

Thomas Paine

Reply to
The Bishop of Llandaff
(Extract)

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The Editorial Note is from the "Answer..."

Editorial Note.

IMMEDIATELY after perusal of Bishop Watson's reply to *The Age of Reason (An Apology for the Bible, 1796)* Paine began his answer to it. By reference to his letter to Jefferson (vol. iii. p. 377 of this edition) it will be seen that in October, 1800, he was still writing on it, and intended to publish it as Part III. of *The Age of Reason*. This plan, however, was changed, and in his Will (4. v.) this Part III. and the "Answer" are mentioned as different manuscripts. That both were not published by Paine was due to several considerations. After his arrival in America, October 30, 1802, he found the *odium theologicum* against him so strong that it involved President Jefferson and other friends, personal and political, and it even seems doubtful whether he could have found a publisher. His last pamphlet *Examination of the Prophecies* was, it will be seen, "printed for the Author," no other publisher being named. Madame Bonneville mentions that "he left the manuscript of his Answer to the Bishop of Llandaff; the Third Part of his *Age of Reason*; several pieces on Religious Subjects, prose and verse." (See my *Life of Paine*, vol. ii., p. 486.) Soon after Paine's death Madame Bonneville's reactionary religious tendencies which drew her back to the Catholic Church, led her to mutilate the manuscripts bequeathed to her. Her pious destructiveness was, however, to some extent, limited by her impecuniosity, as has been said in my introduction to *The Age of Reason*, and Col. Fellows managed to rescue several fragments and restore passages that had been erased. Fortunately another woman, without reactionary tendencies, the widow of Elihu Palmer, attended Paine during his illness in 1806, in the house of William Carver. (See *post*, note on the *Prospect Papers*.) About that time he gave Mrs. Palmer a portion of the manuscript of the "Answer" which he had transcribed, and after his death she presented this to the editor of the *Theophilanthropist* (New York), in which it was published, 1810, and from which (loaned me by Mr. E. Truelove) it is here reprinted. The strange fate that brought Paine's latest religious writings under expurgation of the Catholic priesthood ultimately consigned some, though accidentally, to the flames. (See preface to my *Life of Paine*.) The chief loss was, I believe, the part of his Answer alluded to in the opening fragment:

"Of these things I shall speak fully when I come in another part to treat of the ancient religion of the Persians, and compare it with the modern religion of the New Testament." The incidental sentences in the further fragment, on Job, in which he accuses the Jews of dishonoring God by ascribing to him the evils of nature, rendered it certain that Paine had grappled with Bishop Butler's argument against the Deists (that the God of the Bible was no more cruel than their God of Nature) which had been pressed by Bishop Watson. Although it is clear from other passages that Paine had no belief in a personal Ahriman (as indeed Zoroaster had not) he probably adopted something like the Zoroastrian dualism.

Concerning the Bishop's "Apology" it may be remarked that those who circulated it so industriously could have hardly been aware, generally, of its heretical contents. It concedes that Paine had discovered "real difficulties" in the Old Testament, in the Christian grove some "unsightly shrubs," discrepancies in the genealogies of Christ, and inconsistencies in Ezra; it admits that a certain law in Deuteronomy is ("improper," that Moses did not write some parts of the Pentateuch, and that "many learned men and good Christians" regard the Bible as fallible in matters not distinctively religious. Others who replied to Paine made large concessions in other points, the result being that when these concessions are added together they amount very nearly to a surrender of the biblical stronghold which Paine assailed. But as for Watson's "Apology," it is well known in the history of "Freethought" that the Bishop's work was second only to Paine's in the propagation of scepticism, partly, no doubt, through the extracts from the *Age of Reason* contained in it. Indeed the Bishop's own orthodoxy was suspected, his legitimate promotion was prevented, and among his papers was found (dated 1811) this bitter note: "I have treated my divinity as I twenty-five years ago treated my chemical papers: I have lighted my fire with the labour of a great portion of my life." There appears to me no doubt that both the Broad Church in England, and the rationalistic wing of the Quakers in America (Hicksites), were founded by *The Age of Reason* and the controversies raised by it.

In criticising these fragments it must be remembered that the portions published in 1810 were those thrown aside by Paine after transcribing or using them for a statement now lost, that the other por-

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tions were obtained only with Madame Bonneville's erasures, and that none of them ever received Paine's revision.

Extract From a Reply to the Bishop of Llandaff.

[This extract from Mr. Pain's reply to Watson, Bishop of Llandaff, was given by him, not long before his death, to Mrs. Palmer, widow of Elihu Palmer. He retained the work entire, and, therefore, must have transcribed this part, which was unusual for him to do. Probably he had discovered errors, which he corrected, in the copy. Mrs. Palmer presented it to the editor of a periodical work, entitled the *Theophilanthropist*, published in New York, in which it appeared in 1810.]

Genesis.

The bishop says, "the oldest book in the world is Genesis." This is mere assertion; he offers no proof of it, and I go to controvert it, and to show that the book of Job, which is not a Hebrew book, but is a book of the Gentiles, translated into Hebrew, is much older than the book of Genesis.

The book of Genesis means the book of Generations; to which are prefixed two chapters, the first and second, which contain two different cosmogonies, that is, two different accounts of the creation of the world, written by different persons, as I have shown in the preceding part of this work.¹

The first cosmogony begins at the first verse of the first chapter, and ends at the end of the third verse of the second chapter; for the adverbial conjunction thus, with which the second chapter begins, shows those three verses to belong to the first chapter. The second cosmogony begins at the fourth verse of the second chapter, and ends with that chapter.

In the first cosmogony the name of God is used, without any epithet joined to it, and is repeated thirty-five times. In the second cosmogony it is always the Lord God, which is repeated eleven times. These two different styles of expression show these two chapters to be the work of two different persons, and the contradictions they contain; show they cannot be the work of one and the same person; as I have already shown.

¹ See Letter to Erskine, page 165.

The third chapter; in which the style of Lord God is continued in every instance, except in the supposed conversation between the woman and the serpent (for in every place in that chapter where the writer speaks;—it is always the Lord God) shows this chapter to belong to the second cosmogony.

This chapter gives an account of what is called the fall of man, which is no other, than a fable borrowed from, and constructed upon the religion of Zoroaster, or the Persians, or the annual progress of the sun through the twelve signs of the Zodiac: It is the fall of the year, the approach and evil of winter, announced by the ascension of the autumnal constellation of the serpent of the Zodiac, and not the moral fall of man that is the key of the allegory, and of the fable in Genesis borrowed from it.

