

Cyrus had been hinder'd from going thither, a Year before, by his Mother's Sickness. He was exceedingly pleas'd with a Journey to *Babylon*, not only that he might serve his Country, but likewise to converse with the *Jews*, whose Oracles (as he had learn'd from *Zoroaster*,) contain'd Predictions of his future Greatness; and he had no less a Desire to see the miserable Condition of King *Nabucodonosor*, the Report of which was spread over all the East. He left *Persia*, cross'd *Susiana*, and soon arriv'd at *Babylon*.



T H E



T H E
T R A V E L S
O F
C Y R U S.

B O O K V I I I.

S *EMIRAMIS* had founded the City of *Babylon*; but *Nabucodonosor* had given it its principal Beauties. Having finish'd his Wars abroad, and being in full Peace at home, he had apply'd his Thoughts to make his Capital one of the Wonders of the World, and with that View transported thither a great Number of Captives, of all the Nations he had conquer'd.

It

* It was situated in a vast Plain, water'd by the *Euphrates*. The Fruitfulness of the Soil was so great, that it yielded the King as much as the half of his Empire, and produc'd two hundred times more than was sown.

The Walls of the City were built of large Brick, cemented together with *Bitumen*, or a Slime arising out of the Earth, which in time became harder than Marble. They were fourscore Foot thick, three hundred and fifty high, and form'd a perfect Square, twenty Leagues in Compass. A hundred and fifty Towers were rais'd at certain Distances upon these inaccessible Walls, and commanded all the Country round about.

In the Sides of these Walls were an Hundred Gates of Brass, through which might be seen passing to and fro an innumerable Throng of People, of all Nations. Fifty great Streets travers'd the City from Side to Side, and by crossing each other formed above six hundred large Divisions, in which were stately Palaces, delightful Gardens and magnificent Squares.

The *Euphrates* flow'd through the Middle of the City; and over this River was a Bridge, built with surprising Art. At its two Extremities were two Palaces. The old one to the East, the new one to the West. Near the old Palace was the Temple of *Belus*. From the Center of this Building rose a Pyramid, more prodigious than those of *Egypt*. It was six hundred Foot high, and compos'd of eight Towers, one above another. The uppermost was

* The following Particulars are to be found in Herodotus, who had been upon the Spot. B. 1. Diad. Sic. B. 2. Quint. Curt. B. 5. Ptolemaeus Connexion.

the holy Place, where the principal Mysteries were celebrated. From the Top of this Tower, the *Babylonians* observ'd the Motions of the Stars, which was their favourite Study, and by which they made themselves famous in other Nations.

At the other End of the Bridge stood the new Palace, which was eight Miles in Circuit. Its famous hanging Gardens, which were so many large Terraces one above another, rose like an Amphitheatre to the Height of the City Walls. The whole Mass was supported by divers Arches built upon other Arches, all cover'd with broad Stones strongly cemented, and over them was first a Layer of Reed, mix'd with *Bitumen*, then two Rows of Bricks, and over these were laid thick Sheets of Lead, which made the whole impenetrable to Rain, or any Moisture. The Mould which cover'd all was of that Depth, as to have room enough for the greatest Trees to take Root in it. In these Gardens were long Walks, which ran as far as the Eye could reach, Bowers, green Plots, and Flowers of all Kinds; Canals, Basins, and Aqueducts, to water and adorn this Place of Delights. A most surprising Collection of all the Beauties of Nature and Art.

The Author, or rather the Creator, of so many Prodiges, equal to *Hercules* in Bravery, and superior to the greatest Men by his Genius, was, after incredible Successes, fallen into a kind of Madness. He imagin'd himself transform'd into a Beast, and had all the Fierceness of one.

As soon as *Cyrus* was arriv'd at *Babylon*, he went to see the Queen *Amstis*. This Princess had, for near seven Years, been plung'd in a deep Sadness; but she was beginning to moderate her Grief, be-

cause the *Jews*, who were then Captives in the City, had promis'd her that the King should be cur'd in a few Days. The Queen was waiting that happy Moment with great Impatience. The Wonders which she had seen perform'd by *Daniel*, had made her confide in what he said. *Cyrus*, from a respectful Consideration of the Affliction of *Amytis*, avoided speaking to her on the principal Design of his Journey. He was sensible, that it was not a favourable Conjunction to treat of political Affairs, and waited, like the Queen, for the King's Cure; but not with the same Hopes. In the mean while, he endeavour'd to satisfy his Curiosity of knowing the Religion and Manners of the *Israelites*.

