally ſunk; to teach them in what manner, and with what kind of external ſervice, God might moſt acceptably be worſhipped, and what expiation he would accept for ſin; to give them a full aſſurance of a future ſtate and a future judg-

ment; to make the whole doctrine o
religion clear and obvious to all cap
cities; to add weight and authorit
to the plaineſt precepts, and to furni
men with extraordinary and ſuperna
ural aſſiſtance, to enable them t
overcome the corruptions of their na
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worthy of God, and conſonant to a
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hands, that he ſhould thus enlighten
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ground to ſuſpect that ſuch informa
tion and aſſiſtance would be granted
and the wiſeſt of the ancient heathen
themſelves thought it moſt natura
and agreeable to right reaſon to hop
for ſomething of this nature.

You may give over, ſays Socrate
all hopes of amending men's manner
for the future, unleſs God be pleaſe
to ſend you ſome other perſon to in

ſtruct you;* and Plato declares, that whatever is right, and as it ſhould be in the preſent evil ſtate of the world, can be ſo only by the *particular interpoſition of God.*† Cicero has made ſimilar declarations; and Porphyry, who was a moſt inveterate enemy to the Chriſtian Religion, yet confeſſes, that there was wanting *ſome univerſal method of delivering men's ſouls, which no ſect of philoſophy had ever yet found out.*‡

Theſe confeſſions of the great ſages of antiquity, infinitely outweigh the aſſertions of our modern infidels, "that human reaſon is fully ſufficient to teach man his duty, and enable him to perform it; and that, therefore, a divine revelation was perfectly needleſs." It is true, that, in the preſent times, a Deiſt may have tolerably juſt notions of the nature and attributes of

* Plato in Apolog. Socratis.
† Plato de Rep.
‡ Auguſ. in de Civitate Dei, l. 10, c. 32.

the Supreme Being, of the worſhip due to him, of the ground and extent of moral obligation, and even of a future ſtate of retribution. But from whence does he derive theſe notions? Not from the dictates of his own unaſſiſted reaſon, but (as the philoſophiſt Rouſſeau himſelf confeſſes*) from thoſe very ſcriptures which he deſpiſes and reviles, from the early impreſſions of education, from living and converſing in a Chriſtian country, where thoſe doctrines are publicly taught, and where, in ſpite of himſelf, he imbibes ſome portion of that religious knowledge, which the ſacred writings have every where diffuſed and communicated to the *enemies* as well as the friends of the goſpel. But they who were deſtitute of theſe advantages, they who had nothing but reaſon to direct them, and therefore knew what reaſon is capable of doing,

* Vol. ix. p. 71, 12mo. 1764.

when left to itſelf, much better than any modern infidel (who never was, and never can be, preciſely in the ſame predicament ;) theſe men uniformly declare, that the mere light of nature was *not* competent to conduct them into the road of happineſs and virtue ; and that the only *ſure and certain guide* to carry men well through this life *was a divine diſcovery of the truth.** Theſe conſiderations may ſerve to ſhow, that, inſtead of entertaining any unreaſonable prejudices beforehand againſt the poſſibility or probability of any divine revelation whatever, we ought, on the contrary, to be previouſly prepoſſeſſed in favor of it, and to be prepared and open to receive it with candor and fairneſs whenever it ſhould come ſupported with ſufficient evidence ; becauſe, from conſidering the wants of man

* Plato in Phædone.

and the mercy of God, it appears highly probable that ſuch a revelation would *ſome time or other* be vouchſafed to mankind.

PROPOSITION II.

At the very time when there was a general expectation in the world of some extraordinary personage making his appearance in it, a person called Jesus Christ did actually appear upon earth, asserting that he was the Son of God, and that he came from heaven to teach mankind true religion; and he did accordingly found a religion, which from him was called, the Christian Religion, and which has been professed by great numbers of people from that time to the present.

It was necessary just to state this proposition, as the foundation of all the reasoning that is to follow: but the truth of it is so universally acknowledged, that it requires but very few words to be said in support of it.

That there was, about the time of our Saviour's birth, a general expectation ſpread over the eaſtern part of the world, that ſome very extraordinary perſon would appear in Judea, is evident both from the ſacred hiſtory and from Pagan writers. St. Matthew informs us, that when Jeſus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, there came wiſe men (probably men of conſiderable rank and learning in their own country) from the Eaſt, ſaying, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews; for we have ſeen his ſtar in the Eaſt, and are come to worſhip him?" In confirmation of this, two Roman hiſtorians, Suetonius and Tacitus, aſſert that there prevailed at that time, over the whole Eaſt, an ancient and fixed opinion, that there ſhould ariſe out of Judea a perſon who ſhould obtain dominion over the world.

That at this time, when Auguſtus

Cæſar was Emperor of Rome, a perſon called Jeſus Chriſt was actually born in Judea; that he profeſſed to come from heaven to teach mankind true religion, and that he had a multitude of followers; the ſacred hiſtorians unanimouſly affirm, and ſeveral heathen authors alſo bear teſtimony to the ſame facts. They mention the very name of Chriſt, and acknowledge that he had a great number of diſciples, who from him were called Chriſtians. The Jews, though profeſſed enemies to our religion, acknowledge theſe things to be true; and none, even of the earlieſt Pagans who wrote againſt Chriſtianity, ever pretended to queſtion their reality. Theſe things, therefore, are as certain and undeniable as ancient hiſtory, both ſacred and profane, and the concurrent teſtimony both of friends and enemies, can poſſibly make them.

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PROPOSITION III.

he books of the New Teſtament were written by thoſe perſons to whom they are aſcribed, and contain a faithful hiſtory of Chriſt and his religion: and the account there given of both, may be ſecurely relied upon as ſtrictly true.

HE books which contain the hiſ-
ry of Chriſt and of the Chriſtian
eligion, are the four goſpels and the
cts of the Apoſtles. That the goſ-
ls were written by the perſons whoſe
ame they bear, namely, Matthew,
ark, Luke, and John, there is no
ore reaſon to doubt, than that the
iſtories which we have under the
ames of Xenophon, Livy, or Tacitus,
ere written by thoſe authors.

A great many passages are allude to or quoted from the Evangelist exactly as we read them now, by regular succession of Christian wr ters, from the time of the Apostl down to this hour; and at a very ea ly period their names are mentione as the authors of their respective go pels; which is more than can be sa for any other ancient historian wha ever.*

These books have always been co fidered by the whole Christian world from the Apostolic age, as containin a faithful history of their religion, an therefore they ought to be received such; just as we allow the Koran t contain a genuine account of the M hometan religion, and the sacre books of the Bramins to contain true representation of the Hindoo r ligion.

* Lardner's Credibility, b. i. and Paley Evidences, vol. 1.

That all the facts related in these writings, and the accounts given of every thing our Saviour said and did, are also strictly true, we have the most substantial grounds for believing:

For, in the first place, the writers had the very best means of information, and could not possibly be deceived themselves.

And, in the next place, they could have no conceivable inducement for imposing upon others.

St. Matthew and St. John were two of our Lord's Apostles; his constant companions and attendants throughout the whole of his ministry. They were actually present at the scenes which they describe; eye witnesses of the facts, and ear witnesses of the discourses, which they relate.

St. Mark and St. Luke though n themſelves Apoſtles, yet were t contemporaries and companions Apoſtles, and in habits of ſociety a friendſhip with thoſe who had be preſent at the tranſactions which th record. St. Luke expreſsly ſays t in the beginning of his goſpel, whi opens with theſe words: "For much as many have taken in hand ſet forth in order a declaration of th things which are moſt ſurely believ amongſt us: even as *they* deliver them unto us, which from the beg ning were *eye witneſſes and miniſters the word*, it ſeemed good to *me* al *having had perfect underſtanding of things from the very firſt*, to write to thee, in order, moſt excellent T ophilus, that thou mighteſt know t *certainty* of thoſe things wherein th haſt been inſtructed." St. Luke ſo being the author of the Acts of t Apoſtles, we have, for the writers theſe five books, perſons who had t

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most *perfect knowledge* of every thing they relate, either from their own personal observation, or from immediate communications with those who saw and heard every thing that passed.

They could not, therefore, be themselves deceived; nor could they have the least inducement, or the least inclination, to deceive others.

They were plain, honest, artless, unlearned men, in very humble occupations of life, and utterly incapable of inventing or carrying on such a refined and complicated system of fraud, as the Christian Religion must have been if it was not true. There are, besides, the strongest marks of fairness, candor, simplicity and truth throughout the whole of their narratives. Their greatest enemies have never attempted to throw the least stain upon their characters; and how

then, can they be ſuppoſed capable of ſo groſs an impoſition as that of aſſerting and propagating the moſt impudent fiction? They could gain by it neither pleaſure, profit, nor power. On the contrary, it brought upon them the moſt dreadful evils, and even death itſelf. If, therefore, they were cheats, they were cheats without any motive, and without any advantage; nay, contrary to every motive and every advantage that uſually influence the actions of men. They preached a religion which forbids falſehood under pain of eternal puniſhment, and yet, on this ſuppoſition, they ſupported that religion by falſehood; and whilſt they were guilty of the baſeſt and moſt uſeleſs knavery themſelves they were taking infinite pains, and going through the greateſt labor and ſufferings, in order to teach honeſty to all mankind.

Is this credible? Is this possible? Is not this a mode of acting so contrary to all experience, to all the principles of human nature, and to all the usual motives of human conduct, as to exceed the utmost bounds of belief, and to compel every reasonable man to reject at once so monstrous a supposition.

The facts, therefore, related in the Gospels, and in the Acts of the Apostles, even those evidently miraculous, *must* be true; for the testimony of those who *die* for what they assert is evidence sufficient to support *any* miracle whatever. And this opinion of their veracity is strongly confirmed by the following considerations:

There are, in all the sacred writings of the New-Testament, continual allusions and references to things, persons, places, manners, customs and

opinions, which are found to be perfectly conformable to the real ſtate of things, at that time, as repreſented by diſintereſted and contemporary writers. Had their ſtory been a forgery, they would certainly have been detected in ſome miſtake or other concerning theſe incidental circumſtances, which yet they have never once been.

Then, as to the facts themſelves which they relate, great numbers of them are mentioned and admitted both by Jewiſh and Roman hiſtorians; ſuch as the ſtar that appeared at our Saviour's birth, the journey of the wiſe men to Bethlehem, Herod's murder of the infants under two years old, many particulars concerning John the Baptiſt and Herod, the crucifixion of our Lord under Pontius Pilate, and the earthquake and miraculous darkneſs which attended it. Nay, even

many of the miracles which Jesus himself wrought, particularly the curing the lame and blind, and casting out devils, are, as to the *matters of fact*, expressly owned and admitted by several of the earliest and most implacable enemies of Christianity. For though they ascribed these miracles to the assistance of evil spirits, yet they allowed that the miracles themselves were actually wrought.*

This testimony of our adversaries, even to the miraculous parts of the sacred history, is the strongest possible confirmation of the truth and authority of the whole.

It is also certain, that the books of the New-Testament have come down to the present times without any ma-

* Clarke's Evidences of Nat. and Rev. Religion.

terial alteration or corruption; and that they are in all essential points, the same as they came from the hands of their authors.

That in the various transcripts of these writings, as in all other ancient books, a few letters, syllables, or even words, may have been changed, we do not pretend to deny; but that there has been any designed or fraudulent corruption of any considerable part, especially of any doctrine, or any important passage of history, no one has ever attempted, or been able to prove. Indeed it was absolutely impossible. There can be no doubt but that, as soon as any of the original writings came out of the hands of their authors, great numbers of copies were immediately taken, and sent to all the different Christian churches. We know that they were publicly read in the religious assemblies of the

first Christians. We know, also, that they were very soon translated into a variety of foreign languages, and these ancient versions (many of which still remain) were quickly dispersed into all parts of the known world; nay even several of the original manuscripts remained to the time of Tertullian, at the end of the second century.* There are numberless quotations from every part of the New-Testament by Christian writers, from the earliest ages down to the present, all which substantially agree with the present text of the sacred writings. Besides which, a variety of sects and heresies soon arose in the Christian church, and each of these appealed to the scriptures for the truth of their doctrines. It would, therefore, have been utterly impossible for any one sect to have made any material altera-

* Grotius de Ver. l. 3. s. 2.

tion in the ſacred books, without being immediately detected and expoſed by all the others.* Their mutual jealouſy and ſuſpicion of each other would effectually prevent any groſs adulteration of the ſacred volumes; and with reſpect to leſſer matters, the beſt and moſt able critics have, after the moſt minute examination, aſſerted and proved, that the holy ſcriptures of the New-Teſtament have ſuffered leſs from the injury of time, and the errors of tranſcribers, than any other ancient writings whatſoever.†

* Beattie, Vol. 1. p. 188.

† The style, too, of the gospel (says the amiable and elegant author of the Minstrel) bears intrinsic evidence of its truth. We find there no appearance of artifice or of party spirit; no attempt to exaggerate on the one hand, or depreciate on the other; no remarks thrown in to anticipate objections; nothing of that caution which never fails to distinguish the testimony of those who are conscious of imposture; no endeavor to re-

PROPOSITION IV.

The scriptures of the Old Testament, which are connected with those of the New, are the genuine writings of those whose names they bear, and give a true account of the Mosaic dispensation, as well as of the historical facts, the divine commands, the moral precepts, and the prophecies which they contain.

THAT part of the Bible, which is called the Old Testament, contains a great variety of very different compo-

conciliate the reader's mind to what may be extraordinary in the narrative; all is fair, candid, and simple. The historians make no reflections of their own, but confine themselves to matter of fact, that is, to what they

ſitions, ſome hiſtorical, ſome poetical, ſome moral and perceptive, ſome prophetical; written at different times, and by different perſons, and collected into one volume by the care of the Jews.