The fall of man in Genesis, is said to have been produced by eating a certain fruit, generally taken to be an apple. The fall of the year is the season for the gathering and eating the new apples of that year. The allegory, therefore, holds with respect to the fruit, which it would not have done had it been an early summer fruit. It holds also with respect to place. The tree is said to have been placed in the midst of the garden. But why in the midst of the garden more than in any other place? The situation of the allegory gives the answer to this question, which is; that the fall of the year, when apples and other autumnal fruits are ripe, and when days and nights are of equal length, is the mid-season between summer and winter.

It holds also with respect to clothing, and the temperature of the air. It is said in Genesis, chap. iii. ver. 21. "Unto Adam and his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins and clothed them. "But why" are coats of skins mentioned? This cannot be understood as referring to any thing of the nature of moral evil. The solution of the allegory gives again the answer to this question, which is, that the evil of winter, which follows the fall of the year, fabulously called in Genesis the fall of man, makes warm clothing necessary.

But of these things I shall speak fully when I come in another part to treat of the ancient religion of the Persians, and compare it with the modern religion of the New Testament.² At present, I shall confine myself to the comparative antiquity of the books of Genesis and

² Not published

Job, taking, at the same time, whatever I may find in my way with respect to the fabulousness of the book of Genesis; for if what is called the fall of man, in Genesis be fabulous or allegorical, that which is called the redemption in the New Testament, cannot be a fact. It is morally impossible, and impossible also in the nature of things, that moral good can redeem physical evil. I return to the bishop.

If Genesis be, as the bishop asserts, the oldest book in the world; and, consequently, the oldest and first written book of the Bible, and if the extraordinary things related in it, such as the creation of the world in six days, the tree of life, and of good and evil, the story of Eve and the talking serpent, the fall of man and his being turned out of Paradise, were facts, or even believed by the Jews to be facts, they would be referred to as fundamental matters, and that very frequently, in the books of the Bible that were written by various authors afterwards; whereas, there, is not a book, chapter, or verse of the Bible, from the time Moses is said to have written the book of Genesis, to the book of Malachi, the last book in the Bible; including a space of more than a thousand years, in which there is any mention made of these things, or any of them, nor are they so much as alluded to. How will the bishop solve this difficulty, which stands as a circumstantial contradiction to his assertion?

There are but two ways of solving it:

First, that the book of Genesis is not an ancient book; that it has been written by some (now) unknown person, after the return of the Jews from the Babylonian captivity, about a thousand years after the time that Moses is said to have lived, and put as a preface or introduction to the other books, when they were formed into a cannon in the time of the second temple, and, therefore, not having existed before that time, none of these things mentioned in it could be referred to in those books.

Secondly, that admitting Genesis to have been written by Moses, the Jews did not believe the things stated in it to be true, and, therefore as they could not refer to them as facts, they would not refer to them as fables. The first of these solutions goes against the antiquity of the book, and the second against its authenticity, and the bishop may take which he pleases.

But, be the author of Genesis whoever he may, there is abundant evidence to show, as well from the early Christian writers, as from the Jews themselves, that the things stated in that book were not believed to be facts. Why they have been believed as facts since that time, when better and fuller knowledge existed on the case, than is known now, can be accounted for only on the imposition of priest-craft.

Augustine, one of the early champions of the Christian church, acknowledges in his *City of God*, that the adventure of Eve and the serpent, and the account of Paradise, were generally considered as fiction, or allegory. He regards them as allegory himself, without attempting to give any explanation, but he supposes that a better explanation might be found than those that had been offered.

Origen, another early champion of the church, says, "What man of good sense can ever persuade himself that there were a first, a second, and a third day, and that each of these days had a night when there were yet neither sun, moon, nor stars. What man can be stupid enough to believe that God acting the part of a gardener, had planted a garden in the east, that the tree of life was a real tree, and that its fruit had the virtue of making those who eat of it live for ever?"

Marmonides, one of the most learned and celebrated of the Jewish rabbins, who lived in the eleventh century (about seven or eight hundred years ago) and to whom the bishop refers in his answer to me, is very explicit, in his book entitled *Morch Nebuchim*, upon the non-reality of the things stated in the account of the Creation in the book of Genesis.

"We ought not (says he) to understand, nor take according to the letter, that which is written in the book of the Creation, nor to have the same ideas of it with common men; otherwise, our ancient sages would not have recommended, with so much care, to conceal the sense of it, and not to raise the allegorical veil which envelopes the truths it contains. The book of Genesis, taken according to the letter, gives the most absurd and the most extravagant ideas of the Divinity. Whoever shall find out the sense of it, ought to restrain himself from divulging it. It is a maxim which all our sages repeat, and above all with respect to the work of six days. It may happen that some one, with the aid he may borrow from others, may hit upon the meaning of it. In that case he ought to impose silence upon himself; or if he

“speak of it, he ought to speak obscurely, and in an enigmatical manner, as I do myself, leaving the rest to be found out by those who can understand.”

This is, certainly, a very extraordinary declaration of Marmonides, taking all the parts of it.

First, he declares, that the account of the Creation in the book of Genesis is not a fact; that to believe it to be a fact, gives the most absurd and the most extravagant ideas of the Divinity.

Secondly, that it is an allegory.

Thirdly, that the allegory has a concealed secret.

Fourthly, that whoever can find the secret ought not to tell it.

It is this last part that is the most extraordinary. Why all this care of the Jewish rabbins, to prevent what they call the concealed meaning, or the secret, from being known, and, if known, to prevent any of their people from telling it? It certainly must be something which the Jewish nation are afraid or ashamed the world should know. It must be something personal to them as a people, and not a secret of a divine nature, which the more it is known, the more it increases the glory of the Creator, and the gratitude and happiness of man. It is not God's secret, but their own, they are keeping. I go to unveil the secret.

The case is, the Jews have stolen their cosmogony, that is, their account of the Creation, from the cosmogony of the Persians, contained in the book of Zoroaster, the Persian lawgiver, and brought it with them when they returned from captivity by the benevolence of Cyrus, King of Persia; for it is evident, from the silence of all the books of the Bible upon the subject of the Creation, that the Jews had no cosmogony before that time. If they had a cosmogony from the time of Moses, some of their judges who governed during more than four hundred years, or of their kings, the Davids and Solomons of their day, who governed nearly five hundred years, or of their prophets and psalmists, who lived in the meantime, would have mentioned it. It would, either as fact or fable, have been the grandest of all subjects for a psalm. It would have suited to a title the ranting, poetical genius of Isaiah, or served as a cordial to the gloomy Jeremiah. But not one word nor even a whisper, does any of the Bible authors give upon the subject.