Daniel was not then at *Babylon*, but was gone to visit and console the *Jews*, dispers'd throughout *Assyria*. *Amytis* made *Cyrus* acquainted with an illustrious *Hebrew*, named *Elezzer*, for whom she had a particular Esteem. The Prince being inform'd by him, that the People of God did not look upon the King's Frenzy as a natural Dilemper, but as a Punishment from Heaven, enquir'd of him the Cause of it.

‘ *Nabuchodonosor*, said the *Hebrew Sage*, ‘ being led away by impious Men who were about him, came at length to such an Excess of Irreligion, that he blasphem'd against *The most High*, and to crown his Impiety, he made, of our sacred Vessels, and of the Riches which he had brought from his Expedition into *Judea*, a golden Statue, of an enormous Size, and resembling his own Person. He had it erected, and consecrated, in the Plain of *Dara*, and commanded that it should be ador'd, by all the Nations whom he had subdu'd.

‘ He

‘ He was admonish'd by divine Dreams, that he should be punish'd for his Idolatry and Pride in this Life. A *Hebrew*, nam'd *Daniel*, a Man famous for Science, Virtue, and his Knowledge of Futurity, explain'd to him those Dreams, and denounc'd God's Judgments upon him, which were ready to break forth.

‘ The Words of the Prophet made some Impression upon the King's Mind; but being surrounded by prophane Men, who despis'd the heavenly Powers, he neglected the divine Admonition, and gave himself up a new to his Impiety.

‘ At the End of the Year, while he is walking in his Gardens, admiring the Beauty of his own Works, the Splendor of his Glory, and the Greatness of his Empire; he exalts himself above Humanity, and becomes an Idolater of his own proud Imaginations. He hears a Voice from Heaven, saying *O King Nabuchodonosor, to thee it is spoken, The Kingdom is departed from thee, and they shall drive thee from Men, and thou shalt eat Grass as the Beasts of the Field, till seven Years are past, and until thou know that The Most high ruleth over all the Kingdoms of the Universe, and giveth them to whomsoever he will.*

‘ In the same Hour was the Thing fulfill'd, and his Reason was taken from him. He was seiz'd with a Frenzy, and with Fits of raging Madneis. In vain they attempted to hold him by Chains. He broke all his Irons, and ran away into the Mountains and Plains, roaring like a Lion. No one can approach him, without running the Hazard of being torn to pieces. He has no Repose, except one Day in the Week, which is the Sabbath.

batb. Then his Reason returns, and he holds Discourses worthy of Admiration*. It is now almost seven Years that he has been in this Condition, and we are expecting his total Deliverance in a few Days, according to the divine Prediction.

Here *Cyrus* sigh'd, and could not forbear saying to *Arospes*: 'In all the Countries through which I pass, I see nothing but sad Examples of the Weakness and Misfortunes of Princes. In *Egypt*, *Aphris* is dethron'd, and made a Sacrifice by his blind Friendship for a perfidious Favourite. At *Sparta*, two young Kings were going to ruin the State, if not prevented by the Wisdom of *Chilo*. At *Corinth*, *Periander* makes himself and his whole Family miserable. At *Athens*, *Pisistratus* is twice dethron'd, as a Punishment from the Gods for his Artifice. At *Samos*, *Polycrates* suffers himself to be impos'd upon so far, as to persecute Innocence. At *Crete*, the Successors of *Minos* have destroy'd the most perfect of all Governments. Here, *Nabuchodonosor* draws upon him the Wrath of Heaven, by his Impiety. Great Oromazes! was it only in your Anger then, that you gave Kings to Mortals? Are Grandeur and Virtue incompatible?

The Morning of the Sabbath, *Cyrus*, accompany'd by *Eleazer*, went to the Place which the King of *Babylon* frequented. They beheld the unfortunate Prince come out of the *Euphrates*, and lie down under some Willows, which were upon the Banks of the River. They approach'd him with Silence. He was stretch'd upon the Grass, his Eyes turn'd towards Heaven; and sending forth from time to time deep Sighs, accompany'd with bitter Tears. In the midst of his Misfortunes there was still up

* See *Josuephus*.

on his Face an Air of Greatness, which shew'd, that *The Most High*, in punishing, had not entirely forsaken him. They forbore, out of Respect, to speak to him, or to interrupt the profound Grief, in which he seem'd to be plung'd.