That theſe books were all written by thoſe whoſe names they bear, there is not the leaſt reaſonable ground to doubt: they have been always conſidered as the writings of thoſe perſons by the whole Jewiſh nation (who were moſt intereſted in their authenticity, and moſt likely to know the truth) from the earlieſt times down to the preſent: and no proof to the contrary has ever yet been produced.

That theſe writings have com

heard and saw; and honestly record their own mistakes and faults, as well as the other particulars of the story. *Beattie's Evidences* v. 1. *p.* 89.

down to us in the ſame ſtate in which they were originally written, as to all eſſential points, there is every reaſon to believe. The original manuſcripts were long preſerved among the Jews. A copy of the book of the law was preſerved in the ark; it was ordered to be read publicly every ſeven years, at the feaſt of the tabernacles, as well as privately, and frequently, in every Jewiſh family.

There is a copy ſtill extant, of the five books of Moſes (which are called the Pentateuch) taken by the Samaritans, who were bitter enemies to the Jews, and always at variance with them; and this copy agrees, in every material inſtance, with the Jewiſh copy.

Near three hundred years before Chriſt, theſe ſcriptures were tranſlated into Greek, and this verſion (call

ed the Septuagint) agrees alſo in all eſſential articles with the Hebrew original. . This being very widely ſpread over the world, rendered any conſiderable alteration extremely difficult; and the diſperſion of the Jews into all the different regions of the globe, made it next to impoſſible.

The Jews were always remarkable for being moſt faithful guardians of their ſacred books, which they tranſcribed repeatedly, and compared moſt carefully with the originals, and of which they even numbered the words and letters. That they have not corrupted any of their prophetical writings appears from hence; that we prove Jeſus to be the Meſſiah from many of thoſe very prophecies which they have themſelves preſerved; and which (if their invincible fidelity to their ſacred books had not reſtrained them) their hatred to Chriſtianity

would have led them to alter or suppress. And their credit is still further established by this circumstance, that our Saviour, though he brings many heavy charges against the Scribes and Pharisees, yet never once accuses them of corrupting or falsifying any one of their sacred writings.

It is no less certain that these writings give a true and faithful account of the various matters which they contain. Many of the principal facts and circumstances related in them, are mentioned by the most ancient heathen authors. The first origin and creation of the world out of chaos, as described by Moses; the formation of the sun, the moon, and the stars, and afterwards of man himself; the dominion given him over other animals; the completion of this great work in six days; the destruction of the world by a deluge; the

circumſtances of the ark and the dove; the puniſhment of Sodom by fire; the ancient rite of circumciſion; many particulars relating to Moſes, the giving of the law, and the Jewiſh ritual; the names of David and Solomon, and their leagues with the Tyrians: theſe things and many others of the ſame ſort, are expreſsly mentioned, or plainly alluded to, in ſeveral Pagan authors of the higheſt antiquity and the beſt credit. And a very bitter enemy of the Jews as well as Chriſtians, the Emperor Julian, is, by the force of evidence, compelled to confeſs, that there were many perſons among the Jews, divinely inſpired; and that fire from heaven deſcended on the ſacrifices of Moſes and Elijah. Add to this, that the references made to the books of the Old Teſtament, and the paſſages quoted from them by our Saviour and his Apoſtles, is a plain proof, that they acknowledged

the authority of thoſe writings, and the veracity of their authors.

It is true, indeed, that in the hiſtorical books of the Old Teſtament, there are ſome bad characters and bad actions recorded, and ſome very cruel deeds deſcribed; but theſe things are mentioned as mere hiſtorical facts, and by no means approved or propoſed as examples to others. And excepting theſe paſſages, which are comparatively few in number, the reſt of thoſe ſacred books, more eſpecially Deuteronomy, the Pſalms, Proverbs, Eccleſiaſtes, and the Prophets, are full of very ſublime repreſentations of God and his attributes; of very excellent rules for the conduct of life, and examples of almoſt every virtue that can adorn human nature. And theſe things were written at a time when all the reſt of the world, even the wiſeſt and moſt learned, and

most celebrated nations of the earth, were sunk in the grossest ignorance of God and religion; were worshipping idols and brute beasts, and indulging themselves in the most abominable vices. It is a most singular circumstance, that people in a remote, obscure corner of the world, very inferior to several heathen nations in learning, in philosophy, in genius, in science, and all the polite arts, should yet be so infinitely their superiors in their ideas of the Supreme Being, and in every thing relating to morality and religion. This can no otherwise be accounted for, than on the supposition of their having been instructed in these things by God himself, or by persons commissioned and inspired by him; that is, of their having been really favored with those divine revelations, which are recorded in the books of the Old Testament.

With respect to the prophecies which they contain, the truth of a great part of these has been infallibly proved by the exact fulfilment of them in subsequent ages, such as those relating to our Saviour (which will be hereafter specified) to Babylon, to Egypt, to Edom, to Tyre and Sidon. But those which refer more particularly to the dispersion of the Jews are so very numerous and clear, and the accomplishment of them, in the present state of the Jews, is a fact which obtrudes itself, at this moment, so irresistibly upon our senses, that I cannot forbear presenting to the reader some of the most remarkable of those predictions, as they are drawn together by a most able writer.

It was foretold by Moses, that when the Jews forsook the true God, "they should be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth, should be scatter-

ed among the heathen, among all people, from one end of the earth even unto the other; should become an astonishment, a proverb, and a bye-word, among all nations; and that among those nations they should find no ease, neither should the sole of their foot have rest; but the Lord should give them a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind, and send a faintness into their hearts in the land of their enemies: so that the sound of a shaken leaf should chase them."* The same things are continually predicted thro' all the following prophets: "That God would disperse them through the countries of the heathen; that he would sift them among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve; that

* Deut. 28. 25; Lev. 26. 33; Deut. 4. 27; Deut. 28. 64; Deut. 28. 37; Deut. 28. 65; Lev. 26. 36.

in all the kingdoms of the earth, whither they should be driven, they should be a reproach and a proverb, a taunt, and a curse, and an astonishment and a hissing: and that they should abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim."*

Had any thing like this, in the time of Moses or of the prophets, ever happened to any nation, in the world? Or was there in nature any probability that any such thing should ever happen to any people? That when they were conquered by their enemies, and led into captivity, they should neither continue in the place of their captivity, nor be swallowed up and lost among their conquerers, but be scattered

* Ezek. 20. 13; 11, 15; Amos 9. 9; Jer. 24. 9; 29. 18; Hosea 3. 4.

among all the nations of the world, and hated and perſecuted by all nations for many ages, and yet continue a diſtinct people? Or could any deſcription of the Jews, written at this day, be a more exact and lively picture of the ſtate they have now been in for many ages, than theſe prophetic deſcriptions, eſpecially that of Moſes, given more than three thouſand years ago.*

* Clarke's Evidences, p. 176, 277.

PROPOSITION V.

The character of Christ, as represented in the gospels, affords very strong ground for believing that he was a divine person.

WHOEVER considers with attention the character of our blessed Lord, as it may be collected from the various incidents and actions of his life, (for there are no labored descriptions of it, no encomiums upon it, by his own disciples,) will soon discover that it was, in every respect, the most perfect that ever was made known to mankind. If we only say of him what even Pilate said of him, and what his bitterest enemies cannot and do not deny, *that we can find no fault in him*, and that the whole tenor of his life

was entirely blamelefs throughout, this is more than can be faid of any other perfon that ever came into the world. But this is going a very little way indeed in the excellence of his character. He was not only free from every failing, but poffeffed and practifed every imaginable virtue. Towards his heavenly Father he expreffed the moft ardent love, the most fervent yet rational devotion, and displayed in his whole conduct the moft abfolute refignation to his will, and obedience to his commands. His manners were gentle, mild, condefcending, and gracious: his heart overflowed with kindnefs, compaffion, and tendernefs to the whole human race. The great employment of his life was to do good to the bodies and fouls of men. In this all his thoughts and all his time were conftantly and almoft inceffantly occupied. He went about difpenfing his

bleſſings to all around him in a thouſand different ways; healing diſeaſes, relieving infirmities, correcting errors, removing prejudices, promoting piety, juſtice, charity, peace, harmony, among men, and crowding into the narrow compaſs of his miniſtry more acts of mercy and compaſſion than the longeſt life of the moſt benevolent man upon earth ever yet produced. Over his own paſſions he had obtained the moſt complete command; and though his patience was continually put to the ſevereſt trials, yet he was never once overcome; never once betrayed into any intemperance or exceſs in word or deed, "never once ſpake unadviſedly with his lips." He endured the cruelleſt inſults from his enemies with the utmoſt compoſure, meekneſs, patience, and reſignation; diſplayed the moſt aſtoniſhing fortitude under a moſt painful and ignominious death; and, to

crown all, in the very midſt of his torments on the croſs, implored for giveneſs for his murderers, in that divinely charitable prayer, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do."

Nor was his wiſdom inferior to his virtues. The doctrines he taught were the moſt ſublime and the most important that were ever before delivered to mankind, and every way worthy of that God, from whom he profeſſed to derive them, and whoſe Son he declared himſelf to be.

His precepts inculcated the purest and moſt perfect morality: his discourſes were full of dignity and wisdom, yet intelligible and clear: his parables conveyed inſtruction in the moſt pleaſing, familiar, and impreſſive manner: and his anſwers to the many inſidious queſtions that were put to him, ſhowed uncommon quick

neſs of conception, ſoundneſs of judgment, and preſence of mind, completely baffled all the artifices and malice of his enemies, and enabled him to elude all the ſnares that were laid for him. It appears then, even from this ſhort and imperfect ſketch of our Saviour's character, that he was beyond compariſon, the wiſeſt and moſt virtuous perſon that ever appeared; and even his bitterest enemies allow that he was ſo. If, then, he was confeſſedly ſo great and ſo good a man, it unavoidably follows that he muſt be, what he pretended to be, a divine perſon, and of courſe his religion alſo muſt be divine; for he certainly laid claim to a divine original. He aſſerted, that he was the Son of God; that he and his religion came from heaven; and that he had the power of working miracles. If this was not the caſe, he muſt, in a matter of infinite importance, have

afferted what had no foundation in truth. But is ſuch a ſuppoſition as this in the ſmalleſt degree credible? Is it probable, is it conceivable, is it conſiſtent with the general conduct of man, is it reconcilable with the acknowledged character of our Lord, to ſuppoſe, that any thing *but* truth could proceed from him whom his very enemies allow to have been in *every* reſpect (and of courſe in point of veracity) the beſt and moſt virtuous of men? Was it ever known, is there a ſingle inſtance to be produced in the hiſtory of mankind of any one ſo unblemiſhed in morals as Chriſt confeſſedly was, perſiſting for ſo great a length of time as he did in aſſertions, which, if untrue, would be repugnant to the cleareſt principles of morality, and more fatal in their conſequences to thoſe he loved beſt, his followers and his friends? Is it poſſible, that the pure, the upright, the

pious, the devout, the meek, the gentle, the humane, the merciful Jesus, could engage multitudes of innocent and virtuous people in the belief and support of a religion which he knew must draw on them persecution, misery and death, unless he had been authorised by God himself to establish that religion; and unless he was conscious that he possessed the power of amply recompensing those who preferred his religion to every other consideration? The common sense and common feelings of mankind must revolt at such a preposterous idea.

It follows, then, that Christ was, in truth, a divine teacher, and his religion the gift of God.

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PROPOSITION VI.

The ſublimity of our Lord's doctrines and the purity of his moral precepts confirm the belief of his divine miſſion.

THERE is no where to be found ſuch important information, and ſuch juſt and noble ſentiments concerning God and Religion, as in the ſcriptures of the New-Teſtament.

They teach us, in the firſt place, that there is one Almighty Being, who created all things, of infinite power, wiſdom, juſtice, mercy, goodneſs; that he is the governor and preſerver of this world, which he has made; that his providential care is over all his works; and that he more

particularly regards the affairs and conduct of men. They teach us, that we are to worſhip this great Being in ſpirit and in truth; and that the love of him is the firſt and great commandment, the ſource and ſpring of all virtue. They teach us, more particularly, how to pray to him, and for that purpoſe ſupply us with a form of prayer, called the Lord's Prayer, "which is a model of calm and rational devotion, and which for its conciſeneſs, its clearneſs, its ſuitableneſs to every condition, and for the weight, ſolemnity, and real importance of its petitions, is without an equal or a rival."* They teach us moreover, what we all feel to be true, that the human heart is weak and corrupt; that man is fallen from his original innocence; that he is reſtored however, to the favor of God, and the capacity of happineſs, by the death and

* Paley.

mediation and atonement of Christ, who is the way, the truth and the life; and that he will be assisted in his sincere, though imperfect, endeavors after holiness, by the influence of God's Holy Spirit.

They assure us, in fine, that the soul does not perish with the body, but shall pass, after death, into another world; that all mankind shall rise from the grave, and stand before the judgment seat of Christ, who shall reward the virtuous, and punish the wicked, in a future and eternal state of existence, according to their deserts.

These are the great, and interesting, and momentous truths, either wholly unknown, or but very imperfectly known to the world before; and they render the meanest peasant in this country better acquainted with

the nature of the Supreme Being, and the relation in which we ſtand to him, than were any of the greateſt ſages of ancient times.

Equally excellent, and ſuperior to all other rules of life, are the moral precepts of the goſpel.

Our Divine Maſter, in the firſt place, laid down two great leading principles for our conduct, love to God, and love to mankind; and thence deduced (as occaſions offered, and incidents occurred, which gave peculiar force and energy to his in. ſtructions) all the principal duties towards God, our neighbor and our. ſelves.