To conceal the theft, the rabbins of the second temple have published Genesis as a book of Moses, and have enjoined secrecy to all their people, who, by travelling, or otherwise, might happen to discover from whence the cosmogony was borrowed, not to tell it. The evidence of circumstances is often unanswerable, and there is no other than this which I have given, that goes to the whole of the case, and this does.

Diogenes Laertius, an ancient and respectable author, whom the Bishop, in his answer to me, quotes on another occasion, has a passage that corresponds with the solution here given. In speaking of the religion of the Persians, as promulgated by their priests or magi, he says, the Jewish rabbins were the successors of their doctrine. Having thus spoken on the plagiarism, and on the non-reality of the book of Genesis, I will give some additional evidence that Moses is not the author of that book.

Eben-Ezra, a celebrated Jewish author, who lived about seven hundred years ago, and whom the bishop allows to have been a man of great erudition, has made a great many observations, too numerous to be repeated here, to show that Moses was not, and could not be, the author of the book of Genesis, nor any of the five books that bear his name.

Spinosa, another learned Jew, who lived about a hundred and thirty years ago, recites, in his treatise on the ceremonies of the Jews, ancient and modern, the observations of Eben-Ezra, to which he adds many others, to show that Moses is not the author of these books. He also says, and shows his reasons for saying it, that the Bible did not exist as a book, till the time of the Maccabees, which was more than a hundred years after the return of the Jews from the Babylonian captivity.

In the second part of the *Age of Reason*, I have, among other things, referred to nine verses in the 36th chapter of Genesis, beginning at the 31st verse, "These are the kings that reigned in Edom, before there reigned any king over the children of Israel," which it is impossible could have been written by Moses, or in the time of Moses, and could not have been written till after the Jew kings began to reign in Israel, which was not till several hundred years after the time of Moses.

This bishop allows this, and says "I think you say true." But he then quibbles, and says, that a small addition to a book does not destroy either the genuineness or authenticity of the whole book. This is priestcraft. These verses do not stand in the book as an addition to it, but as making a part of the whole book, and which it is impossible that Moses could write. The bishop would reject the antiquity of any other book if it could be proved from the words of the book itself that a part of it could not have been written till several hundred years after the reputed author of it was dead. He would call such a book a forgery. I am authorised, therefore, to call the book of Genesis a forgery.

Combining, then, all the foregoing circumstances together respecting the antiquity and authenticity of the book of Genesis a conclusion will naturally follow therefrom, these circumstances are:—

First, that certain parts of the book cannot possibly have been written by Moses, and that the other parts carry no evidence of having been written by him.

Secondly, the universal silence of all the following books of the Bible, for about a thousand years, upon the extraordinary things spoken of in Genesis, such as the creation of the world in six days—the garden of Eden—the tree of knowledge—the tree of life—the story of Eve and the serpent—the fall of man, and his being turned out of this fine garden, together with Noah's flood, and the tower of Babel.

Thirdly, the silence of all the books of the Bible upon even the name of Moses, from the book of Joshua until the second book of Kings, which was not written till after the captivity, for it gives an account of the captivity, a period of about a thousand years. Strange that a man "who is proclaimed as the historian of the Creation, the privy-counsellor and confidant of the Almighty—the legislator of the Jewish nation, and the founder of its religion; strange, I say, that even the name of such a man should not find a place in their books for a thousand years, if they knew or believed any thing about him, or the books he is said to have written.

Fourthly, the opinion of some of the most celebrated of the Jewish commentators, that Moses is not the author of the book of Genesis, founded on the reasons given for that opinion.

Fifthly, the opinion of the early Christian writers, and of the great champion of Jewish literature, Marmonides, that the book of Genesis is not a book of facts,

Sixthly, the silence imposed by all the Jewish rabbins, and by Marmonidos himself upon the Jewish nation, not to speak of any thing they may happen to know, or discover, respecting the cosmogony (or creation of the world) in the book of Genesis.

From these circumstances the following conclusions offer—

First: that the book of Genesis is not a book of facts.

Secondly: that as no mention is made throughout the Bible of any of the extraordinary things related in Genesis, that it has not been written till after the other books were written, and put as a preface to the Bible. Every one knows that a preface to a book, though it stands first, is the last written.

Thirdly, that the silence imposed by all the Jewish rabbins, and by Marmonides upon the Jewish nation, to keep silence upon everything related in their cosmogony, evinces a secret they are not willing should be known. The secret therefore explains itself to be, that when the Jews were in captivity in Babylon and Persia, they became acquainted with the cosmogony of the Persians, as registered in the Zend-Avesta, of Zoroaster, the Persian lawgiver, which, after their return from captivity, they manufactured and modelled as their own, and anti-dated it by giving to it the name of Moses. The case admits of no other explanation. From all which it appears that the book of Genesis, instead of being the oldest book in the world, as the bishop calls it, has been the last written book of the Bible, and that the cosmogony it contains, has been manufactured.

On the Names in the Book of Genesis.

EVERYTHING in Genesis serves as evidence or symptom, that the book has been composed in some late period of the Jewish nation. Even the names mentioned in it serve to this purpose.

Nothing is more common or more natural, than to name the children of succeeding generations, after the names of those who had been celebrated in some former generation. This holds good with respect to all the people, and all the histories we know of, and it does not hold good with the Bible. There must be some cause for this.

This book of Genesis tells us of a man whom it calls Adam, and of his sons Abel and Seth; of Enoch, who lived 365 years (it is exactly the number of days in a year,) and that then God took him up. It has the appearance of being taken from some allegory of the Gentiles on the commencement and termination of the year, by the progress of the sun through the twelve signs of the Zodiac, on which the allegorical religion of the Gentiles was founded.

It tells us of Methuselah who lived 969 years, and of a long train of other names in the fifth chapter. It then passes on to a man whom it calls Noah, and his sons, Shem, Ham, and Japhet; then to Lot, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and his sons, with which the book of Genesis finishes.