Cyrus, deeply struck with the sad Situation of this great Prince, stood immoveable, and on his Countenance appeared all the Tokens of a Soul seiz'd with Terror and Compassion. The King of *Babylon* observ'd it, and without knowing who he was, said to him: 'Heaven suffers me to have Intervals of Reason, to make me sensible, that I do not possess it as a Property; that it comes from another; that a superior Being takes it from me, and restores it, when he pleases; and that he who gives it me is a sovereign Intelligence, who holds all Nature in his Hand, and can dispose it in order, or overturn it, according to his Pleasure.

'Heretofore, being blinded by Pride, and corrupted by Prosperity, I said within my self, and to all the false Friends who were about me; *We are born, as it were by Chance, and after Death we shall be, as if we had never been. The Soul is a Spark of Fire, which goes out when the Body is reduc'd to Ashes. Come, let us enjoy the present Good, let us make haste to exhaust all Pleasures. Let us drink the most delicious Wines, and perfume our selves with odoriferous Oils. Let us crown our selves with Roses before they wither. Let Strength be our only Law, and Pleasure the Rule of our Duty. Let us make the Just fall into our Snares, because he dishonours us by his Virtue. Let us examine him with Affronts and Torments, that we may see whether he be sincere.* Thus it was that I blasphem'd against Heaven.

‘ Heaven, and this is the Source of my Miseries.
 ‘ Alas! I have but too much deserv’d them.’

Scarcely had he pronounc’d these Words, when he started up, ran away, and hid himself in the neighbouring Forest. This sad Spectacle augmented the young Prince’s Respect for the Deity, and redoubled his Desire of being fully instructed in the Religion of the *Hebrews*.

He frequently saw *Eleazer*, with whom he came by degrees into a strict Friendship. The *Eternal*, being watchful over *Cyrus*, whom he had chosen, to bring about the Deliverance of his People, thought fit, by his Conversation with the *Hebrew Sage*, to prepare him to receive, soon after, the Instructions of the Prophet *Daniel*.

Ever since the Captivity of the *Israelites*, the *Hebrew* Doctors, who were dispers’d in the several Nations, had apply’d themselves to the Study of the profane Sciences, and endeavour’d to reconcile Religion with Philosophy. In order thereto, they embrac’d, or forsook the literal Sense of the sacred Books, according as it suited with their Notions, or was repugnant to them. They taught, that the *Hebrew* Traditions were often folded up in Allegories, according to the Eastern Custom; but they pretended to explain them. This was what gave Rise afterwards to that famous Sect among the *Hebrews*, call’d the *Allogorists*.

Eleazer was of the Number of those Philosophers, and was, with Reason, esteem’d one of the greatest *Genius*’s of his Age. He was vers’d in all the Sciences of the *Chaldeans* and *Egyptians*, and had held several Disputes with the Eastern *Magi*, to prove, that the Religion of the *Jews* was not only the most ancient, but the most conformable to Reason.

Cyrus having divers times discours’d with *Eleazer*, upon all he had learnt in *Persia*, *Egypt*, and *Greece*, concerning the great Revolutions which had happen’d in the Universe, desir’d him one Day, to explain to him the Doctrine of the *Hebrew* Philosophers, concerning the three States of the World.

‘ We adore, answer’d *Eleazer*, but *One only God*, infinite, eternal, immense. He has defin’d himself, *HE WHO IS*, to denote, that he exists of himself, and that all other Beings exist only by him. Being rich by the Riches of his own Nature, and happy by his own supreme Felicity, he had no need to produce other Substances. Nevertheless, by a noble and free Effort of his beneficent Will, he has thought fit to create divers Orders of Intelligences, to make them happy.

‘ Man first forms the Plan of his Work before he executes it, but *The Eternal* conceives, produces, and disposes every Thing in order, by the same Act, without Labour or Succession. He thinks and immediately all the possible Ways of representing himself outwardly, appear before him. A World of Ideas is form’d in the divine Intellect. He wills, and instantly real Beings, resembling those Ideas, fill his Imminity. The whole Universe, and the vast Expanse of Nature, distinct from the divine Essence is produc’d.

‘ The Creator has represented himself two ways, by simple Pictures, and by living Images. Hence there are two sorts of Creatures essentially different, *material Nature*, and *intelligent Nature*. The one represents only some Perfections of its Original. The other knows and enjoys it. There are an in-

‘ finite Number of Spheres, full of intelligent Beings.