With reſpect to God, we are commanded to love, fear, worſhip, and obey him; to ſet him always before us; to do all things to his glory; to

ſeek firſt his kingdom and his righteouſneſs; to reſign ourſelves wholly to his pleaſure, and ſubmit, with patience, cheerfulneſs, and reſignation, to every thing he thinks fit to bring upon us.

With regard to our neighbor, we are to exerciſe towards him the duties of charity, juſtice, equity, and truth: we are to love him as ourſelves, and to do unto all men as we would they ſhould do unto us; a moſt admirable rule, which comprehends the ſum and ſubſtance of all ſocial virtue, and which no man can miſtake.

As to thoſe duties which concern ourſelves, we are commanded to keep ourſelves unſpotted from the world, to be temperate in all things, to keep under our body, and bring it into ſubjection, to preſerve an abſolute command over all our paſſions, and

live ſoberly, righteouſly and godly in this preſent world.

Theſe are the general directions given for our conduct in the various ſituations and relations of life. More particular injunctions are given in various parts of ſcripture, eſpecially in our Saviour's admirable ſermon from the mount, where we find a multitude of moſt excellent rules of life, ſhort, ſententious, ſolemn and important, full of wiſdom and dignity, yet intelligible and clear. But the principal excellence of the goſpel morality, and that which gives it an infinite ſuperiority over all other moral inſtructions, is this; that it prefers a meek, yielding, complying, forgiving temper, to that violent, overbearing, inflexible, imperious diſpoſition, which prevails ſo much in the world; that it regulates not merely our actions, but our affections and our inclinations; and

places the check to licentiousness exactly where it ought to be, that is, on the heart; that it forbids us to covet the praise of men in our devotions, our alms, and all our other virtues; that it gives leading rules and principles for all the relative duties of life; of husbands and wives, of parents and children, of masters and servants, of Christian teachers and their disciples, of governors and subjects; that it commands us to be, as it were, lights in the world, and examples of good to all; to injure no man, but to bear injuries patiently; never to seek revenge, but to return good for evil; to love our very enemies, and to forgive others as we hope to be forgiven; to raise our thoughts and views above the present life, and to fix our affections principally on that which is to come.

But besides all this, the *manner* in

which our Lord delivered all his doc-
trines and all his precepts : the con-
cise, sententious, solemn, weighty
maxims into which he generally com-
pressed them : the easy, familiar, nat-
ural, pathetic parables in which he
sometimes clothed them : that divine
authority, and those awful sanctions
with which he enforced them : these
circumstances give a weight, and dig-
nity and importance to the precepts
of holy writ, which no other moral
rules can boast.

If now we ask, as it is very natural
to ask, who that extraordinary person
could be, that was the author of such
uncommonly excellent morality as
this? the answer is, that he was, to
all outward appearance, the reputed
son of a carpenter, living with his fa-
ther and mother in a remote and ob-
scure corner of the world, until the
time that he assumed his public char-

after. "Whence, then, had this man these things, and what wisdom is this that was given unto him?" He had evidently none of the usual means or opportunities of cultivating his understanding or improving his mind. He was born in a low and indigent condition without education, without learning, without any ancient stores from whence to draw his wisdom and his morality, that were at all likely to fall into his hands. You may, perhaps, in some of the Greek or Roman writers, pick out a few of his precepts, or something like them. But what does this avail? Those writers he had never read. He had never studied at Athens or at Rome; he had no knowledge of orators or philosophers. He understood, probably, no language but his own, and had nothing to give him juster notions of virtue and religion than the rest of

his countrymen and persons in his humble rank of life usually had. His fellow laborers in this undertaking, the persons who assisted him during his life, and into whose hands his religion came after his death, were a few fishermen on the Lake of Tiberias, as unlearned and uneducated, and, for the purpose of framing rules of morality, as unpromising, as himself. Is it possible, then, that such men as these could, without any assistance whatever, produce such perfect and incomparable rules of life as those of the gospel; so greatly superior in purity, solidity, perspicuity, and universal usefulness, to all the moral lessons of all the philosophers upon earth put together? Every man of common sense must see that this is absolutely impossible: and that there is no other conceivable way of accounting for this, than by admitting what these

persons constantly affirmed, that their doctrines and their precepts came from the fountain of all perfection, that is, from God himself.

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PROPOSITION VII.

The rapid and ſucceſsful propagation of the goſpel by the first teachers of it, through a large part of the world, is a proof that they were favored with divine aſſiſtance and ſupport.

WE find in the Acts of the Apoſtles, and in their Epiſtles, that the number of converts to the Chriſtian Religion began to increaſe conſiderably almoſt immediately after our Saviour's aſcenſion, and contiuued increaſing to an aſtoniſhing degree, through every age until the final eſtabliſhment of Chriſtianity by Conſtantine. The firſt aſſembly which we meet with of Chriſt's diſciples, and

that a few days after his removal from the world, consisted of one hundred and twenty.* About a week after this, three thousand were added in one day :† and the number of Christians publicly baptized, and publicly associating together, was very soon increased to five thousand.‡ In a few years after this, the converts were described as increasing in great numbers, in great multitudes, and even in myriads, tens of thousands :§ and multitudes both of men and women continued to be added daily; so that within about thirty years after our Lord's death, the gospel was spread, not only throughout almost all parts of the Roman Empire, but even to Parthia and India. It appears from the Epistles written to several churches by the Apostles, that there were

* Acts i. 15. † Acts ii. 41.
‡ Acts iv. 4. § Acts xxi. 20.

large congregations of Christians, both at Rome and in all the principal cities of Greece and Asia. This account is confirmed by contemporary Roman historians; and Pliny, about eighty years after the ascension, complains that this *superstition*,* as he calls it, had seized not cities only, but the lesser towns also, and the open country; that the Pagan temples were almost deserted, the sacred solemnities suspended, and scarce any purchasers to be found for the victims. About twenty years after this, Justin Martyr, a Christian writer, declares, that there was no nation of men, whether Greeks or barbarians, not excepting even those savages that wandered in clans from one region to another, and had no fixed habitation, who had not

* The very name by which *modern Pagans*, as well as their predecessors, the ancient Heathens, describe the Christian Religion.

learned to offer prayers and thanksgivings to the Father and Maker of all, in the name of Jesus, who was crucified. And thus the Church of Christ went on increasing more and more, till, under Constantine, the empire became Christian; at which time there is every reason to believe that the Christians were more numerous and more powerful than the Pagans.

In what manner, now, can we account for this wonderful and unexampled progress of the Christian Religion?

If this religion had set out with flattering the corrupt passions of mankind, and held up to them the prospect of power, wealth, rank, or pleasure as the rewards of their conversion; if it had soothed their vices, humored their prejudices, and encouraged their ancient superstitions; if

the persons who taught it had been men of brilliant talents, or commanding eloquence; if they had first proposed it in times of darkness and ignorance, and among savage and barbarous nations; if they had been seconded by all the influence and authority of the great potentates of the earth, or propagated their doctrines at the head of a victorious army, one might have seen some reason for their extraordinary success.

But it is well known that the very reverse of all this was the real truth of the case. It is well known, that the first preachers of the gospel declared open war against all the follies, the vices, the interests, the inveterate prejudices, and favorite superstitions of the world; that they were (with few exceptions) men of no abilities, no learning, no artificial rhetoric or powers of persuasion; that their doc-

trines were promulgated in an enlightened age, and to the most polished nations, and had all the wit and learning, and eloquence and philosophy of the world to contend with: and that instead of being aided by the authority and influence of the civil powers, they were opposed, and harrassed, and persecuted by them, even to death with the most unrelenting cruelty; and all those who embraced their doctrines were exposed to the same hardships and sufferings.

Is it now credible, that, under these circumstances, twelve poor illiterate fishermen of Galilee should be able, merely by their own natural powers, to spread their new religion in so short a space, over so large a part of the then known world, without any assistance or co-operation from any quarter whatever? Did any thing of the kind

ever happen in the world, before or ince?

It is plainly unprecedented and impossible. As, therefore, all *human* means of ſucceſs were againſt them, what else but *ſupernatural* means were eft for them? It is clear almoſt to demonſtration, that they muſt have been endowed with thoſe miraculous powers, and favored with that divine ſſiſtance to which they pretended, nd which of courſe proved them to e the meſſengers of Heaven.

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PROPOSITION VIII.

A comparison between Christ and Mahomet, and their respective religions, leads us to conclude, that as the religion of the latter is confessedly the invention of man, that of the former is derived from God.

THERE is a religion in the world, called the Mahometan, which is professed in one part of Europe, and most parts of Asia and Africa. The founder of this religion, Mahomet, pretended to be a prophet sent from God; but it is universally allowed, by all who are not Mahometans, and who have searched very carefully into the pretensions of this teacher, that

he was an enthusiast and an impostor and that his religion was a contrivance of his own. Even those persons who reject Christianity, do not think Mahometanism to be true; nor do we ever hear of a Deist embracing it from conviction.

Here, then, we have two religions co-existing together in the world, and both pretending to be revelations from heaven; one of these we know to be a fraud, the other we affirm and believe to be true. If this be so, upon comparing them and their authors together, we may expect to find the most marked and essential difference between them, such a difference as may naturally be supposed to exist between an impostor and a divine teacher, between truth and falsehood. And this, I apprehend, will appear to be actually the case with respect

hrift and Mahomet, and their respective religions.

Mahomet was a man of considerable rank in his own country; he was the grandson of a man of the most powerful and honorable family in Mecca, and, though not born to a great fortune, he soon acquired one by marriage. These circumstances would of themselves, without any supernatural assistance, greatly contribute to the success of his religion. A person considerable by his wealth, of high descent, and nearly allied to the chiefs of his country, taking upon himself the character of a religious teacher in an age of ignorance and barbarism, could not fail of attracting attention and followers.

Christ did not possess these advantages of rank and wealth, and powerful connections. He was born of

parents in a very mean condition of life. His relations and friends were all in the ſame humble ſituation; he was bred up in poverty, and continued in it all his life, having frequently no place where he could lay his head.—A man ſo circumſtanced was not likely, by his own perſonal influence, to force a new religion, much leſs a falſe one, upon the world.

Mahomet indulged himſelf in the groſſeſt pleaſures. He perpetually tranſgreſſed even thoſe licentious rules which he had preſcribed to himſelf. He made uſe of the power he had acquired, to gratify his paſſions without controul, and he laid claim to a ſpecial permiſſion from heaven to riot in the moſt unlimited ſenſuality.

Jeſus, on the contrary, preſerved throughout life the moſt unblemiſhed purity and ſanctity of manners. He

did no ſin, but was perfectly holy and undefiled. Not the leaſt ſtain was ever thrown on his moral character by his bitterest enemies.

Mahomet was violent, impetuous, and ſanguinary.

Chriſt was meek, gentle, benevolent, and merciful.

Mahomet pretended to have ſecret communications with God, and with the angel Gabriel, which no other perſon ever ſaw or heard.

Jeſus was repeatedly declared to be the Son of God by voices from heaven, which were plainly and diſtinctly heard and recorded by others.

The appearance of Mahomet was not foretold by ancient prophecies, nor was there at the time any expectation

of ſuch a perſon in that part of the world.

The appearance of Chriſt upon earth was clearly and repeatedly predicted by ſeveral ancient prophecies, which moſt evidently applied to him and to no other; and which were in the keeping of thoſe who were profeſſed enemies to him and his religion.—And there was at the time of his birth a general expectation over all the Eaſt, that ſome great and extraordinary perſonage would then manifeſt himſelf to the world.

Mahomet never preſumed to foretel any future events, for this plain reaſon, becauſe he could not foreſee them; and had he foretold any thing which did not come to paſs, it muſt have entirely ruined his credit with his followers.

Chriſt foretold many things which did actually come to paſs, particularly his own death and reſurrection, and the deſtruction of Jeruſalem.

Mahomet never pretended to work miracles; on the contrary, he expreſſly diſclaimed any ſuch power, and makes ſeveral labored and awkward apologies for not poſſeſſing it.

Jeſus, we all know, worked a great number of the moſt aſtoniſhing miracles in the open face of day, and in the ſight of great multitudes of people. He made the deaf to hear, the dumb to ſpeak, the lame to walk, the blind to ſee, and even the dead to riſe from the grave.

Mahomet, during the firſt twelve years of his miſſion, made uſe only of argument and perſuaſion, and in con-

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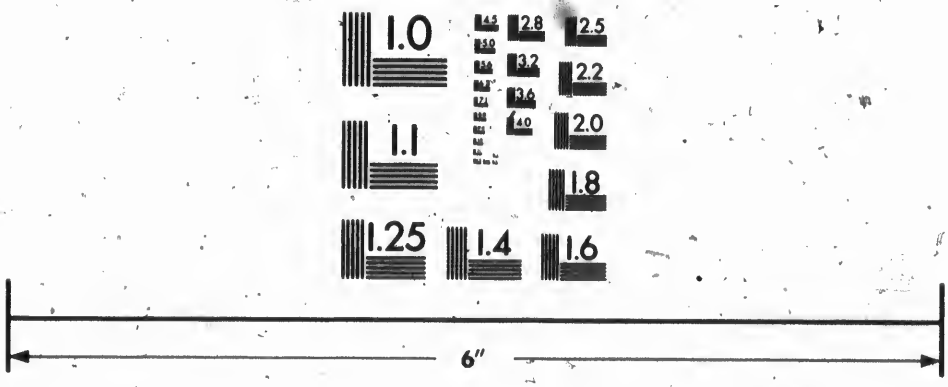

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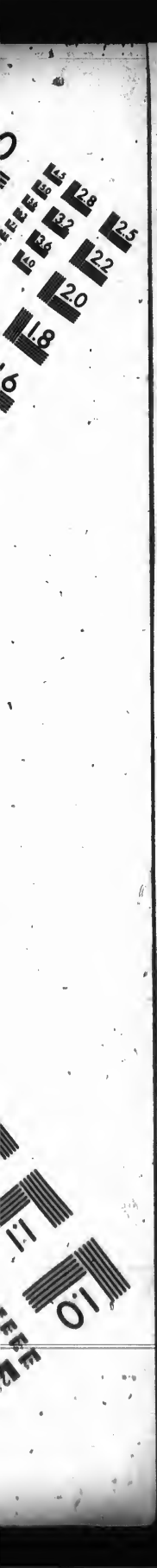
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ſequence of that gained very few converts. In three years he made only fourteen proſelytes, and in ſeven only eighty-three men and eighteen women.