All these, according to the account given in that book, were the most extraordinary and celebrated of men. They were, moreover, heads of families. Adam was the father of the world. Enoch, for his righteousness, was taken up to heaven: Methuselah lived to almost a thousand years. He was the son of Enoch, the man of 365, the number of days in a year. It has the appearance of being the continuation of an allegory on the 365 days of a year, and its abundant productions. Noah was selected from all the world to be preserved when it was drowned, and became the second father of the world. Abraham was the father of the faithful multitude. Isaac and Jacob were the inheritors of his fame, and the last was the father of the twelve tribes.

Now, if these very wonderful men and their names, and the book that records them, had been known by the Jews, before the Babylonian captivity, those names would have been as common among the Jews before that period as they have been since. We now hear of thousands of Abrahams, Isaac's, and Jacobs among the Jews, but there were none of that name before the Babylonian captivity. The Bible does not mention one, though from the time that Abraham is said to have lived, to the time of the Babylonian captivity, is about 1400 years.

How is it to be accounted for, that there have been so many thousands, and perhaps hundreds of thousands of Jews of the names of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob since that period, and not one before? It can be accounted for but one way, which is that before the Babylonian captivity, the Jews had no such books as Genesis, nor knew any thing of the names and persons it mentions, nor of the things it re-

lates, and that the stones in it have been manufactured since that time. From the Arabic name Ibrahim (which is the manner the Turks write that name to this day) the Jews have, most probably, manufactured their Abraham.

I will advance my observations a point further, and speak of the names of Moses and Aaron, mentioned for the first time in the book of Exodus. There are now, and have continued to be from the time of the Babylonian captivity, or soon after it, thousands of Jews of the names of Moses and Aaron, and we read not of any of that name before that time. The Bible does not mention one. The direct inference from this is, that the Jews knew of no such book as Exodus, before the Babylonian captivity. In fact, that it did not exist before that time, and that it is only since the book has been invented, that the names of Moses and Aaron have been common among the Jews.

It is applicable to the purpose, to observe, that the picturesque work, called *Mosaic-work*, spelled the same as you would say the Mosaic account of the creation, is not derived from the word Moses but from *Muses*, (the *Muses*,) because of the variegated and picturesque pavement in the temples dedicated to the *Muses*. This carries a strong implication that the name Moses is drawn from the same source, and that he is not a real but an allegorical person, as Marmonides describes what is called the Mosaic account of the creation to be.

I will go a point still further. The Jews now know the book of Genesis, and the names of all the persons mentioned in the first ten chapters of that book, from Adam to Noah: yet we do not hear (I speak for myself) of any Jew of the present day, of the name of Adam, Abel, Seth, Enoch, Methuselah, Noah³, Shem, Ham, or Japhet, (names mentioned in the first ten chapters,) though these were, according to the account in that book, the most extraordinary of all the names that make up the catalogue of the Jewish chronology.

The names the Jews now adopt, are those that are mentioned in Genesis after the tenth chapter, as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, &c. How then does it happen, that they do not adopt the names found in the first ten chapters? Here is evidently a line of division drawn between

³ Noah is an exception; there are many of that name among the Jews.—Editor

the first ten chapters of Genesis, and the remaining chapters, with respect to the adoption of names. There must be some cause for this, and I go to offer a solution of the problem.

The reader will recollect the quotation I have already made from the Jewish rabbin, Marmonides, wherein he says, "We ought not to understand nor to take according to the letter that which is written in the book of the Creation. It is a maxim (says he) which all our sages repeat *above all*, with respect to the work of six days."

The qualifying expression, *above all*, implies there are other parts of the book, though not so important, that ought not to be understood or taken according to the letter, and as the Jews do not adopt the names mentioned in the first ten chapters, it appears evident those chapters are included in the injunction not to take them in a literal sense, or according to the letter; from which it follows, that the persons or characters mentioned in the first ten chapters, as Adam, Abel, Seth, Enoch, Methuselah, and so on to Noah, are not real but fictitious or allegorical persons, and, therefore the Jews do not adopt their names into their families. If they affixed the same idea of reality to them as they do to those that follow after the tenth chapter, the names of Adam, Abel, Seth, &c; would be as common among the Jews of the present day; as are those of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses and Aaron.

In the superstition they have been in, scarcely a Jew family would have been without an *Enoch*, as a presage of his going to heaven as ambassador for the whole family. Every mother who wished that the days of her son *might be long in the land* would call him *Methuselah*; and all the Jews that might have to traverse the ocean would be named Noah, as a charm against shipwreck and drowning.

This is domestic evidence against the book of Genesis, which joined to the several kinds of evidence before recited, show the book of Genesis not to be older than the Babylonian captivity, and to be fictitious. I proceed to fix the character and antiquity of the book of

JOB.

The book of Job has not the least appearance of being a book of the Jews, and though printed among the books of the Bible, does not belong to it. There is no reference in it to any Jewish law or cere-

mony. On the contrary, all the internal evidence it contains shows it to be a book of the Gentiles, either of Persia or Chaldea.

The name of Job does not appear to be a Jewish name. There is no Jew of that name in any of the books of the Bible, neither is there now that I ever heard of. The country where Job is said or supposed to have lived, or rather where the scene of the drama is laid, is called Uz, and there was no place of that name ever belonging to the Jews. If Uz is the same as Ur, it was in Chaldea, the country of the Gentiles.

The Jews can give no account how they came by this book, not who was the author, nor the time when it was written. Origen, in his work against Celsus, (in the first ages of the Christian church,) " says, that *the book of Job is older than Moses*. Eben-Ezra, the Jewish commentator, whom (as I have before said) the bishop allows to have been a man of great erudition, and who certainly understood his own language, says, that the book of Job has been translated from another language into Hebrew. Spinosa, another Jewish commentator of great learnings confirms the opinion of Eben-Ezra and says moreover, "*Je crois que Job était Gentil*,"⁴ I believe that Job was a Gentile.

The bishop, (in his answer to me) says, "that the structure of the whole hook of Job, in whatever light of history or drama it be considered, is founded on the belief that prevailed with the Persians and Chaldeans, and other Gentile nations, of a good and an evil spirit."