‘ Sometimes these Spirits plunge themselves into the unfathomable Depths of Divine Nature, to adore its Beauties, which are ever new. At other times they admire the Perfections of the Creator in his Works. This is their two-fold Happiness. They cannot incessantly contemplate the Splendor of the divine Essence. Their weak and finite Nature requires that he should sometimes veil himself from their Eyes. This is the Reason why the material World was created; the Refreshment of the Intellectual.

‘ Two sorts of Spirits lost this Happiness by their Disloyalty. The one call’d *Cherubim*, were of a superior Order, and are now infernal Spirits. The other call’d *Ifchim*, were of a less perfect Nature. These are the Souls which actually inhabit mortal Bodies.

‘ The Chief of the Cherubim approach’d nearer to the Throne than the other Spirits. He was crown’d with the most excellent Gifts of *The most High*; but lost his Wisdom by a vain Complacency in himself. Being enamour’d with his own Beauty, he beheld and consider’d himself, and was dazzled with the Lustre of his own Light. He first grew proud, then rebell’d, and drew into his rebellion all the *Genii* of his Order.

‘ The *Ifchim* became too much attach’d to material Objects, and in the Enjoyment of created Pleasures, forgot the Supreme Beatitude of their Nature. The first were elected with Pride, the others debas’d by Sensuality.

‘ Upon

‘ Upon this there happen’d a great Revolution in the Heavens. The Sphere of the *Cherubim* became a dark *Chaos*, where those unhappy Intelligences explore, without Consolation, the Fecuity they have lost by their own Fault.

‘ The *Ifchim*, being less guilty, because they had find through Weakness, were condemn’d by *The Almighty* to animate mortal Bodies. God suffer’d them to fall into a kind of Lethargy, that they might forget their former State: Nevertheless, as a punishment of their Crime, he ordain’d that their Abode should be an uneasy Prison.

‘ The Earth, which was before luminous, chang’d its Form. It was no longer a Place of Delights, but of a painful Banishment, where the continual War of the Elements subjected Men to Diseases and Death. This is the hidden Meaning of the first Allegory of the *Hebrew Law-giver*, concerning the Terrestrial Paradise and the Fall of our first Parents. *Adam* does not represent one single Man, but all Mankind.

‘ Souls, being once disunited from their Origin, had no longer any fix’d Principle of Union. The Order of Generation, mutual Wants, and Self-love, became, here below, the only Bonds of our transient Society, and took the Place of Justice Friendship, and divine Love, which unites the heavenly Spirits.

‘ Divers other Changes happen’d in this mortal Abode, suitable to the State of Souls, who suffer and deserve to suffer, and are to be cur’d by their Sufferings.

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' In the End, the great Prophet, whom we call the
 ' *Messiah*, will come and renew the Face of the Earth.
 ' It is *He*, who is the Head, and the Conductor of all
 ' intelligent Natures. He is the first-born of all
 ' Creatures. The Deity has united himself to him
 ' in an intimate manner, from the Beginning of the
 ' World. It is *He*, who convers'd with our Fathers
 ' under a human Form. It is *He*, who appear'd to
 ' our Law-giver upon the Holy Mount. It is *He*,
 ' who spoke to the Prophets under a visible Appear-
 ' ance. It is *He*, who is call'd every where *The De-*
 ' *sire of Nations*, because he has been imperfectly
 ' known to them, by an Ancient Tradition, with the
 ' Origin of which they are unacquainted. To con-
 ' clude, it is *He*, who will come in Triumph upon
 ' the Clouds, to restore the Universe to it's primitive
 ' Splendor and Felicity. The Foundation of the
 ' whole Law, and of all the Prophecies, is the Idea of
 ' *A Nature, pure in its Original, corrupted by Sin, and to*
 ' *be one Day restor'd.*'