In the ſame ſpace of time our Saviour and his Apoſtles converted thouſands and tens of thouſands, and ſpread the Chriſtian Religion over a great part of Aſia.

Mahomet told the Jews, the Chriſtians, and the Arabs, that he taught no other religion than that which was originally taught to their forefathers, by Abraham, Iſmael, Moſes, and Jeſus. This would naturally prejudice them in favor of his religion.

Chriſt preached a religion which directly oppoſed the moſt favorite opinions and prejudices of the Jews, and ſubverted, from the very foundation, the whole ſyſtem of Pagan ſuperſtition.

Mahomet paid court to the peculiar weakneſſes and propenſities of his diſciples. In that warm climate, where all the paſſions are ardent and violent, he allowed them a liberal indulgence in ſenſual gratifications; no leſs than four wives to each of his followers, with the liberty of divorcing them thrice.*

In the ſame climate, and among men of the ſame ſtrong paſſions, Jeſus moſt peremptorily reſtrained all his followers from adultery, fornication, and every kind of impurity. He confined them to one wife, and forbade divorce, except for adultery only. But what was ſtill more, he required them to govern their eyes and their thoughts, and to check the very firſt riſing of any criminal deſire in the ſoul. He told them, that whoever

* Koran, c. 4. p. 42. Ib. c. 2. p. 41.

looked upon a woman to luſt after her, had committed adultery with her already in his heart; and he aſſured them, that none but the pure in heart ſhould ſee God. He declared open war, in ſhort, againſt all the criminal paſſions, and evil inclinations of mankind, and expreſsly required all his followers to renounce thoſe favorite ſins that did moſt eaſily beſet them; nay, even to leave father, mother, brethren, ſiſters, houſes, lands, and every thing that was moſt dear to them, and take up their croſs and follow him.

With the ſame view above-mentioned of bribing men to embrace his religion, Mahomet promiſed to reward his followers with the delights of a moſt voluptuous paradiſe, where the objects of their affection were to be almoſt innumerable, and all of

them gifted with tranſcendent beauty and eternal youth.*

Chriſt entirely precluded his diſciples from all hopes of ſenſual indulgences hereafter, aſſuring them that in heaven they ſhould neither marry nor be given in marriage, and promiſing them nothing but pure celeſtial ſpiritual joys, ſuch as eye hath not ſeen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived.

Beſides the powerful attractions of ſenſual delights, Mahomet had another ſtill more efficacious mode of producing conviction, and gaining proſelytes; and that was force, violence, and arms. He propagated his religion by the ſword; and, till he made uſe of that inſtrument of converſion, the number of his proſelytes was a

* Koran, c. 56. p. 413.

mere nothing. He was at once a prophet, a warrior, a general, and a conqueror. It was at the head of his armies that he preached the koran.—His religion and his conquests went on together; and the former never advanced one step without the latter. He commanded in person in eight general engagements, and undertook, by himself and his lieutenants, fifty military enterprizes. Death or conversion was the only choice offered to idolaters, and tribute or conversion to Jews and Christians.

Jesus employed no other means of converting men to his religion, but persuasion, argument, exhortation, miracles, and prophecies. He made use of no other force but the force of truth; no other sword but the sword of the Spirit, that is, the word of God. He had no arms, no legions to fight his cause. He was the Prince of

Peace, and preached peace to all the world. Without power, without ſupport, without any followers but twelve poor humble men, without one circumſtance of attraction, influence, or compulſion, he triumphed over the prejudices, the learning, the religion of his country; over the ancient rites, idolatry, and ſuperſtition, over the philoſophy, wiſdom, and authority of the whole Roman Empire.

The great object of Mahomet was to make his followers ſoldiers, and to inſpire them with a paſſion for violence, bloodſhed, vengeance, and perſecution. He was continually exhorting them to fight for the religion of God: and, to encourage them to do ſo, he promiſed them the higheſt honors, and the richeſt rewards, in paradiſe. "They who have ſuffered for my ſake, and have been ſlain in battle, verily I will expiate their evil

deeds from them, and I will ſurely bring them into a garden watered by rivers, a reward from God, and with God is moſt excellent reward."*— This duty of warring againſt infidels is frequently inculcated in the koran, and highly magnified by the Mahomedan divines, who call the ſword *the key of heaven and hell*, and perſuade their people that the leaſt drop of blood ſpilt in the way of God, as it is called, is moſt acceptable unto him; and that the defending the territories of the Moſlems for one night, is of more avail than a faſt of two months.† It is eaſy to ſee to what a degree of fierceneſs this muſt raiſe all the furious vindictive paſſions of the ſoul, and what a horde of ſavages and barbarians it muſt let looſe upon mankind.

* Koran, ch. 3. p. 91. and c. 9. p. 242.

† Sale's Prelim. Diss. s. 11. p. 189.

The directions of Christ to his disciples were of a different temper. He positively forbade them the use of any violence whatever. The sword that was drawn by one of them in his defence he ordered to be sheathed: "Put up thy sword within the sheath; they that use the sword shall perish by the sword." * He could not consent to bring down fire from heaven on the Samaritans, who had refused to receive him: "The son of man," he told them, "came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you. Do violence to no man; resist not evil. Be ye merciful, even as your Father in heaven is merciful. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." †

* Matth. xxvi. 52; John xviii. 11.

† Luke ix. 56; John xiv. 27; Luke iii. 14; Matth. v. 39; Luke vi. 36; Matth. v. 7.

The conſequence was, that the firſt followers of Mahomet were men of cruelty and violence, living by rapine, murder and plunder. The firſt followers of Jeſus were men of meek, quiet, inoffenſive, peaceable manners, and in their morals irreproachable and exemplary.

If now, after comparing together the authors of the two religions we have been conſidering, we take a ſhort view of the ſacred books of thoſe religions, the koran and the goſpel, we ſhall find a difference no leſs ſtriking between them; no leſs ſtrongly marking the truth of the one and the falſehood of the other.

The koran is highly applauded, both by Mahomet himſelf and his followers, for the exquiſite beauty, purity, and elegance of the language, which they repreſent as a ſtanding

miracle, greater than even that of raiſing the dead. But admitting its excellence (which yet has been queſtioned by ſeveral learned men) if beauty of ſtyle and compoſition is to be conſidered as a proof of divine inſpiration, the writings of Plato and Xenophon, of Cicero and Cæſar, and a multitude of other inimitable writers in various languages, will have as juſt a claim to a miraculous origin as the koran. But in truth, theſe graces of diction, ſo far from being a circumſtance favorable to the koran, create a ſtrong ſuſpicion of its being a human fabrication, calculated to charm and captivate men by the arts of rhetoric and the faſcination of words, and thus draw off their attention from the futility of its matter, and the weakneſs of its pretenſions. Theſe are the artifices of fraud and falſehood. The goſpel wants them not. It diſdains the aid of human eloquence, and depends

ſolely on the force of truth and the power of God for its ſucceſs. "I came not (as St. Paul ſublimely expreſſes himſelf,) with excellency of ſpeech, nor with the enticing words of man's wiſdom, but in demonſtration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith might not ſtand in the wiſdom of men, but in the power of God."*

But, whatever may be the purity of the language, the matter and ſubſtance of the koran cannot bear a moment's compariſon with that of the goſpel. The narrative is dull, heavy, monotonous, unintereſting; loaded with endleſs repetitions, with ſenſeleſs and prepoſterous fables, with trivial, diſguſting, and even immoral precepts. Add to this, that it has very little novelty or originality to recommend it, the moſt material parts

* 1 Cor. ii. 1, 4, 5.

of it being borrowed from the ſcriptures of the Old-Teſtament or the New; and even theſe are ſo diſguiſed and deformed by paſſing through the hands of the impoſtor (who vitiates and debaſes every thing he touches) that you can hardly know them to be the ſame incidents or tranſactions that you read with ſo much delight in the Bible.

The goſpel, on the contrary, is every where conciſe, ſimple, original, animated, intereſting, dignified; its precepts important, its morality perfect, its ſentiments ſublime, its views noble and comprehenſive, its ſanctions awful.

In the koran, Mahomet is perpetually boaſting of his own merits and achievements, and the ſupreme excellence of his book. In the goſpel, no encomiums are beſtowed by the E-

vangeliſts, either on themſelves or their writings. Even the virtues of their divine Maſter are not diſtinctly ſpecified, or brought forward into a conſpicuous point of view. It is from his actions only, and his diſcourſes, not from the obſervations of his hiſtorians, that we can collect the various tranſcendent excellencies of his character. Here we plainly ſee the ſober modeſty of truth oppoſed to the oſtentatious vanity of impoſture.

In the deſcription of future rewards and puniſhments, the koran is minute circumſtantial, and extravagant, both in painting the horrors of the one and the delights of the other. It deſcribes things which cannot, and ought not to be deſcribed, and enters into details too horrible, or too licentious, to be preſented to the human mind.

In the goſpel, the pains and the

pleasures of a future life are represented concisely, in strong, but general and indefinite terms, sufficient to give them a powerful, but not an overwhelming, influence over the mind.

There is still another, and a very material mark of discrimination between the koran and the gospel. Mahomet shows throughout the utmost anxiety to guard against objections, to account for his working no miracles, and to defend his conduct, in several instances, against the charges which he suspects may be brought against him. This is always the case with imposture. It is always suspicious, afraid of being detected, alive to every appearance of hostility, solicitous to anticipate, and eager to repel the accusations of enemies.

Truth has no occasion for such precautions, and therefore never uses

them. We ſee nothing of this ſort in the goſpel. The ſacred hiſtorians ſhow not the ſmalleſt ſolicitude, nor take the leaſt pains to obviate cavils or remove difficulties. They relate plainly and ſimply what they know to be true. They entertain no doubt of it themſelves, and ſeem to have no ſuſpicion that any one elſe can doubt it; they therefore leave the facts to ſpeak for themſelves, and ſend them unprotected into the world, to make their way (as they have done) by their own native force and incontrovertible truth.

Such are the leading features of Mahomet and his religion on the one hand, and of Chriſt and his religion on the other, and never was there a ſtronger or more ſtriking contraſt ſeen than in this inſtance. They are, in ſhort, in every eſſential article, the direct oppoſites of each other. And

as it is on all hands acknowledged that Mahomet was an impoſtor, it is fair to conclude that Chriſt, who was the very reverſe of Mahomet, was the reverſe of an impoſtor, that is, a real meſſenger from heaven. In Mahomet we ſee every diſtinctive mark of fraud; in Jeſus, not one of theſe is to be found: but on the contrary, every poſſible indication and character of truth.

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PROPOSITION IX.

The predictions delivered by the ancient Prophets, and fulfilled in our Saviour, show that he was the Messiah expected by the Jews, and that he came into the world by divine appointment, to be the great Deliverer and Redeemer of mankind.

THE word Messiah signifies anointed; that is, a person appointed to some high station, dignity, or office; because originally among the eastern nations men so appointed (particularly kings, priests, and prophets) were anointed with oil. Hence the word *Messiah* means the person pre-ordained and oppointed by God to be

the great Deliverer of the Jewiſh nation, and the Redeemer of all mankind. The word Chriſt means the ſame thing.

Now it was foretold concerning the Meſſiah, that he ſhould come before the ſceptre departed from Judah, that is, before the Jewiſh government was deſtroyed; * and, accordingly, Chriſt appeared a ſhort time before the period when the Jewiſh government was totally overthrown by the Romans.

It was foretold that he ſhould come before the deſtruction of the ſecond temple. "The Deſire of all nations ſhall come, and I will fill this houſe with glory, ſaith the Lord of Hoſts; the glory of this latter houſe ſhall be greater than that of the former." †

* Gen. xlix. 10.

† Haggai ii. 7, 9.

Accordingly Chrift appeared fome time before the deftruction of the city and the temple of Jerufalem by the Romans.

It was foretold by the prophet Daniel, that he fhould come at the end of 490 years after the rebuilding of Jerufalem, which had been laid wafte during the captivity of the Jews in Babylon, and that he fhould be cut off; and that afterwards the city and fanctuary of Jerufalem fhould be deftroyed and made defolate.* And accordingly, at what time foever the beginning of the 490 years can, according to any fair interpretation of the words, be fixed, the end of them will fall about the time of Chrift's appearing: and it is well known how entirely the city and fanctuary were deftroyed by the

* Dan. ix. 26.

Romans ſome years after he was cut off and crucified.

It was foretold, that he ſhould perform many great and beneficial miracles; that the eyes of the blind ſhould be opened, and the ears of the deaf unſtopped; that the lame man ſhould leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb ſing;* and this we know was literally fulfilled in the miracles of Chriſt; the blind received their ſight, the lame walked, the deaf heard.

It was foretold, that he ſhould die a violent death; that he ſhould be wounded for our tranſgreſſions, and bruiſed for our iniquities; that the chaſtiſement of our peace ſhould be upon him; and that with his ſtripes we ſhould be healed; that God would

*Isaiah, xxxv. 5.

lay on him the iniquity of us all.* All which was exactly accomplished in the sufferings of Christ, "who died for our sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God."†

It was foretold, that to him should the gathering of the people be; and that God would give him the heathen for his inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for his possession,‡ which was punctually fulfilled by the wonderful success of the gospel, and its universal propagation throughout the world.