In speaking of the good and evil spirit of the Persians, the bishop writes them *Arimanius* and *Oromasdes*. I will not dispute about the orthography, because I know that translated names are differently spelled in different languages. But he has nevertheless made a capital error. He has put the Devil first; for Arimanius, or, as it is more generally written, *Ahriman*, is the *evil spirit* and *Oromasdes* or *Ormud* the good spirit. He has made the same mistake in the same paragraph, in speaking of the good and evil spirit of the ancient Egyptians *Osiris* and *Typho*; he puts *Typho* before *Osiris*. The error is just the same as if the bishop in writing about the Christian religion, or in preaching a sermon, were to say the *devil* and God. A priest ought to know his own trade better. We agree, however, about the structure of

⁴ Spinoza on the *Ceremonies of the Jews*, page 296, published in French at Amsterdam, 1678.

the book of Job, that it is Gentile. I have said in the second part of the *Age of Reason*, and given my reasons for it, that the drama of it is not *Hebrew*.

From the testimonies I have cited, that of Origen, who, about fourteen hundred years ago, said "that the book of Job was more ancient than Moses, that of Eben-Ezra, who, in his commentary on Job, says, it has been translated from another language (and Consequently from a Gentile language) into Hebrew; that of Spinosa, who not only says the same thing, but that the author of it was a Gentile; and that of the bishop, who says that the structure of the whole book is Gentile—it follows, then, in the first place, that the book of Job is not a book of the Jews originally.

Then, in order to determine to what people or nation any book of religion belongs, we must compare it with the leading dogmas and precepts of that people or nation; and, therefore, upon the bishop's own construction, the book of Job belongs to either the ancient Persians, the Chaldeans, or the Egyptians; because the structure of it is consistent with the dogma they held, that of a good and evil spirit, called in Job, God and Satan, existing as distinct and separate beings, and it is not consistent with any dogma of the Jews.

The belief of a good and an evil spirit, existing as distinct and separate beings, is not a dogma to be found in any of the books of the Bible. It is not till we come to the New Testament that we hear of any such dogma. There the person called the Son of God, holds conversation with Satan on a mountain, as familiarly as is represented in the drama of Job. Consequently the bishop cannot say in this respect, that the New Testament is founded upon the Old. According to the Old, the God of the Jews was the God of everything. All good and evil came from him. According to Exodus it was God, and not the Devil, that hardened Pharaoh's heart. According to the book of Samuel, it was an evil spirit from God that troubled Saul. And Ezekiel makes God to say, in speaking of the Jews, "*I gave them the statutes that were not good, and judgments by which they should not live.*" The Bible describes the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in such a contradictory manner, and under such a two fold character, there would be no knowing when he was in earnest and when in irony; when to believe, and when not.

As to the precepts, principles, and maxims, in the book of Job, they show that the people, abusively called the heathen in the books of the Jews, had the most sublime ideas of the Creator, and the most exalted devotional morality:—It was the Jews who dishonoured God. It was the Gentiles who glorified him. As to the fabulous personifications introduced by the Greek and Latin poets, it was a corruption of the ancient religion of the Gentiles, which consisted in the adoration of a first cause of the works of the creation, in which the sun was the *great visible agent*.

It appears to have been a religion of gratitude and adoration, and not of prayer and discontented solicitation. In Job we find adoration and submission, but not prayer. Even the ten commandments enjoin not prayer. Prayer has been added to devotion, by the church of Rome, as the instrument of fees and perquisites. All prayers by the priests of the Christian church,—whether public or private, must be paid for. It may be right individually to pray for virtues, or mental instruction, but not for things. It is an attempt to dictate to the almighty in the government of the world. But to return to the book of Job.

As the book of Job decides itself to be a book of the Gentiles the next thing is to find out to what particular nation it belongs and lastly, what is its antiquity.

As a composition, it is sublime, beautiful, and scientific: full of sentiment, and abounding in grand metaphorical description. As a drama, it is regular. The dramatis personæ, the persons performing the several parts, are regularly introduced, and speak without interruption or confusion. The scene, as I have before said, is laid in the country of the Gentiles, and the unities, though not always necessary in a drama, are observed here as strictly as the subject would admit.

In the last act, where the Almighty is introduced as speaking from the whirlwind, to decide the controversy between Job and his friends it is an idea as grand as poetical imagination can conceive. What follows of Job's future prosperity does not belong to it as a drama. It is an epilogue of the writer as the first verses of the first chapter, which gave an account of Job, his country and his riches, are the prologue.

The book carries the appearance of being the work of some of the Persian Magi, not only because the structure of it corresponds to the

dogmas of the religion of those people, as founded by Zoroaster, but from the astronomical references in it to the constellations of the zodiac and other objects in the heavens, of which the sun, in their religion called Mithra, was the chief. Job, in describing the power of God, (Job ix. v. 27,) says, "Who commandeth the sun, and it riseth not, and sealeth up the stars—who alone spreadeth out the heavens, and treadeth upon the waves of the sea—who maketh Arcturus, Orion, and Pleiades, and the chambers of the south." All this astronomical allusion is consistent with the religion of the Persians.

Establishing then the book of Job, as the work of some of the Persian, or Eastern Magi, the case naturally follows, that when the Jews returned from captivity, by the permission of Cyrus, king of Persia, they brought this book with them, had it translated into Hebrew, and put into their scriptural canons, which were not formed till after their return. This will account for the name of Job being mentioned in Ezekiel, (Ezekiel, chap. xiv. v. 14,) who was one of the captives, and also for its not being mentioned in any book said or supposed to have been written before the captivity.

Among the astronomical allusions in the book, there is one which serves to fix its antiquity. It is that where God is made to say to Job, in the style of reprimand, "Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades," (Chap. xxxviii. ver. 31.) As the explanation of this depends upon astronomical calculation, I will, for the sake of those who would not otherwise understand it, endeavour to explain it as clearly as the subject will admit.

The Pleiades are "a cluster of pale, milky stars, about the size of a man's hand, in the constellation Taurus, or in English, the Bull. It is one of the constellations of the zodiac, of which there are twelve, answering to the twelve months of the year. The Pleiades are visible in the winter nights, but not in the summer nights, being then below the horizon.

The zodiac is an imaginary belt or circle in the heavens, eighteen degrees broad, in which the sun apparently makes his annual course, and in which all the planets move. When the sun appears, to our view to be between us and the group of stars forming such or such a constellation, he is said to be in that constellation. Consequently the constellation he appears to be in, in the summer, are directly opposite

to those he appeared in, in the winter, and the same with respect to spring and autumn.

The zodiac, besides being divided into twelve constellations, is also, like every other circle, great or small, divided into 360 equal parts, called degrees; consequently each constellation contains 30 degrees. The constellations of the zodiac are generally called signs, to distinguish them from the constellations that are placed out of the zodiac, and this is the name I shall now use.