Cyrus almost transported with hearing this Account,
 was unwilling to interrupt the Philosopher; but see-
 ing that he had done speaking, he said, ' You give
 ' me a much higher Idea of the Divinity, than the
 ' Philosophers of other Nations. They have re-
 ' presented the first Principle to me, only as a
 ' sovereign Intellect, who separated and reduc'd to
 ' Order, the Chaos of an eternal Matter. But
 ' you teach me, that HE WHO IS, has not only
 ' regularly dispos'd that Matter, but produc'd it; that
 ' he has given it *Being*, as well as *Motion*; and has
 ' fill'd his Immensity with new *Substances*, as well as
 ' new *Forms*. The *Anioteles*, *Jyngas*, *Cosmogoges*, all
 ' the *Genii* which inhabit the *Empyreum*, and all the
 ' subordinate Divinities, ador'd in other Countries,
 ' are not Parts of his Substance, but Images of his
 ' Great-

' Greatness, and mere Effects of his Power. You
 ' shew me, that in all Nature there is but one supreme
 ' Deity, who gives Existence, Life and Reason to all
 ' Beings. This then is the God of *Israel*, so superi-
 ' or to those of all other Nations.

' I see that the Doctrine of the *Persian Egyptians*
 ' and *Greeks*, concerning the three States of the
 ' World, is perfectly conformable to your Theology.

' *Zoroaster*, being instructed in the Sciences of the
 ' *Gymnosophistes*, spoke to me of the first Empire of
 ' *Oromazes*, before the Rebellion of *Arimanius*, as of a
 ' State in which Spirits were happy and perfect. In
 ' *Egypt*, the Religion of *Hermes* represents the Reign
 ' of *Osiris*, before the Monster *Typhon* broke through
 ' the *Mundane Egg*, as a State exempt from Miseries
 ' and Passions. *Orpheus* has sung the golden Age as
 ' States of Simplicity and Innocence. Each Nati-
 ' on has formed an Idea of this primitive World, ac-
 ' cording to its Genius. The *Magi*, who are all A-
 ' stronomers, have plac'd it in the *Stars*. The *Egyp-*
 ' *tians*, who are all Philosophers, have fancy'd it a
 ' *Republick of Sages*. The *Greeks*, who delight in ru-
 ' ral Scenes, have describ'd it as a *Country of Shepherds*.

' The *Sibyls* have foretold the coming of a Hero,
 ' who is to descend from Heaven, to bring back *As-*
 ' *traea* to the Earth. The *Persians* call him *Mylbras*,
 ' the *Egyptians*, *Orus*; the *Greeks*, *Jupiter*, the *Conduc-*
 ' *tor*, and *Saviour*. It is true they differ in their De-
 ' scriptions, but all agree in the same Truths: They are
 ' all sensible, that Man is not now what he was, and
 ' believe that he will one Day assume a more perfect
 ' Form. God cannot suffer an eternal Blemish in his
 ' Work. Evil had a Beginning, and it will have an
 ' End. Then will be the Triumph of Light over
 ' Darkness. *That is the Time fix'd by Destiny, for*
 ' the

the total Destruction of *Typhon, Arimanius, and Pluton*.
That is the preterib'd Period for re-establishing
the Reign of *Ormazdes, Osiris and Saturn*.

Nevertheless, there arises one great Difficulty,
which no Philosopher has yet been able to solve me.
I do not conceive how Evil could happen under the Go-
vernment of a God, who is good, wise and powerful. If
he be wise, he might have foreseen it. If he be power-
ful, he might have hinder'd it: And if he be good, he
would have prevented it. Help me to answer this great
Difficulty. Shew me which way to justify the eter-
nal Wisdom. Why has God created free Beings capable
of Evil? Why has he bestow'd on them so a fatal Gift?

Liberty, answer'd *Eleazer*, is a necessary Conse-
quence of our reasonable Nature. To be free, is
to be able to chuse. To chuse, is to prefer. Every
Being capable of Reasoning and Comparing can
chuse, and consequently prefer. This is the es-
sential Difference between Bodies and Spirits: The
one are necessarily transported wherever the mov-
ing Power carries them; The other are mov'd only
by a Reason which enlightens them. God could
not give us Intelligence, without giving us Liberty.

But could he not, reply'd *Cyrus*, have hinder'd us
from abusing our Liberty, by shewing us Truth
with so clear an Evidence, that it would have been
impossible to mistake; When the sovereign Beauty
displays his infinitely attractive Charms, they seize
and engross the whole Will, and make all inferior
Amiability vanish, as the rising Sun dispels the
Shades of Night.