Lastly, many minuter circumstances were told of the great Deliverer, or Redeemer, that was to come.

* Isaiah liii. throughout, and Dan. ix. 26.
† 1 Pet. iii. 18.
‡ Psalm ii. 8

That he ſhould be born of a virgin; that he ſhould be of the tribe of Judah and the ſeed of David; that he ſhould be born in the town of Bethlehem; that he ſhould ride upon an aſs in humble triumph into the city of Jeruſalem; that he ſhould be a man of ſorrows, and acquainted with grief; that he ſhould be ſold for thirty pieces of ſilver; that he ſhould be ſcourged, buffetted and ſpit upon; that he ſhould be numbered with the tranſgreſſors (that is, ſhould be crucified, as he was between two thieves;) that he ſhould have gall and vinegar given him to drink; that they who ſaw him crucified ſhould mock at him, and at his truſting in God to deliver him; that the ſoldiers ſhould caſt lots for his garments; that he ſhould make his grave with the rich; and that he ſhould riſe again without ſeeing corruption,*—

* Isaiah, vii. 14; Mic. v.; Zech. ix. 9;

All these circumstances, it is well known, were foretold, and, to the greatest possible exactness, fulfilled, in the person of Christ.

What now shall we say to these things? Here are upwards of twenty different particulars, many of them of a very extraordinary nature, which, it was foretold, seven hundred years before our Saviour was born, would all meet in him, and which did all actually meet in his person. Is not this a most extraordinary consideration? There are but three possible suppositions that can be made concerning it; either that this was a mere fortuitous coincidence, arising entirely from chance and accident, or that these prophecies were written after the events

Isaiah, liii. 3; Zech. xi. 12; Isaiah l 6; Isaiah, liii. 12; Psalm, lxix. 22; Psalm xxix. 7, 18; Isaiah, liii, 9; Psalm, xvi. 10.

had taken place; or lastly, that they were real predictions, delivered many years before these events came to pass, and all fulfilled in Christ. That any one should by chance hit upon so many things, which should all prove true, and prove true concerning one and the same person, though several of them were of such a nature as were unlikely to happen *singly*, and by far the greatest part of which had never before happened *singly*, to *any person whatever*; this, I say, exceeds all bounds of credibility, and all power of conjecture or calculation.

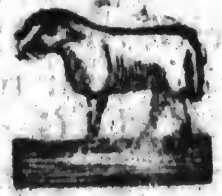
That these prophecies were not written or delivered after the things predicted had happened is most certain; because they are found in books which existed long before those events came to pass, that is, in the books of the Old Testament; and the Jews themselves, the mortal enemies of

Chriſt and his religion, acknowledge that theſe prophecies were in thoſe books exactly as we now ſee them many hundred years before Chriſt came into the world.

The books themſelves were in their own keeping, in the keeping of our adverſaries, who would undoubtedly take effectual care that nothing favorable to Chriſt ſhould be fraudulently inſerted into them. The Jews were our librarians. The prophecies were in their cuſtody, and are read in all their copies of the Old-Teſtament as well as in ours. They have made many attempts to *explain* them away, but none to queſtion their authenticity.

It remains then that theſe are all real predictions, all centering in our Saviour, and in him only, and delivered many centuries before he was

born. As no one but God has the foreknowledge of events, it is from him these prophecies must have proceeded; and they show of course, that Christ was the person whom he had for a great length of time pre determined to send into the world to be the great Deliverer, Redeemer, and Saviour of mankind.



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PROPOSITION X.

The prophecies delivered by our Saviour himself, prove that he was endued with the foreknowledge of future events; which belongs only to God and to those inspired by him.

HE did very particularly, and at several different times, foretel his own death, and the circumstances of it: that the chief priests and scribes should condemn him to death, and deliver him to the Gentiles, that is, to Pilate and the Roman soldiers, to mock, and scourge, and crucify him; that he should be betrayed into their hands; that Judas Iscariot was the person who should betray him; that all his disciples would forsake him,

and flee; and that Peter would particularly thrice deny him in one night. He foretold further, that he would rise again the third day; that after his ascension, he would send down the Holy Ghost on his apostles, which should enable them to work many miracles. He foretold, likewise, many particulars concerning the future success of the gospel, and what should happen to several of his disciples; he foretold what opposition and persecution they should meet with in their preaching; he foretold what particular kind of death Peter should die, and intimated that St. John should live (at he did) till after the destruction of Jerusalem; he foretold that, notwithstanding all opposition and persecution, the gospel should yet have such success as to spread itself over the world; and, lastly, he foretold the destruction of Jerusalem, with such very particular and minute circum-

ſtances, in the 24th chapter of St. Matthew, the 13th of St. Mark, and the 21ſt of St. Luke, that no one who reads the deſcription of that event, in the hiſtorians of thoſe times, can have the ſmalleſt doubt of our Saviour's divine foreknowledge. We have a moſt authentic, exact, and circumſtantial account of the ſiege and deſtruction of that city by the Romans, written by Joſephus, a Jewiſh and contemporary hiſtorian; and the deſcription he has given of this terrible calamity ſoperfectly correſponds with our Saviour's prophecy, that one would have thought, had we not known the contrary, that it had been written by a Chriſtian, on purpoſe to illuſtrate that prediction.

This power of foretelling future events is a plain proof that Chriſt came from God, and was endued with this power from above.

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PROPOSITION XI.

The miracles performed by our Lord, demonstrate him to have possessed divine power.

ALTHOUGH the preceding propositions contain very convincing proofs of the divine mission of Christ, and the divine authority of his religion, yet, undoubtedly, the strongest evidence of this arises from the wonderful and well attested miracles which he wrought from the beginning to the end of his ministry. He cured the most inveterate diseases; he made the lame to walk; he opened the eyes of the blind and the ears of the deaf; he cast out devils; he

walked upon the ſea; he fed five thouſand perſons with a few ſmall loaves and fiſhes, and even raiſed the dead to life again. Theſe miracles were all wrought in open day, in the ſight of multitudes of witneſſes, who could not be impoſed upon in things which they ſaw plainly with their own eyes, who had an opportunity of ſcrutinizing them as much as they pleaſed, and who did actually ſcrutinize them with a moſt critical exactneſs, as appears from the very remarkable inſtance of the blind man reſtored to ſight by our Lord, in the ninth chapter of St. John, a tranſaction which I recommend very earneſtly to the attention of my readers.

It is true, that miracles being very unuſual and extraordinary facts, they require very ſtrong evidence to ſupport them; much ſtronger, it muſt be owned, than common events, that are

recorded in hiſtory: and, accordingly, the miracles of Chriſt *have* this very ſtrong and extraordinary evidence to ſupport them; evidence ſuch as is not to be equalled in any other inſtance, and ſuch as is fully competent to prove the reality of the greateſt miracle that ever was performed.

Beſides a multitude of other perſons who were eye witneſſes to theſe miracles, and who were actually convinced and converted by them, there were twelve perſons called Apoſtles, plain, honeſt, unprejudiced men, whom our Saviour choſe to be his conſtant companions and friends, who were almoſt always about his perſon, accompanied him in his travels, heard all his diſcourſes, ſaw all his miracles, and attended him through all the different ſcenes of his life, death, and reſurrection, till the time of his aſcen-

ſion into heaven. Theſe perſons were perfectly capable of judging whether the works which they ſaw Jeſus perform were real miracles or not; they could tell whether a perſon whom they had known to be blind all his life was ſuddenly reſtored to ſight by our Saviour's only ſpeaking a word or touching his eyes; they could tell whether he did actually, in open day light, walk upon the ſea without ſinking, and without any viſible ſupport; whether a perſon called Lazarus, whom they were well acquainted with, and whom they knew to have been four days dead and buried, was raiſed to life again merely by Chriſt's ſaying, LAZARUS, ARISE.

In theſe, and other facts of this ſort, they could not poſſibly be deceived. Now theſe, and many other miracles equally aſtoniſhing, they affirm that they themſelves actually ſaw perform-

ed by our Saviour. In consequence of this, from being Jews, and of course strongly prejudiced against Christ and his outward appearance, which was the very reverse of every thing they expected in their Messiah, they became his disciples; and on account of their conversion, and more particularly on account of their asserting the truth of his miracles and his resurrection, they endured for a long course of years the severest labors, hardships, sufferings, and persecution, that human nature could be exposed to, and at last submitted to the most cruel and excruciating deaths; all which they might easily have avoided, if they would only have said that Christ was NOT the Son of God, that he never worked any miracles, and never rose from the dead. Yet this they refused to say, and were content to die rather than say it.*

* No man ever laid down his life for the honor of Jupiter, Neptune, or Apollo; but

Is not this giving the ſtrongeſt proof of their ſincerity, and of the reality of Chriſt's miracles, that human nature and human teſtimony are capable of giving? The concurrent and uncontradicted teſtimony of twelve ſuch witneſſes is, according to all the rules of evidence, ſufficient to eſtabliſh the truth of any one fact in the world, however extraordinary, however miraculous.

If there had been any powerful temptation thrown in the way of theſe men; if they had been bribed, like the followers of Mahomet, with ſenſual indulgencies; or, like Judas Iſcariot, with a ſum of money, one ſhould not have been much ſurpriſed at their perſiſting, for a time at leaſt, in a premeditated falſehood. But when

how many thonsands have sealed their Christian testimony with their blood? Beattie v. 2.

we know that, instead of any of these allurements being held out to them, their master always foretold to them, and they themselves soon found by experience, that they could gain nothing, and must lose every thing in this world, by embracing Christianity; it is utterly impossible to account for their embracing it on any other ground than their conviction of its truth from the miracles which they saw. In fact, must they not have been absolutely mad to have incurred voluntarily so much misery, and such certain destruction, for affirming things to be true which they knew to be false; more especially as their own religion taught them, that they would be punished most severely in another world, as well as in this, for so wicked a fraud? Is it usual for men thus to sport with their own happiness, and their very lives, and to bring upon themselves, with their eyes open, such

dreadful evils, without any reaſon in the world, and without the leaſt poſſible benefit, advantage, credit, or pleaſure reſulting from it? Where have you ever heard of any inſtance of this ſort? Would any twelve men you ever knew, eſpecially men of credit and character take it into their heads to aſſert that a certain perſon in the neighborhood raiſed a dead man to life, when they knew that no ſuch thing had ever happened; and that they would all, with one conſent, ſuffer themſelves to be put to death rather than confeſs that they had told a lie? Such a thing never happened ſince the world began. It is contrary to all *experience* and all credibility, and would be, in itſelf, a greater miracle than any of thoſe that are recorded in the goſpel.

It is certain then (as certain as any thing can be that depends on human teſtimony) that real miracles were

wrought by Christ; and as no miracles can be wrought but by the power of God, it is equally certain that Christ and his religion drew their origin from God.*

* On the clear and evident marks of discrimination between the real miracles of the gospel and the pretended miracles of paganism and of popery, see Bishop Douglas's Criterion, and Dr. Paley's most masterly observations, in his view of the Evidences of Christianity, Prop. i. ch. ii. b. i. p. 329.

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PROPOSITION XII.

The resurrection of our Lord from the dead, is a fact fully proved by the clearest evidence, and is the seal and confirmation of his divinity and of the truth of his religion.

THE resurrection of Christ being one of those mitacles which are recorded in the gospel, the truth of it is, in fact, already proved by what has been advanced respecting those miracles in the preceding article. But it is an event so singular in its nature, and so infinitely important in its consequences, that it well deserves to be made the subject of a distinct proposition.

After our Saviour's crucifixion, Joſeph of Arimathea, we are told, laid the body in his own new tomb, hewn out of a rock, and rolled a great ſtone to the door of the ſepulchre. In order to ſecure themſelves againſt any fraud, the Jews deſired the Roman governor, Pilate, to grant them a band of ſoldiers to guard the ſepulchre, leſt, as they ſaid, the diſciples ſhould come by night and ſteal the corpſe away.—Pilate's anſwer was in theſe words, "Ye have a watch, go your way, make it as ſure as you can: ſo they went and made the ſepulchre ſure, ſealing the ſtone, and ſetting a watch."* The Evangeliſt then proceeds to relate the great event of the reſurrection with that ingenuous and natural ſimplicity which characterizes the ſacred hiſtorians, and which carries upon the face of it every mark of ſincerity and truth.

* Matth. xxvii. 65, 66.

"In the end of the ſabbath, as it began to dawn towards the firſt day of the week came Mary Magdalen, 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 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 of the Lord anſwered, and ſaid unto the women, Fear not ye; for I know that ye ſeek Jeſus that was crucified. He is not here, for he is riſen from the dead; and behold he goeth before you into Galilee, there ye ſhall ſee him. Lo! I have told you. 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 they ſhall ſee me. Now, when they were going, behold ſome of the watch came into the city, and ſhewed unto the chief prieſts all that was 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 unto this day."*

Such is the relation of this wonderful fact given by St. Matthew, which comprehends not only his own

* Matt. xxviii. 1, 16.

account of it, but that alſo which was circulated in oppoſition to it by the chief prieſts and rulers of the Jews. Here then we have fairly before us the two different repreſentations of this event by the friends and by the enemies of Chriſt; of which the former aſſerts that it was a real reſurrection, the other that it was a fraud; and between theſe two we muſt form our opinions, for no third ſtory has been ſet up, that we know of, by any one.