The precession of the equinoxes is the part most difficult to explain, and it is on this that the explanation chiefly depends.

The equinoxes correspond to the two seasons of the year when he sun makes equal day and night.

Sabbath or Sunday.⁵

The seventh day, or more properly speaking the period of seven days, was originally a numerical division of time and nothing more and had the bishop been acquainted with the history of astronomy, he would have known this. The annual revolution of the earth makes what we call a year.

The year is artificially divided into months, the months into weeks of seven days, the days into hours, &c. The period of seven days, like any other of the artificial divisions of the year, is only a fractional part thereof, contrived for the convenience of countries.

It is ignorance, imposition, and priestcraft, that have called it otherwise. They might as well talk of the Lord's month, of the Lord's week, of the Lord's hour, as of the Lord's day. All time is his, and no part of it is more holy or more sacred than another. It is, however, necessary to the trade of a priest, that he should preach up a distinction of days.

Before the science of astronomy was studied and carried to the degree of eminence to which it was by the Egyptians and Chaldeans, the people of those times had no other helps, than what common observation of the very visible changes of the sun and moon afforded, to enable them to keep an account of the progress of time. As far as history establishes the point, the Egyptians were the first peo-

⁵ The following is a disconnected part of the same work, and is now (1824) first published.

ple who divided the year into twelve months. Herodotus, who lived above two thousand two hundred years ago, and is the most ancient historian whose works have reached our time, says, they did this by the knowledge they had of the stars. As to the Jews, there is not one single improvement in any science or in any scientific art, that they ever produced. They were the most ignorant of all the illiterate world. If the word of the Lord had come to them, as they pretend, and as the bishop professes to believe, and that they were to be the harbingers of it to the rest of the world, the Lord would have taught them the use of letters, and the art of printing; for without the means of communicating the word, it could not be communicated; whereas letters were the invention of the Gentile world; and printing of the modern world. But to return to my subject—

Before the helps which the science of astronomy afforded, the people as before said, had no other, whereby to keep an account of the progress of time, than what the common and very visible changes of the sun and moon afforded. They saw that a great number of days made a year, but the account of them was too tedious, and too difficult to be kept numerically, from one to three hundred and sixty-five; neither did they know the true time of a solar year. It, therefore, became necessary, for the purpose of marking the progress of days, to put them into small parcels, such as are now called weeks; and which consisted as they now do of seven days. By this means the memory was assisted as it is with us at this day; for we do not say of any thing that is past, that it was fifty, sixty, or seventy days ago, but that it was so many weeks, or, if longer time, so many months. It is impossible to keep an account of time without helps of this kind.

Julian Scaliger, the inventor of the Julian period of 7,980 years, produced by multiplying the cycle of the moon, the cycle of the sun, and the years of an indiction, 19, 28, 15, into each other: says, that the custom of reckoning by periods of seven days was used by the Assyrians, the Egyptians, the Hebrews, the people of India, the Arabs, and by all the nations of the east.

In addition to what Scaliger says, it is evident that in Britain, in Germany, and the north of Europe, they reckoned by periods of seven days, long before the book called the bible, was known in those parts; and, consequently, that they did not take that mode of reckoning from anything written in that book.

That they reckoned by periods of seven days is evident from their having seven names and no more for the several days; and which have not the most distant relation to any thing in the book of Genesis, or to that which is, called the fourth commandment.

Those names are still retained in England, with no other alteration than what has been produced by moulding the Saxon and Danish languages into modern English.

1. Sunday from Sunne the sun, and dag, day, Saxon. *Søndag*, Danish. The day dedicated to the sun.

2. Monday, that is, moonday, from mona, the moon, Saxon; *Moano*, Danish. Day dedicated to the moon.

3. Tuesday, that is Tuisco's-day. The day dedicated to the idol *Tuisco*.

4. Wednesday, that is Woden's-day. The day dedicated to *Woden*, the mars of the Germans.

5. Thursday, that is, Thor's-day dedicated to the idol Thor.

6. Friday, that is *Friga's*-day. The day dedicated to *Friga*, the Venus of the Saxons.

Saturday from Seaten (Saturn) an idol of the Saxons; one of the emblems representing time, which continually terminates and renews itself: The last day of the period of seven days. When we see a certain mode of reckoning general among nations totally unconnected, differing from each other in religion and in government, and some of them unknown to each other, we may be certain that it arises from some natural and common cause, prevailing alike over all, and which strikes every one in the same manner. Thus all nations have reckoned arithmetically by tens, because the people of all nations have ten fingers. If they had more or less than ten, the mode of arithmetical reckoning would have followed that number, for the fingers are a natural numeration table to all the world. I now come to show why the period of seven days is so generally adopted.

Though the sun is the great luminary of the world, and the animating cause of all the fruits of the earth, the moron by renewing herself more than twelve times oftener than the sun, which does it but once a year, served the rustic world as a natural almanac, as the fingers served it for a numeration table. All the world could see the moon, her changes, and her monthly revolutions; and their mode of reckoning time, was accommodated as nearly as could possibly be done in

round numbers, to agree with the changes of that planet, their natural almanac.

The moon performs her natural revolution round the earth in twenty-nine days and a half. She goes from a new moon to a half moon, to a full moon, to a half moon gibbous or convex, and then to a new moon again. Each of these changes is performed in seven days and nine hours; but seven days is the nearest division in round numbers that could be taken; and this was sufficient to suggest the universal custom of reckoning by periods of seven days, since it is impossible to reckon time without some stated period.

How the odd hours could be disposed of without interfering with the regular periods of seven days, in case the ancients recommenced a new Septenary period with every new moon, required no more difficulty than it did to regulate the Egyptian Calender afterwards of twelve months of thirty days each, or the odd hour in the Julian Calender, or the odd days and hours in the French Calendar. In all cases it is done by the addition of complementary days; and it can be done in no otherwise.

The bishop knows that as the Solar year does not end at the termination of what we call a day, but runs some hours into the next day, as the quarters of the Moon runs some hours beyond seven days; that it is impossible to give the year any fixed number of days, that will not in course of years become wrong, and make a complimentary time necessary to keep the nominal year parallel with the solar year. The same must have been the case with those who regulated time formerly by lunar revolutions. They would have to add three days to every second moon, or in that proportion, in order to make the new moon and the new week commence together like the nominal year and the solar year.