The purest Light, answer'd *Eleazer*, does not illu-
minate those who will not see. Now, every finite
Intelligence may turn his Eyes from the Truth. I

have

have already told you that Spirits cannot incessantly
contemplate the Splendors of the divine Essence;
they are oblig'd from time to time to cover their
Faces. 'Tis then that Self-love may seduce and
make them take an apparent Good for a Real one.
And this false Good may dazzle and draw them a-
way from the true Good. Self-love is inseparable
from our Nature. God, in loving himself, essenti-
ally loves Order, because he is Order; but the Crea-
ture may love it self without loving Order; and
hence every created Spirit is necessarily and essenti-
ally fallible. To ask why God has made fallible
Intelligences, is to ask why he has made them finite,
or why he has not created Gods as perfect as him-
self? A Thing impossible.

Cannot God, continu'd *Cyrus*, employ his Almight-
y Power, to force free Intelligences to see and re-
lish Truth?

Under the Empire of God himself, answer'd *Ele-
azer*, despotick Rule and Liberty are incompatible.
Inclination, Will, and Love, are never forc'd. God
does every Thing he pleases in Heaven and upon
Earth; but he will not employ his absolute Power
to destroy the free Nature of intelligent Beings. If
he did so, they would act no longer from Inclinati-
on and Choice, but by Force and Necessity. They
would obey, but they would not love. Now Love
is what God demands, and it is the only Worship
worthy of him. He does not require it for any Ad-
vantage to himself, but for the Good of his Crea-
tures. He will have them happy, and contribute to
their own Happiness; happy by Love, and by
a Love of pure Choice. It is thus that their Merit
augments their Felicity.

I begin to understand you, said *Cyrus*. Moral
Evil does not come from the supremely good, wise,
and

and powerful Being, who cannot be wanting to his Creatures, but from the Weakness inseparable from our limited Nature, which may be dazzled and deceiv'd. *But what is the Cause of natural Evil? Might not the Goodness of God have brought back his offending Creatures to Order, without making them suffer? A good Father will never make use of Punishments, when he can gain his Children by Mildness.*

I have already told you, *answer'd Eleazar*, that we are capable of a twofold Happiness. If God, after our Rebellion, continu'd to us the Enjoyment of created Pleasure, we should never aspire to an Union with the Creator. We should content our selves with an inferior Happiness, without any Endeavours to attain to the supreme Beatitude of our Nature. The only Means to give free Beings a Dislike and Detestation of their Disorder, is to make them feel, for a time, the fatal Consequences of their wandering from him. God owes it to his Justice, to punish the Guilty, that he may not countenance Crimes; and his Goodness likewise requires it, in order to correct and inform the Criminal. *Natural Evil is necessary to cure moral Evil: Suffering is the only Remedy for Sin.*

I comprehend you, *said Cyrus*. God could not deprive Spirits of Liberty, without depriving them of Intelligence; nor hinder them from being fallible, without making them infinite; nor restore them after their Fall, by expiatory Pains, without violating his Justice and Goodness. Exempt from all Passion, he has neither Anger nor Revenge. He chastises only to amend; and punishes, only to cure.

Yes, *answer'd Eleazar*, all will suffer more or less, as they are more or less gone astray. Those who have never departed from their Duty, will for ever
excel

excel the rest in Knowledge and in Happiness. Those who delay their Return to it, will be always inferior to the other in Perfection and Felicity. The Return of Spirits to their first Principle, resembles the Motion of Bodies towards their Center. The nearer they approach to it, the more their Velocity augments.

This is the Order establish'd by eternal Wisdom, the immutable Law of distributive Justice; from which God cannot deviate, without being essentially wanting to himself, countenancing Rebellion, and exposing all finite and fallible Beings to the Danger of disturbing the universal Harmony.

The Conduct of God shocks us, only because we are *finite and mortal*. Let us raise our Thoughts above this Place of Banishment. Let us run over all the Celestial Regions. We shall see Disorder and Evil no where but in this Corner of the Universe. The Earth is but an *Atom* in comparison of *Immensity*. The whole Extent of Time is but a *Moment* in respect of *Eternity*. These two infinitely small Points will one Day disappear. Yet a little Moment, and Evil will be no more. But our limited Minds, and our Self-love, magnify Objects, and make us look upon that *Point*, which divides the two Eternities, as something great.