One thing is agreed on by both ſides, viz. that the body was not to be found in the ſepulchre. It was gone; and the queſtion is, by what means? The ſoldiers gave out that the diſciples "came by night, while they ſlept, and ſtole it away." But it is not very eaſy to underſtand how the ſoldiers could depoſe to any thing that paſſed while they were

faſt aſleep; they could not poſſibly tell in what manner the body was ſtolen away, or by whom. Nor, conſidering the extreme ſeverity of the Roman military diſcipline, is it credible, that if they had been aſleep, they would have confeſſed it. For it was certain death to a Roman ſoldier to be found ſleeping upon guard. Nothing could have prevailed upon them to make ſuch a declaration as that, but a previous promiſe of impunity and reward from the Jewiſh rulers; a plain proof that they had been tampered with, and that it was a concerted ſtory.

In the next place, ſuppoſing the ſtory true, of what uſe could the dead body be to the diſciples? It could not prove to them, or to others, that their Maſter was riſen from the dead; on the contrary, it muſt have been a ſtanding and viſible proof of the con-

trary. It muſt convince them that he, inſtead of being the deliverer they expected, was an impoſtor, and they moſt cruelly deceived. And why they ſhould chooſe to keep in their poſſeſſion, and to have continually before their eyes, a lifeleſs corpſe, which completely blaſted all their hopes, and continually reminded them of their bitter diſappointment, is ſomewhat difficult to be imagined.

The tale then, told by the ſoldiers, is, upon the very face of it, a groſs and clumſy forgery. The conſequence is, that the account given by St. Matthew is the true one. For if the body was actually gone (an acknowledged point on all ſides) and if it was not, as we have proved, ſtolen away by the diſciples, there are but two poſſible ſuppoſitions remaining; either that it was taken away by the Jews and Romans, or

that it was raiſed to life again by the power of God. If the former had been the caſe, it could only have been for the purpoſe of confronting and convicting the diſciples of falſehood and fraud by the production of the dead body. But the dead body was NOT produced. It was, therefore, as the goſpel affirms, raiſed from the grave, and reſtored to life. There is no other conceivable alternative left.

And that this was actually the caſe, is proved by our Lord's appearing, after his reſurrection, not only to the two women who came firſt to the ſepulchre, but to the two diſciples going to Emmaus, and to the diſciples aſſembled together at two different times, and to all the apoſtles, and to above five hundred brethren, at once. And he not only appeared to them ſilently, but he talked and ate with them; he ſhowed them his hands and

his feet; he made them handle him; he held several long conversations with them; and, at last, ascended up into heaven in their sight.

These were things of which the plainest and most ignorant men could judge. It was impossible for them to be deceived in an object with which they were well acquainted, and which presented itself to all their senses.

But there is another most decisive proof, arising from their own conduct, that they were perfectly convinced of the reality of our Lord's resurrection.

It appears that the apostles were far from being men of natural courage and firmness of mind. When our Lord was apprehended, all his disciples, we are told, forsook him, and fled. Peter followed him afar off,

and went into a hall in the palace of the high-priest, where the servants warmed themselves, and being there charged with being a disciple of Jesus, he peremptorily denied it three times with vehemence and with oaths. It does not appear that any of his disciples attended in the judgment hall to assist or to support him; and when he was crucified, the only persons that ventured to stand near his cross were his mother, and two or three other women, and St. John. They all, in short, appeared dismayed and terrified with the fate of their Master, afraid to acknowledge the slightest connection with him, and utterly unable to face the dangers that seemed to menace them. But, immediately after the resurrection of their Lord, a most astonishing change took place in their conduct. From being the most timid of men, they suddenly became courageous, undaunted, and intrepid;

they boldly preached that very Jesus, whom but a short time before they had deserted in his greatest distress; and although his crucifixion was fresh before their eyes, and they had reason to expect the same or a similar fate, yet they persisted in avowing themselves his disciples, and told the Jews publicly, "that God had made that same Jesus, whom they had crucified, both Lord and Christ;"* and when they were brought before the rulers and elders to be examined respecting the lame man whom they had cured at the gate of the temple, "Be it known unto you all (said they) and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, and whom God raised from the dead, even by him does this man stand here before you all. This is the stone that was set at nought of you

* Acts ii. 36.

builders, which is become the head ſtone of the corner; neither is there ſalvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we muſt be ſaved."†

And when a ſecond time they were brought before the council, and forbidden to teach in the name of Jeſus, their anſwer was, "We ought to obey God rather than man. And when they were again reprimanded and threatened, and beaten, yet they ceaſed not in the temple, and in every houſe, to teach and to preach Jeſus Chriſt; and with great power gave the apoſtles witneſs of the reſurrection of the Lord Jeſus."*

In what manner now ſhall we ac

† Acts iv. 10, 11, 12.

* Acts v. 29, 42. Acts iv. 33.

count for this ſudden and moſt ſingular change in the diſpoſition, and as it were in the very conſtitution, of the Apoſtles. If Chriſt had not riſen from the grave, and his dead body was in the poſſeſſion of his diſciples, was this calculated to inſpire them with affection for their leader, and with courage to preach a doctrine, which they knew to be falſe? Would it not, on the contrary, have increaſed their *natural timidity*, depreſſed their ſpirits, extinguiſhed all their zeal, and filled them with indignation and horror againſt a man who had ſo groſsly deceived them, and robbed them under falſe pretences, of every thing that was dear and valuable to them in the world? Moſt unqueſtionably it would. Nor is it poſſible to account in any rational way, for the ſtrange revolution which took place in their minds, ſo ſoon after their Maſter's death, but by admitting that they were fully

perſuaded and ſatisfied that he roſe alive from the grave.

It may be ſaid, perhaps, that this perſuaſion was the effect, not of irreſiſtible evidence, but of enthuſiaſm, which made them fancy that ſome viſionary phantom, created ſolely by their own heated imagination, was the real body of their Lord reſtored to life. But nothing could be more diſtant from enthuſiaſm than the character and conduct of theſe men, and the courage they manifeſted, which was perfectly calm, ſober, collected, and cool. But what completely repels this ſuſpicion is, that their bitterest adverſaries never once accuſed them of enthuſiaſm, but charged them with a crime which was utterly inconſiſtent with it, fraud and theſt; with ſtealing away the body from the grave. And if they did this, if that dead body was actually before their eyes,

how was it possible for any degree of enthusiasm short of madness (which was never alleged against them) to mistake a dead body for a living man, whom they saw, and touched and conversed with? No such instance of enthusiasm ever occurred in the world.

The resurrection of our Lord being thus established on the firmest grounds. it affords an unanswerable proof of the truth of our Saviour's pretensions, and, consequently, of the truth of his religion: for had he not been what he assumed to be, the Son of God, it is impossible that God should have raised him from the dead, and thereby given his sanction to an imposture. But as he did actually restore him to life, he thereby set his seal to the divinity which he claimed, and acknowledged him, in the most

public and authoritative manner, to be "his beloved Son, in whom he was well pleaſed."*

And this evidence of our Lord's divine miſſion is of the more importance, becauſe, our Saviour himſelf appealed to it as the grand proof of his being ſent from heaven to inſtruct and to redeem mankind. For when he caſt the buyers and ſellers out of the temple, and the Jews required of him a ſign, that is, a miraculous proof, that he had the authority of God for doing thoſe things, his anſwer was, Deſtroy this temple, (meaning his body) and in three days I will raiſe it up. When therefore, he was riſen from the dead, his diſciples remembered that he had ſaid this unto them; and they believed the ſcriptures, and

* Matth. iii. 17.

the word which Jesus had said;"* and they themselves constantly referred to the resurrection, more than to any other evidence, as the great foundation on which their faith was built.

The reason for this, perhaps, was, that this great event contained in itself, at once, the evidence both of miracle and of prophecy. It was certainly one of the most stupendous manifestations of divine power that could be presented to the observation of mankind; and it was, at the same time, the completion of two most remarkable prophecies; that of our Saviour's above mentioned, and that well known one of king David's, which St. Peter expressly applies to the resurrection of Christ: "Thou

*John ii. 19, 22.

wilt not leave my ſoul in hell, neither wilt thou ſuffer thy Holy One to ſee corruption."†

† Pſalm xvi. 10. Acts ii. 27. On this subject of Christ's resurrection I must again refer my young readers to Dr. Paley. vol. ii. ch. ix. p. 209, and also to the conclusion of his work; the force of which it seems to me scarce possible for an unprejudiced reader to withstand.

CONCLUSION.

THESE are the principal proofs of the truth of the Christian Religion. Many others of a very satisfactory nature might be added; but the question may be safely rested on those that have here been stated.

And when we collect them all together into one point of view; when we consider the deplorable ignorance and inconceivable depravity of the heathen world before the birth of Christ, which rendered a divine interposition essentially necessary, and therefore highly probable; the appearance of Christ upon earth, at the very time when his presence was most wanted, and when there was a

general expectation throughout the East, that some great and extraordinary personage was soon to come into the world; the transcendent excellence of our Lord's character, so infinitely beyond that of every other moral teacher; the calmness, the composure, the dignity, the integrity, the spotless sanctity of his manners, so utterly inconsistent with every idea of enthusiasm or imposture; the sublimity and importance of his doctrines; the consummate wisdom and perfect purity of his moral precepts, far exceeding the natural powers of a man born in the humblest situation, and in a remote and obscure corner of the world, without learning, education, languages or books; the rapid and astonishing propagation of his religion, in a very short space of time, through almost every region of the East, by the sole efforts of himself and a few illiterate fishermen, in direct op-

poſition to all the power, the authority, the learning, the philoſophy, the reigning vices, prejudices and ſuperſtitions of the world; the complete and marked oppoſition, in every eſſential point, between the character and religion of Chriſt and the character and religion of Mahomet, exactly ſuch as might be expected between truth and falſehood. The minute deſcription of all the moſt material circumſtances of his birth, life, ſufferings, death, and reſurrection, given by the ancient prophets many hundred years before he was born, and exactly fulfilled in him, and him only, pointing him out as the Meſſiah of the Jews and the Redeemer of mankind; the various prophecies delivered by Chriſt himſelf, which were all punctually accompliſhed, more eſpecially the deſtruction of Jeruſalem by the Romans; the many aſtoniſhing miracles, wrought by Jeſus, in the

open face of day before thouſands of ſpectators, the reality of which is proved by multitudes of the moſt unexceptionable witneſſes, who ſealed their teſtimony with their blood, and was even acknowledged by the earlieſt and moſt inveterate enemies of the goſpel; and, laſtly, that moſt aſtoniſhing and well authenticated miracle of our Lord's reſurrection, which was the ſeal and confirmation of his own divine origin, and that of his religion; when all theſe various evidences are brought together, and impartially weighed, it ſeems hardly within the power of a fair and ingenuous mind, to reſiſt the impreſſion of their united force. If ſuch a combination of evidence as this is not ſufficient to ſatisfy an honeſt inquirer into truth, it is utterly impoſſible that any event, which paſſed in former times, and which we did not ſee with our own eyes, can ever be proved to have happened, by

any degree of teſtimony whatever. It may ſafely be affirmed, that no inſtance can be produced of any one fact or event, ſaid to have taken place in paſt ages, and eſtabliſhed by ſuch evidence as that on which the Chriſtian Revelation reſts, that afterwards turned out to be falſe. We challenge the enemies of our faith to bring forward, if they can, any ſuch inſtance. If they cannot (and we know it to be impoſſible) we have a right to ſay, that a religion, ſupported by ſuch an extraordniary accumulation of evidence, muſt be true; and that all men, who pretend to be guided by argument and by proof, are bound, by the moſt ſacred obligations, to receive the religion of Chriſt as a real revelation from God.

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DEATH,

A POETICAL ESSAY.

FRIEND to the wretch, whom every friend forſakes,
I woo thee, Death! In fancy's fairy paths
Let the gay ſongſter rove, and gently trill
The ſtrain of empty joy.—Life and its joys
I leave to thoſe that prize them.—At this hour,
This ſolemn hour, when ſilence rules the world,
And wearied nature makes a gen'ral pauſe,
Wrapt in night's ſable robe, through cloyſters drear
And charnels pale, tenanted by a throng
Of meagre phantoms ſhooting croſs my path
With ſilent glance, I ſeek the ſhadowy vale
Of Death.—Deep in a murky cave's receſs,
Lav'd by Oblivion's liſtleſs ſtream, and fenc'd
By ſhelving rocks, and intermingled horrors
Of yew and cypreſs' ſhade, from all intruſion
Of buſy noontide-beam, the Monarch ſits
In unſubſtantial majeſty enthron'd.
At his right hand, neareſt himſelf in place
And frightfulneſs of form, his parent Sin
With fatal induſtry and cruel care

Busies herself in pointing all his stings,
And tipping every shaft with venom drawn
From her infernal store; around him rang'd
In terrible array and mixture strange
Of uncouth shapes, stand his dread Ministers:
Foremost Old Age, his natural ally
And firmest friend; next him diseases thick,
A motley train; Fever, with cheek of fire;
Consumption, wan; Palsy, half warm with life,
And half a clay-cold lump; joint-tot'ring Gout,
And ever-gnawing Rheum; Convulsion, wild;
Swol'n Dropsy; panting Asthma; Apoplex
Full-gorg'd —There too the Pestilence that walks
In darkness, and the sickness that destroys
At broad noon-day. These, and a thousand more,
Horrid to tell, attentive wait; and when
By Heaven's command DEATH waves his ebon
wand,
Sudden rush forth to execute his purpose,
And scatter desolation o'er the Earth.
Ill-fated Man, for whom such various forms
Of Mis'ry wait, and mark their future prey!
Ah! why, *All-righteous Father*, didst thou make
This creature Man? why wake the unconscious
dust
To life and wretchedness? Oh better far
Still had he slept in uncreated night,
If this the lot of Being!—Was it for this
Thy breath divine kindled within his breast
The vital flame? For this was thy fair image
Stampt on his soul in godlike lineaments?
For this, dominion giv'n him absolute
O'er all thy works, only that he might reign
Supreme in woe?—From the blest Source of Good
Could Pain and Death proceed? Could such foul ills