Diodorus of Sicily, who, as before said, lived before Christ was born, in giving an account of times much anterior to his own, speaks of years, of three months, of four months, and of six months. These could be of no other than years composed of lunar revolutions, and, therefore, to bring the several periods of seven days, to agree with such years there must have been complementary days.

The moon was the first almanac the world knew; and the only one which the face of the heavens afforded to common spectators. Her

changes and revolutions have entered into all the Calenders that have been known in the known world.

The division of the year into twelve months, which, as before shown, was first done by the Egyptians, though arranged with astronomical knowledge, had reference to the twelve moons, or more properly speaking, to the twelve lunar revolutions that appear in the space of a solar year; as the period of seven days had reference to one revolution of the moon. The feasts of the Jews were, and those of the Christian church still are, regulated by the moon. The Jews observed the feasts of the new moon and full moon, and, therefore, the period of seven days was necessary to them.

All the feasts of the Christian church are regulated by the moon. That called Easter governs till the rest, and the moon governs Easter. It is always the first Sunday after the first full moon that happens after the vernal Equinox, or 21st of March.

In proportion as the science of astronomy was studied and improved by the Egyptians and Chaldeans, and the solar year regulated by astronomical observations, the custom of reckoning by lunar revolutions became of less use, and in time discontinued. But such is the harmony of all parts of the machinery of the Universe, that a calculation made from the motion of one part will correspond with the motion of some other.

The period of seven days deduced from the revolution of the moon round the earth, corresponded nearer than any other period of days would do to the revolution of the earth round the sun. Fifty-two periods of seven days make 364, which is within one day and some odd hours of a solar year; and there is no other periodical number that will do the same, till we come to the number thirteen, which is too great for common use, and the numbers before seven are "too small. The custom, therefore, of reckoning by periods of seven days, as best suited to the revolution of the moon, applied with equal convenience to the solar year, and became united with it. But the decimal division of time, as regulated by the French Calendar, is superior to every other method.

There is no part of the Bible that is supposed to have been written by persons who lived before the time of Josiah, (which was a thousand years after the time of Moses,) that mentions any thing about the sabbath as a day consecrated to that which is called the fourth

commandment, or that the Jews kept any such day. Had any such day been kept, during the thousand years of which I am speaking, it certainly would have been mentioned frequently; and that it should never be mentioned, is strong, presumptive, and circumstantial evidence that no such day was kept. But mention is often made of the feasts of the new-moon, and of the full-moon; for the Jews, as before shown, worshipped the moon; and the word sabbath was applied by the Jews to the feasts of that planet, and to those of their other deities. It is said in Hosea, chap. 2, verse 11, in speaking of the Jewish nation, "And I will cause all her mirth to cease, her feast-days, her new-moons, and her sabbaths, and all her solemn feasts." Nobody will be so foolish as to contend that the Sabbath is here spoken of as Mosaic sabbaths. The construction of the verse implies they are lunar sabbaths, or sabbaths of the moon. It ought also to be observed that Hosea lived in the time of Ahaz and Hezekiah, about seventy years before the time of Josiah, when the law called the law of Moses is said to have been found; and, consequently, the sabbaths that Hosea speaks of are sabbaths of the Idolatry.

When those priestly reformers, (impostors! should call them,) Hilkiah, Ezra, and Nehemiah, began to produce books under the name of the books of Moses, they found the word sabbath in use: and as to the period of seven days, it is, like numbering arithmetically by tens, from time immemorial. But having found them in use, they continued to make them serve to the support of their new imposition. They trumped up a story of the creation being made in six days, and of the Creator resting on the seventh, to suit with the lunar and chronological period of seven days; and they manufactured a commandment to agree with both. Impostors always work in this manner. They put fables for originals, and causes for effects.

There is scarcely any part of science, or any thing in nature, which those impostors and blasphemers of science, called priests, as well Christians as Jews, have not, at some time or other, perverted, or sought to pervert to the purpose of superstition and falsehood. Everything wonderful in appearance, has been ascribed to angels, to devils, or to saints. Every thing ancient has some legendary tale annexed to it. The common operations of nature have not escaped their practice of corrupting everything.

Future State.

The idea of a future state was an universal idea to all nations except the Jews. At the time and long before Jesus Christ and the men called his disciples were born, it had been sublimely treated of by Cicero in his book on old age, by Plato, Socrates, Xenophon, and other of the ancient theologians, whom the abusive Christian church calls heathen. Xenophon represents the elder Cyrus speaking after this manner:—

"Think not, my "dearest children, that when I depart from you, I shall be no more: but remember that my soul, even while I lived among you, was invisible to you; yet by my actions you were sensible it existed in this body. Believe it therefore existing still, though it be still unseen. How quickly would the honors of illustrious men perish after death, if their souls performed nothing to preserve their fame! For my own part, I could never think that the soul, while in a mortal body, lives, but when departed from it dies; or that its consciousness is lost, when it is discharged out of an unconscious habitation. But when it is freed from all corporeal alliance, it is then that it truly exists."

Since then the idea of a future existence was universal, it may be asked, what new doctrine does the New Testament contain? I answer, that of corrupting the theory of the ancient theologians, by annexing to it the heavy and gloomy doctrine of the resurrection of the body.

As to the resurrection of the body, whether the same body or another, it is a miserable conceit, fit only to be preached to man as an animal. It is not worthy to be called doctrine.—Such an idea never entered the brain of any visionary but those of the Christian church;—yet it is in this that the novelty of the New Testament consists. All the other matters serve but as props to this, and those props are most wretchedly put together.

Miracles.

The Christian church is full of miracles. In one of the churches of Brabant, they show a number of cannon balls, which, they say the virgin Mary in some former war, caught in her muslin apron as they came roaring out of the cannon's mouth, to prevent their hurting the saints of her favourite army. She does no such feats now-a-days. Perhaps the reason is, that the infidels have taken away her muslin apron. They show also, between Montmartre and the village of St.

Dennis, several places where they say St. Dennis stopped with his head in his hands after it had been cut off at Montmartre. The Protestants will call those things lies; and where is the proof that all the other things called miracles are not as great lies as those.

6

Christ, say those Cabalists, came in the fulness of time. And pray what is the fulness of time? The words admit of no idea. They are perfectly Cabalistical. Time is a word invented to describe to our conception a greater or less portion of eternity. It may be a minute, a portion of eternity measured by the vibration of a pendulum of a certain length;—it may be a day, a year, a hundred, or a thousand years, or any other quantity. Those portions are only greater or less comparatively.