This *contin'd Eleazar*, is what even the Understanding of Man can answer, to justify the Ways of God. It is thus that we confound Reason by Reason it self. It is by these Principles that our Doctors silence the Philosophers of the Gentiles, who blaspheme against the sovereign Wisdom, because of the Evils and Crimes which happen here below. But yet our Religion does not consist in these Speculations. It is not so much

a philoso-

' a philosophical System, as a supernatural Establish-
 ' ment. *Daniel* will instruct you in it. He is at
 ' present the Prophet of *The most High*. The *Eter-*
 ' *nal* sometimes shews him Futurity as present, and
 ' lends him his Power to work Prodigies. He is
 ' soon to return to *Babylon*. He will shew you the
 ' Oracles contain'd in our sacred Books, and teach
 ' you what are the Purposes for which God intends
 ' you.'

It was in this Manner that *Eleszer* instructed *Cy-*
rus. The *Hebrew Sage* endeavour'd to justify the
 incomprehensible Ways of Providence by Reason-
 ings merely philosophical. And what was defective
 in his Opinions, was set right by the more simple
 and sublime Instructions of *Daniel*, who came back
 to *Babylon* a few Days after.

It was the Time fix'd by the Prophets for the
 Deliverance of *Nabuchodonosor*. His Frenzy ceas'd,
 and his Reason was restor'd to him. Before he re-
 turn'd to his Capital, he resolv'd to pay a publick
 Homage to the God of *Israel*, in the same Place
 where he had given the notorious Instance of his
 Impiety.

He order'd *Daniel* to assemble the Princes, Magi-
 strates, Governors of Provinces, and all the Nobles of
Babylon, and to conduct them to the Plains of *Dura*,
 where he had some Years before erected the famous
 golden Statue. Cloath'd with his Imperial Robe, he
 mounts upon an Eminence, from whence he may
 be seen by all the People. He has no longer any
 thing fierce or savage in his Look. Notwithstand-
 ing the dreadful Condition to which his Sufferings
 had reduc'd him, his Countenance has a serene and
 majestick Air. He turns towards the East, takes
 off

off his Diadem, prostrates himself with his Face
 to the Earth, and pronounces three times the tre-
 mendous Name of *J E H O V A H !*

After having ador'd the *ETERNAL* for some
 time in a profound Silence, he rises, and says:

' People of all Nations assembled together, it
 ' was here that you formerly beheld the extrava-
 ' gant Marks of my impious and abominable Pride.
 ' It was here, that I usurp'd the Rights of the Divi-
 ' nity, and would force you to worship the Work
 ' of Men's Hands. *The Most High*, to punish this
 ' Excess of Irreligion, condemn'd me to eat Grass
 ' with the Beasts for seven whole Years. The
 ' Times are accomplish'd. I have lifted up my
 ' Eyes to Heaven, and acknowledg'd his Power.
 ' My Reason and my Understanding are restor'd me.
 ' Your God (*contin'd* *be*, turning towards *Daniel*;) is
 ' in Truth the GOD or GODS, and KING of KINGS.
 ' All the Inhabitants of the Earth are, before him,
 ' as nothing, and he does according to his Will
 ' both in Heaven and in Earth. His Wisdom is
 ' equal to his Power, and all his Ways are full of
 ' Justice. Those that walk in Pride he is able to
 ' abase, and he raises again those whom he had
 ' humbled. O Princes and People, learn to ren-
 ' der Homage to his Greatness !

At these Words the Assembly sent up Shouts of
 Joy, and fill'd the Air with Acclamations, in Ho-
 nour of the God of *Israel*. *Nabuchodonosor* was con-
 ducted back with Pomp to his Capital, and return'd
 the Government of his Kingdom. Soon after, he
 rais'd *Daniel* to the highest Dignities, and the *Jews*
 were honour'd with the first Posts throughout his
 vast Empire.

Some Days after, *Amytis* presented *Cyrus* to *Nabuchodonosor*, who receiv'd the young Prince in a most friendly Manner, and gave him a favourable Hearing. However, the Nobles of *Babylon*, who sat in the King's Council, represented to him in very strong Terms; That, great Inconveniences might attend the provoking the *Median* Court, at the present Juncture, when notwithstanding the prudent Conduct of *Amytis*, during the King's Illness, the Forces of the Kingdom were much lessen'd, and its Treasure exhausted: And that it would be better Policy to foment the Divisions between the *Medes* and *Persians*, in order to make them mutually weaken each other's Strength, and so give the King of *Babylon* a fair Occasion of extending his Conquests.