Fall from fair Mercy's hands?—Far be the thought,
The impious though! God never made a creature
But what was good.—He made *a living Soul:*
The wretched Mortal was the Work of MAN.
Forth from his Maker's hands he ſprung to life,
Freſh with immortal bloom: No pain he knew,
No fear of change no check to his deſires,
Save one command.—That one command, (which ſtood
'Twixt him and Death, the teſt of his obedience)
Urg'd on by wanton curioſity,
He broke.—There in one moment was undone
The Faireſt of GOD's works.—The ſame raſh hand,
That pluck'd in evil hour the fatal fruit,
Unbarr'd the gates of Hell, and let loſe Sin,
And Death, and all the family of Pain,
To prey upon Mankind.—Young Nature ſaw
The monſtrous crew, and ſhook thro' all her frame.
Then fled her new-born luſtre, then began
Heav'n's cheerful face to low'r, then vapors choak'd
The troubled air, and form'd a veil of clouds
To hide the willing Sun. The earth convuls'd
With painful throes threw forth a briſtly crop
Of thorns and briars; and Inſect, Bird and Beaſt,
That wont before with admiration fond
To gaze at Man, and fearleſs croud around him,
Now fled before his face, ſhunning in haſte
Th' infection of his miſery. He alone,
Who juſtly might, th' offended Lord of Man,
Turn'd not away his face; he, full of pity,
Forſook not in this uttermoſt diſtreſs
His beſt-lov'd work. That comfort ſtill remain'd,
(That beſt that greateſt comfort in affliction)
The countenance of God, and through the gloom
Shot forth ſome kindly gleams, to cheer and warm

Th' offender's ſinking ſoul. Hope ſent from Heav'n
Uprais'd his drooping head, and ſhow'd afar
A happier ſcene of things, the PROMIS'D SEED
Trampling upon the SERPENT's humbled creſt,
Death of his ſting diſarm'd, and the dark grave
Made pervious to the realms of endleſs day,
No more the limit but the gate of life.
Cheer'd with the view, MAN went to till the ground
From whence he roſe; ſentenc'd indeed to toil
As to a puniſhment, yet (ev'n in wrath
So merciful is Heav'n) this toil became
The ſolace of his woes, the ſweet employ
Of many a live-long hour, and ſureſt guard
Againſt diſeaſe and Death. DEATH, though denounc'd
Was yet a diſtant Ill, by feeble arm
Of Age his ſole ſupport, led ſlowly on.
Not then as ſince, the ſhort-liv'd ſons of men
Flock'd to his realms in countleſs multitudes;
Scarce in the courſe of twice five hundred years
One ſolitary ghoſt went ſhiv'ring down
To his unpeopled ſhore.—In ſober ſtate,
Through the ſequeſter'd vale of rural life,
The venerable PATRIARCH guileleſs held
The tenor of his way; Labor prepar'd
His ſimple fare, and Temp'rance rul'd his board,
Tir'd with his daily toil, at early eve
He ſunk to ſudden reſt; gentle and pure
As breath of evening Zephyr and as ſweet
Were all his ſlumbers; with the Sun he roſe,
Alert and vigorous as He, to run
His deſtin'd courſe. Thus nerv'd with Giant Strength
He ſtem'd the tide of time, and ſtood the ſhock
Of ages rolling harmleſs o'er his head.

At life's meridian point arriv'd, he ſtood,
And looking round ſaw all the vallies fill'd
With nations from his loins; full well content
To leave his race thus ſcatter'd o'er the Earth,
Along the gentle ſlope of life's decline
He bent his gradual way, till full of years
He dropt like mellow fruit into his grave.
Such in the infancy of time was Man,
So calm was life, ſo impotent was DEATH,
Oh, had he but preſerv'd theſe few remains
The ſhatter'd fragments of loſt happineſs
Snatch'd by the hand of heav'n from the ſad wreck
Of innocence primæval; ſtill had he liv'd
In ruin great; though fall'n, yet not forlorn,
Though mortal, yet not every where beſet
With Death in every ſhape! But He, impatient
To be completely wretched, haſtes to fill up
The meaſure of his woes. 'Twas Man himſelf
Brought death into the world, and Man himſelf
Gave keeneſs to his darts, quicken'd his pace,
And multiply'd deſtruction on mankind.
Firſt Envy, eldeſt-born of Hell, embrued
Her hands in blood, and taught the Sons of men
To make a Death which Nature never made,
And God abhorr'd, with violence rude to break
The thread of life ere half its length was run,
And rob a wretched brother of his being.
With joy Ambition ſaw, and ſoon improv'd
The execrable deed. 'Twas not enough
By ſubtile fraud to ſnatch a ſingle life,
Puny impiety! whole kingdoms fell
To ſate the luſt of power; more horrid ſtill,
The fouleſt ſtain and ſcandal of our nature
Became its boaſt. *One* Murder made a Villain,
Millions a Hero. Princes were priviledg'd
To kill, and numbers ſanctified the crime.

Ah! why will Kings forget that they are Men?
And Men that they are brethren? Why delight
In human ſacrifice? Why burſt the ties
Of Nature, that ſhould knit their ſouls together
In one ſoft bond of amity and love?
Yet ſtill they breathe deſtruction, ſtill go on
Inhumanly ingenious to find out
New pains for life, new terrors for the grave,
Artificers of Death! Still Monarchs dream
Of univerſal Empire growing up
From univerſal ruin. Blaſt the deſign
GREAT GOD OF HOSTS, nor let thy creatures fall
Unpitied victims at Ambition's ſhrine!
Yet ſay, ſhould tyrants learn at laſt to feel,
And the loud din of Battle ceaſe to bray;
Should dove-eyed Peace o'er all the earth extend
Her olive-branch, and give the world repoſe,
Would Death be foil'd? Would health and ſtrength and youth
Defy his power? Has he no arts in ſtore,
No other ſhafts ſave thoſe of war? Alas!
Ev'n in the ſmile of Peace, that ſmile which ſheds
A heav'nly ſunſhine o'er the ſoul, there baſks
That ſerpent Luxury. War its thouſands ſlays;
Peace its ten thouſands. In th' embattled plain,
Tho' Death exults, and claps his raven wings,
Yet reigns he not ev'n there ſo abſolute,
So mercileſs, as in yon frantic ſcenes
Of midnight revel and tumultuous mirth,
Where in th' intoxicating draught conceal'd,
Or couch'd beneath the glance of lawleſs love,
He ſnares the ſimple youth, who nought ſuſpecting,
Means to be bleſt—but finds himſelf undone.
Down the ſmooth ſtream of life the ſtripling darts,
Gay as the morn; bright glows the vernal ſky;

Hope ſwells his ſails, and paſſion ſteers his courſe,
Safe glides his little bark along the ſhore
Where Virtue takes her ſtand, but if too far
He launches forth beyond Diſcretion's mark,
Sudden the tempeſt ſcowls, the ſurges roar,
Blot his fair day, and plunge him in the deep.
Oh, ſad but ſure miſchance! Oh, happier far
To lie like gallant HOWE, 'midſt Indian wilds
A breathleſs corſe, cut off by ſavage hands
In earlieſt prime, a generous ſacrifice
To freedom's holy cauſe; than ſo to fall
Torn immature from life's meridian joys,
A prey to Vice, Intemperance, and Diſeaſe.
Yet die ev'n thus, thus rather periſh ſtill,
Ye Sons of pleaſure, by th' Almighty ſtrick'n,
Than ever dare (though oft, alas! ye dare)
To lift againſt yourſelves the murd'rous ſteel,
To wreſt from GOD's own hand the ſword of juſtice
And be your own avengers. Hold, raſh Man,
Though with anticipating ſpeed thou'ſt rang'd
Through every region of delight, nor left
One joy to gild the evening of thy days;
Though life ſeem one uncomfortable void,
Guilt at thy heels, before thy face deſpair;
Yet gay this ſcene, and light this load of woe,
Compar'd with thy hereafter. Think, oh, think,
And, ere thou plunge into the vaſt abyſs,
Pauſe on the verge a while: look down and ſee
Thy future manſion. Why that ſtart of horror?
From thy ſlack hand why drops th' uplifted ſteel?
Didſt thou not think ſuch vengeance muſt await
The wretch, that with his crimes all freſh about him
Ruſhes irreverent, unprepared, uncall'd,
Into his Maker's preſence, throwing back
With inſolent diſdain his choiceſt gift?
Live then, while Heaven in pity lends thee life,

And think it all too ſhort to waſh away
By penitential tears and deep contrition
The ſcarlet of thy crimes. So ſhalt thou find
Reſt to thy ſoul, ſo unappall'd ſhall meet
Death when he comes, not wantonly invite
His ling'ring ſtroke. Be it thy ſole concern
With innocence to live, with patience wait
Th' appointed hour; too ſoon that hour will come
Tho' Nature run her courſe: But Nature's God,
If need require, by thouſand various ways,
Without thy aid, can ſhorten that ſhort ſpan,
And quench the lamp of life. Oh, when he comes
Rous'd by the cry of wickedneſs extreme
To Heav'n aſcending from ſome guilty land
Now ripe for vengeance; when he comes array'd
In all the terrors of Almighty wrath;
Forth from his boſom plucks his ling'ring Arm,
And on the miſcreants pours deſtruction down!
Who can abide his coming? Who can bear
His whole diſpleaſure? In no common form
Death then appears, but ſtarting into ſize
Enormous, meaſures with gigantic ſtride
Th' aſtoniſh'd Earth, and from his looks throws round
Unutterable horror and diſmay.
All Nature lends her aid. Each Element
Arms in his cauſe. Ope fly the doors of Heav'n;
The fountains of the deep their barriers break;
Above, below, the rival torrents pour,
And drown Creation; or in floods of fire
Deſcends a livid cataract, and conſumes
An impious race. Sometimes, when all ſeems peace,
Wakes the grim Whirlwind, and with rude embrace
Sweeps nations to their grave, or in the deep
Whelms the proud wooden world; full many a youth

Floats on his wat'ry bier, or lies unwept
On some sad desart shore !—At dead of night
In sullen silence stalks forth PESTILENCE :
CONTAGION close behind taints all her steps
With poisonous dew ; no smiting Hand is seen,
No sound is heard ; but soon her secret path
Is mark'd with desolation ; heaps on heaps
Promiscuous drop :—No friend, no refuge near ;
All, all, is false and treacherous around,
All that they touch, or taste, or breathe, is Death.
But ah ! what means that ruinous roar ? why fail
These tott'ring feet ?—Earth to its centre feels
The Godhead's power, and trembling at his touch
Through all its pillars and in ev'ry pore,
Hurls to the ground, with one convulsive heave,
Precipitating domes, and towns, and towers,
The work of ages. Crush'd beneath the weight
Of gen'ral devastation, millions find
One common grave ; not ev'n a widow left
To wail her sons : the house that should protect,
Entombs his master ; and the faithless plain,
If there he flies for help, with sudden yawn
Starts from beneath him. Shield me, gracious Heaven,
Oh, snatch me from destruction ! If this Globe,
This solid Globe, which thine own hand hath made
So firm and sure, if this my steps betray ;
If my own mother Earth, from whence I sprung,
Rise up with rage unnatural to devour
Her wretched offspring, whither shall I fly ?
Where look for succour ? Where, but up to thee
Almighty Father ? Save, oh, save thy suppliant
From Horrors such as these. At thy good time
Let Death approach ; I reck not—let him but come

In genuine form not with thy vengeance arm'd,
Too much for man to bear. Oh, rather lend
Thy kindly aid to mitigate his ſtroke,
And at that hour when all aghaſt I ſtand,
(A trembling Candidate for thy compaſſion,)
On this World's brink, and look into the next;
When my Soul ſtarting from the dark unknown
Caſts back a wiſhful look, and fondly clings
To her frail prop, unwilling to be wrench'd
From this fair ſcene, from all her cuſtom'd joys,
And all the lovely relatives of life,
Then ſhed thy comforts o'er me; then put on
The gentleſt of thy looks. Let no dark Crimes
In all their hideous forms then ſtarting up
Plant themſelves round my couch in grim array,
And ſtab my bleeding heart with two-edg'd torture,
Senſe of paſt guilt, and dread of future woe.
Far be the ghaſtly crew! And in their ſtead,
Let cheerful Memory from her pureſt cells
Lead forth a goodly train of Virtues fair,
Cherith'd in earlieſt youth, now paying back
With tenfold uſury the pious care,
And pouring o'er my wounds the heav'nly balm
Of conſcious innocence. But chiefly, THOU,
Whom ſoft-ey'd Pity once led down from Heav'n
To bleed for Man, to teach him how to live,
And, Oh! ſtill harder leſſon! how to die,
Diſdain not Thou to ſmooth the reſtleſs bed
Of Sickneſs and of Pain. Forgive the tear
That feeble Nature drops, calm all her fears,
Wake all her hopes, and animate her faith,
Till my rapt Soul, anticipating Heav'n
Burſts from the thraldom of incumbring clay,
And on the wing of Extacy upborne
Springs into Liberty, and Light, and Life.

THE DAY OF JUDGMENT.

BY DR. GLYNN.