The word fulness applies not to any of them. The idea of fulness of time cannot be conceived. A woman with child and ready for delivery, as Mary was when Christ was born, may be said to have gone her full time; but it is the woman that is full, not time.

It may also be said figuratively, in certain cases, that the times are full of events; but time itself is incapable of being full of itself. Ye hypocrites! learn to speak intelligible language.

It happened to be a time of peace when they say Christ was born; and what then? There had been many such intervals; and have been many such since. Time was no fuller in any of them than in the other. If he were he would be fuller now than he ever was before. If he was full then he must be bursting now. But peace or war have relation to circumstances, and not to time; and those Cabalists would be at as much loss to make out any meaning to fulness of circumstances, as to fulness of time; and if they could, it would be fatal; for fulness of circumstances would mean, when there are no more circumstances to happen; and fulness of time when there is no more time to follow.

Christ, therefore, like every other person, was neither in the fulness of one nor the other.

But though we cannot conceive the idea of fulness of time, because we cannot have conception of a time when there shall be no time—nor of fulness of circumstances, because we cannot conceive a state of existence to be without circumstances—we can often see,

⁶ There appears to be an omission here in the copy.

after a thing is past, if any circumstance, necessary to give the utmost activity and success to that thing, was wanting at the time that thing took place. If such a circumstance was wanting, we may be certain that the thing which took place, was not a thing of God's ordaining; whose work is always perfect, and his means perfect means. They tell us that Christ was the Son of God; in that case, he would have known everything; and he came upon earth to make known the will of God to man throughout the whole earth. If this had been true, Christ would have known and would have been furnished with all the possible means of doing it; and would have instructed mankind, or at least his apostles, in the use of such of the means as they could use themselves to facilitate the accomplishment of the mission; consequently he would have instructed them in the art of printing, for the press is the tongue of the world; and without which, his or their preaching was less than a whistle compared to thunder. Since, then, he did not do this, he had not the means necessary to the mission; and consequently had not the mission.

They tell us in the book of Acts, chap, ii, a very stupid story of the Apostles' having the gift of tongues; and cloven, tongues of fire descended and sat upon each of them. Perhaps it was this story of cloven tongues that gave rise to the notion of slitting Jackdaws tongues to make them talk. Be that however as it may, the gift of tongues, even if it were true, would be but of little use without the art of printing. I can sit in my chamber, as I do while writing this, and by the aid of printing, can send the thoughts I am writing through the greatest part of Europe, to the East Indies, and over all North America, in a few months, Jesus Christ and his apostles could not do this. They had not the means, and the want of means detects the pretended mission.

There are three modes of communication. Speaking, writing and printing. The first is exceedingly limited. A man's voice can be heard but a few yards of distance; and his person can be but in one place.

Writing is much more extensive; but the thing written cannot be multiplied but at great expense, and the multiplication will be slow and incorrect. Were there no other means of circulating what priests call the word of God (the Old and New Testament) than by writing copies, those copies could not be purchased at less than forty pounds sterling each; consequently, but few people could purchase them,

while the writers could scarcely obtain a livelihood by it. But the art of printing changes all the cases, and opens a scene as vast as the world. It gives to man a sort of divine attribute. It gives to him mental omnipresence. He can be everywhere and at the same instant; for wherever he is read he is mentally there.

The case applies not only against the pretended mission of Christ and his apostles, but against every thing that priests call the word of God, and against all those who pretend to deliver it ; ' for had God ever delivered any verbal word, he would have taught the means of communicating it. The one without the other is inconsistent with the wisdom we conceive of the *Creator*.

The third chapter of Genesis, verse 21, tells us that *God made coats of skins and cloathed Adam and Eve*. It was infinitely more important that man should be taught the art of printing, than that Adam should be taught to make a pair of leather breeches, or his wife a petticoat.

There is another matter, equally striking and important, that connects itself with those observations against this pretended word of God, this manufactured book, called *Revealed Religion*.

We know that whatever is of God's doing is unalterable by man beyond the laws which the Creator has ordained. We cannot make a tree grow with the root in the air and the fruit in the ground; we cannot make iron into gold nor gold into iron; we cannot make rays of light shine forth rays of darkness, nor darkness shine forth light. If there were such a thing, as a word of God, it would possess the same properties which all his other works do. It would resist destructive alteration. But we see that the book which they call the word of God has not this property. That book says, Genesis chap. 1, verse 27, "So God created man in his own image;" but the printer can make it say, So man created God in his own image. The words are passive to every transposition of them, or can be annihilated and others put in their places. This is not the case with any thing that is of God's doing; and, therefore, this book, called the word of God, tried by the same universal rule which every other of God's works within our reach can be tried by, proves itself to be a forgery.

The bishop says; that "*miracles are proper proofs of a divine mission*." Admitted. But we know that men, and especially priests, can tell lies and call them miracles. It is therefore necessary, that the

thing called a miracle be proved to be true, and also to be miraculous; before it can be admitted as proof of the thing called revelation.

The bishop must be a bad logician not to know that one doubtful thing cannot be admitted as proof that another doubtful thing is true. It would be like attempting to prove a liar not to be a liar, by the evidence of another, who is as great a liar as himself.

Though Jesus Christ, by being ignorant of the art of printing, shows he had not the means necessary to a divine mission, and consequently had no such mission; it does not follow that if he had known that art, the divinity of what they call his mission would be proved thereby, any more than it proved the divinity of the man who invented printing. Something, therefore, beyond printing, even if he had known it, was necessary as a miracle, to have proved that what he delivered was the word of God; and this was that the book in which that word should be contained; which is now called the Old and New Testament, should possess the miraculous property, distinct from all human books, of resisting alteration. This would be not only a miracle, but an ever existing and universal miracle; whereas, those which they tell us of, even if they had been true, were momentary and local; they would leave no trace behind, after the lapse of a few years, of having ever existed; but this would prove, in all ages and in all places, the book to be divine and not human, as effectually, and as conveniently, as aquafortis proves gold to be gold by not being capable of acting upon it; and detects all other metals and all counterfeit composition; by dissolving them. Since then the only miracle capable of every proof is wanting, and which every thing that is of a divine origin possesses; all the tales of miracles with which the Old and New Testament are filled, are fit only for impostors to preach and fools to believe.