THY Juſtice, heav'nly King! and that great day,
When Virtue, long abandon'd and forlorn,
Shall raiſe her penſive head; and Vice, that erſt
Rang'd unreprov'd and free, ſhall ſink appall'd;
I ſing advent'rous—But what eye can pierce
The vaſt immeaſurable realms of ſpace
O'er which Meſſiah drives his flaming car
To that bright region, where enthron'd he ſits,
Firſt-born of Heav'n, to judge aſſembled worlds,
Cloth'd in celeſtial radiance; Can the Muſe,
Her feeble wing all damp with earthly dew,
Soar to that bright empyreal, where around
Myriads of angels, God's perpetual choir,
Hymn hallelujahs, and in concert loud
Chant ſongs of triumph to their Maker's praiſe?—
Yet will I ſtrive to ſing, albeit unus'd
To tread poetic ſoil. What though the wiles
Of Fancy me enchanted, ne'er could lure
To rove o'er fairy lands; to ſwim the ſtreams
That through her valleys wave their mazy way;
Or climb her mountain tops; yet will I raiſe
My feeble voice to tell what harmony
(Sweet as the muſic of the rolling ſpheres)
Attunes the moral world; that Virtue ſtill

May hope her promis'd crown; that Vice may dread
Vengeance, though late; that reas'ning Pride may
own
Just, though unsearchable, the ways of Heaven.
Sceptic! whoe'er thou art, who say'st the soul,
That divine particle which God's own breath
Inspir'd into the mortal mass, shall rest
Annihilate, till Duration has unroll'd
Her never-ending line; tell, if thou know'st,
Why every nation, every clime, though all
In laws, in rites, in manners disagree,
With one consent expect another world,
Where wickedness shall weep? Why Paynimbards
Fabled Elysian plains, Tartarean lakes,
Styx and Cocytus? Tell, why Hali's sons
Have feign'd a paradise of mirth and love,
Banquets, and blooming nymphs? Or rather tell,
Why, on the brink of Orellana's stream,
Where never Science rear'd her sacred torch,
Th' untutor'd Indian dreams of happier worlds
Behind the cloud-topt hill? Why in each breast
Is plac'd a friendly monitor, that prompts,
Informs, directs, encourages, forbids?
Tell, why on unknown evil grief attends,
Or joy on secret good? Why conscience acts
With tenfold force, when sickness, age, or pain
Stands tott'ring on the precipice of death?
Or why such horror gnaws the guilty soul
Of dying sinners, while the good man sleeps
Peaceful and calm, and with a smile expires?
Look round the world! with what a partial hand
The scale of bliss and mis'ry is sustain'd!
Beneath the shade of cold obscurity
Pale Virtue lies; no arm supports her head,
No friendly voice speaks comfort to her soul,
Nor soft-eyed Pity drops a melting tear:

But, in their ſtead, Contempt and rude Diſdain
Inſult the baniſh'd wanderer: on ſhe goes,
Neglected and forlorn: Diſeaſe and Cold.
And Famine, worſt of ills, her ſteps attend!
Yet patient, and to Heaven's juſt will reſign'd,
She ne'er is ſeen to weep, or heard to ſigh.
Now turn your eyes to yon ſweet-ſmelling bow'r,
Where, fluſh'd with all the inſolence of wealth,
Sits pamper'd Vice! For him th' Arabian gale
Breathes forth delicious odors; Gallia's hills
For him pour nectar from the purple vine.
Nor think for theſe he pays the tribute due
To Heav'n: of Heav'n he never names the name,
Save when with imprecations dark and dire
He points his jeſt obſcene. Yet buxom health
Sits on his roſy cheek; yet Honor gilds
His high exploits; and downy-pinion'd Sleep
Sheds a ſoft opiate o'er his peaceful couch.
Seeſt thou this, righteous Father! ſeeſt thou this,
And wilt thou ne'er repay? Shall good and ill
Be carried undiſtinguiſh'd to the land
Where all things are forgot;—Ah, no! the day
Will come, when Virtue from the cloud ſhall burſt,
That long obſcur'd her beams; when ſin ſhall fly
Back to her native Hell; there ſink eclip'd
In penal darkness; where nor ſtar ſhall riſe,
Nor ever ſunſhine pierce th' impervious gloom.
On that great day the ſolemn trump ſhall ſound,
(That trump which once in Heav'n on man's revolt
Convok'd the aſtoniſhed ſeraphs) at whoſe voice
Th' unpeopled graves ſhall pour forth all their dead,
Then ſhall th' aſsembled Nations of the Earth
From ev'ry quarter at the judement ſeat
Unite; Egyptians, Babylonians, Greeks,
Parthians; and they who dwelt on Tyber's banks,
Names fam'd of old: or who of later age,

Chineſe and Ruſſian, Mexican and Turk,
Tenant the wild terrene : and they who pitch
Their tents on Niger's banks ; or, where the ſun
Pours on Golconda's ſpires his early light,
Drink Ganges' ſacred ſtream. At once ſhall riſe
Whom diſtant ages to each others ſight
Had long denied : before the throne ſhall kneel
Some great Progenitor, while at his ſide
Stand his deſcendants through a thouſand lines.
Whate'er their nation, and wha te'er their rank,
Heroes and patriarchs, ſlaves and ſceptred kings,
With equal eye the God of all ſhall ſee,
And judge with equal love. What tho' the great
With coſtly pomp and aromatic ſweets
Embalm'd his poor remains ; or through the dome
A thouſand tapers ſhed their gloomy light,
While ſolemn organs to his parting ſoul
Chanted ſlow orilons ? Say, by what mark
Doſt thou diſcern him from that lowly ſwain
Whoſe mould'ring bones beneath the thorn-bound [turf
Long lay neglected ? All at once ſhall riſe,
But not to equal glory ; for, alas !
With howlings dire and execrations loud,
Some wail their fatal birth.—Firſt among theſe
Behold the mighty murd'rers of mankind :
They who in ſport whole kingdoms ſlew ; or they
Who to the tott'ring pinnacle of power
Waded through ſeas of blood ! How will they curſe
The madneſs of ambition ! how lament
Their dear-bought laurels ; when the widow'd wife
And childleſs mother at the judgment ſeat
Plead trumpet-tongu'd againſt them ! Here are they
Who ſunk an aged father to the grave ;
Or with unkindneſs hard, and cold diſdain,
Slighted a brother's ſuff'rings.—Here are they
Whom fraud and ſkilful treachery long ſecur'd ;

Who from the infant virgin tore her dow'r,
And ate the orphan's bread; who ſpent their ſtores
In ſelfiſh luxury; or o'er their gold
Proſtrate and pale ador'd the uſeleſs heap.
Here too who ſtain'd the chaſte connubial bed!
Who mix'd the pois'nous bowl;—or broke the ties
Of hoſpitable friendſhip;—and the wretch
Whoſe liſtleſs ſoul, ſick with the cares of life,
Unſummon'd, to the preſence of his God
Ruſh'd in with inſult rude. How would they joy
Once more to viſit earth, and though oppreſs'd
With all that pain and famine can inflict,
Pant up the hill of life? Vain wiſh! the Judge
Pronounces doom eternal on their heads,
Perpetual puniſhment. Seek not to know
What puniſhment! for that th' Almighty will
Has hid from mortal eyes: and ſhall vain man
With curious ſearch refin'd preſume to pry
Into thy ſecrets, Father? No! let him
With humble patience all thy works adore,
And walk in all thy paths; ſo ſhall his meed
Be great in Heav'n, haply ſhall he 'ſcape
Th' immortal worm and never-ceaſing fire.
But who are they, who bound in ten-fold chains
Stand horribly aghaſt? This is that crew
Who ſtrove to pull Jehovah from his throne,
And in the place of Heaven's eternal King
Set up the phantom Chance. For them in vain
Alternate ſeaſons cheer'd the rolling year;
In vain the ſun o'er herb, tree, fruit and flow'r
Shed genial influence mild; and the pale moon
Repair'd her waning orb.—Next theſe is plac'd
The vile blaſphemer; he whoſe impious wit
Profan'd the ſacred myſteries of faith,
And 'gainſt th' impenetrable walls of Heav'n
Planted his feeble battery. By theſe ſtands

The Arch-Apostate: he with many a wile
Exhorts them still to foul revolt. Alas!
No hope have they from black despair, no ray
Shines through the gloom to cheer their sinking souls:
In agonies of grief they curse the hour
When first they left Religion's onward way.
These on the left are rang'd: but on the right
A chosen band appears, who fought beneath
The banner of Jehovah, and defied
Satan's united legions. Some unmov'd
At the grim tyrant's frown, o'er barb'rous climes
Diffus'd the Gospel's light: some long immur'd
(Sad servitude!) in chains and dungeons pin'd;
Or, rack'd with all the agonies of pain,
Breath'd out their faithful lives. Thrice happy they
Whom Heav'n elected to that glorious strife!—
Here are they plac'd, whose kind munificence
Made heaven-born Science raise her drooping head;
And on the labors of a future race
Entail'd their just reward. Thou amongst these,
Good Seaton! whose well-judg'd benevolence
Fost'ring fair Genius, bade the poet's hand
Bring annual off'erings to his Maker's shrine,
Shalt find the generous care was not in vain.—
Here is that fav'rite band whom mercy mild,
God's best-lov'd attribute, adorn'd; whose gate
Stood ever open to the stranger's call;
Who fed the hungry; to the thirsty lip
Reach'd out the friendly cup; whose care benign
From the rude blast secur'd the pilgrim's side!
Who hear'd the widow's tender tale, and shook
The galling shackle from the pris'ner's feet;
Who each endearing tie, each office knew
Of meek-eyed, heaven-descended Charity.
O Charity, thou nymph divinely fair!

Sweeter than those whom ancient poets bound
In amity's indissoluble chain,
The Graces! how shall I essay to paint
Thy charms, celestial maid! and in rude verse
Blazon those deeds thyself didst ne'er reveal?
For thee nor ranking envy can infect
Nor Rage transport, nor high o'erweening Pride
Puff up with vain conceit: ne'er didst thou smile
To see the sinner as a verdant tree
Spread his luxuriant branches o'er the stream;
While, like some blasted trunk, the righteous fall
Prostrate, forlorn. When prophecies shall fail, [more
When tongues shall cease, when knowledge is no
And this great day is come, thou by the throne
Shalt sit triumphant. Thither, lovely maid!
Bear me, oh, bear me on thy soaring wing!
And through the adamantine gates of Heav'n
Conduct my steps, safe from the fiery gulph,
And dark abyss, where Sin and Satan reign!
But can the Muse, her numbers all too weak,
Tell how that restless element of fire
Shall wage with seas and earth intestine war,
And deluge all creation? Whether (so
Some think) the comet, as through fields of air
Lawless he wanders, shall rush headlong on
Thwarting th' ecliptic, where th' unconscious earth
Rolls in her wonted course; whether the sun
With force centripetal into his orb
Attract her, long reluctant; or the caves,
Those dead volcanos, where engend'ring lie
Sulphureous minerals, from their dark abyss
Pour streams of liquid fire; while from above,
As erst on Sodom, Heaven's avenging hand
Rains fierce combustion —Where are now the work
Of art, the toil of ages?—Where are now
Th' imperial cities, sepulchres, and domes,

Trophies and pillars ? Where is Egypt's boast,
Those lofty pyramids, which high in air
Rear'd their aspiring heads, to distant times
Of Memphian's pride a lasting monument ?—
Tell me where Athens rais'd her tow'rs? where Thebes
Open'd her hundred portals ?—Tell me where
Stood sea-girt Albion ? where Imperial Rome,
Prop'd by seven hills, sat like a sceptred queen,
And aw'd the tributary world to peace ?—
Show me the rampart which o'er many a hill,
Through many a valley, stretch'd its wide extent,
Rais'd by that mighty monarch to repel
The roving Tartar, when with insult rude
'Gainst Pekin's towers he bent th' unerring bow.
But what is mimic art ? E en Nature's work,
Seas, meadows, pastures, the meand'ring streams,
And everlasting hills, shall be no more.
No more shall Teneriff, cloud-piercing height !
O'erhang th' Atlantic surge ; nor that sam'd cliff,
Thro' which the Persian steer'd with many a sail,
Throw to the Lemnian isle its evening shade
O'er half the wide Egean.—Where are now
The Alps that confin'd with unnumbered realms,
And from the Black Sea to the ocean stream
Stretch'd their extended arms ?—Where's Ararat,
That hill on which the faithful patriarch's Ark,
Which seven long months had voyag'd o'er its top,
First rested, when the earth with all her sons,
As now by streaming cataracts of fire,
Was whelm'd by mighty waters ?—All at once
Are vanish'd and dissolv'd ; no trace remains,
No mark of vain distinction : heaven itself,
That azure vault, with all those radiant orbs,
Sinks in the universal ruin lost.
No more shall planets round their central sun
Move in harmonious dance ; no more the moon

Hang out her ſilver lamp; and thoſe ſix'd ſtars,
Spangling the golden canopy of night,
Which oft the Tuſcan with his optic glaſs
Call d from their wondrous height, to read their
names
And magnitude. ſome winged miniſter
Shall quench; and (ſureſt ſign that all on earth
Is loſt) ſhall rend from heaven the myſtic bow.
Such is that awful, that tremendous day,
Whoſe coming who ſhall tell? For as a thief
Unheard, unſeen, it ſteals with ſilent pace
Through night s dark gloom,—Perhaps as here I ſit,
And rudely carol theſe incondite lays,
Soon ſhall the hand be check'd, and dumb the mouth
That liſps the faltring ſtram.—Oh, may it ne er
Intrude unwelcome on an ill-ſpent hour;
But find me wrapt in meditations high,
Hymning my great Creator?———
———" Pow'r Supreme!
" O everlaſting King! to thee I kneel,
" To thee I lift my voice. With fervent heat
" Melt, all ye elements! And thou high heaven,
" Shrink like a a ſhrivell'd ſcroll! But think, O Lord
" Think on the beſt, the nobleſt of thy works;
" Think on thine own bright image! Think on him
" Who died to ſave us from thy righteous wrath;
" And 'midſt the wreck of worlds remember man!"