But *Nabuchodonosor*, who by the Misfortunes he had suffer'd, was cur'd of all such false Maxims, did not suffer himself to be dazzled by the ambitious Projects of his Ministers. And *Cyrus* observing his good Dispositions, took that Opportunity to lay before him the Advantages he might find by an Alliance with *Cambyses*. He represented to him, that the *Medes*, were the only Rivals of his Power in the East; That it could not be for the Interest of the King of *Babylon*, to let them grow more considerable, by subjecting and oppressing the *Persians*; but that he should rather make the latter his Friends, who might serve as a Barrier to his Empire against the Enterprises of the *Median* Prince. And in fine, that *Persia* lay very convenient for the *Babylonian* Troops to march through it into *Media*, in case *Cyaxares* should resolve upon a Rupture.

The Prince of *Persia* spoke both in publick and private assemblies with so much Eloquence and Strength

of Reason; he shew'd during the Course of his Negotiation, (which lasted some Months) so much Candor and Truth! he manag'd the Nobles with so much Prudence and Delicacy; that in the End he brought them all over. An Alliance was sworn in a solemn Manner, and *Nabuchodonosor* continued faithful to it the rest of his Life.

Cyrus being impatient to see the sacred Books of the *Jews* , which contain'd Oracles relating to his future Greatness, convers'd every Day with *Daniel*; and the Prophet endeavour'd to instruct the young Prince in the *Hebrew* Religion. He open'd the Books of *Isaiab*, which had mention'd *Cyrus* by Name, a hundred and fifty Years before his Birth, as a Prince whom God had destin'd to be the Conqueror of *Asia*, and Deliverer of his People.

Cyrus was seiz'd with Astonishment, to see so clear and circumstantial a Prediction, a Thing unknown in other Nations, where the Oracles were always obscure and doubtful.

' Eleazer, said he to the Prophet, has already shewn
' me, that the great Principles of your Religion
' concerning the three States of the World, agree
' with those of other Nations. He has given me
' the Idea of a GOD-CREATOR, which I have not
' found among the other Philosophers. He has an-
' swer'd all my Difficulties about the Origin of E-
' vil, by the free Nature of Spirits. He shuts the
' Mouth of Impiety by his sublime Ideas concern-
' ing the Pre-existence of Souls, their voluntary
' Fall, and their total Restoration. But he has said
' nothing to me of the supernatural Establishment
' of your Law. I conjure you, by the God of *Is-*
' *rael*, to answer my Questions. Has your Tradi-
' tion the same Source with that of other Nations?
L. 2. ' Atlas

‘ Has it been transmitted to you by a purer Channel?
 ‘ Was your Law-giver a mere Philosopher, or a divine
 ‘ Person?

I know, *answer'd Daniel*, all the Endeavours which
 our Doctors use, to sute Religion to the Taste of
 the Philosophers. But they go astray, and lose
 themselves in a Crowd of uncertain Opinions.
 The Origin and Continuance of Evil, under the
 Government of a good, wise, and powerful Crea-
 tor, is an *Enigma*, which has always exercis'd
 the Speculations of the Learned. It is vain and
 fruitless to attempt to explain it. We are cer-
 tain that God has permitted Evil, only that he
 may draw from it an infinite Good; but how
 he will execute his Purpose, is a secret which no
 Mortal can penetrate. The *Chaldean*, the *Egypt-*
tian, the *Greek*, and even our *Hebrew* Philoso-
 phers, are puzzled and confounded by the Mul-
 tiplicity of their own Reasonings upon this Mat-
 ter. They waste themselves in toiling about those
 intricate Questions, without being able to unrav-
 el them. Who can know the Designs of God,
 or penetrate into his secret Purposes? Our
 Thoughts are weak, and our Conjectures vain.
 The Body weighs down the Soul, and will not
 suffer it to reach those Heights to which it fond-
 ly aspires.

‘ The Curiosity of seeing into ever Thing, ex-
 ‘ plaining every Thing, and adjusting it to our weak
 ‘ Ideas, is the Most dangerous Disease of the human
 ‘ Mind. The most sublime Act of our feeble
 ‘ Reason, is to keep it self silent before the *Se-*
 ‘ *vereign Reasoner*, to submit, and to leave to God
 ‘ the Care of justifying, one Day, the incompre-
 ‘ hensible Ways of his Providence. Our Pride
 ‘ and Impatience will not suffer us to wait for this
 ‘ U-

‘ Unravelling. We would go before the Light, and
 ‘ by so doing we lose the Use of it.

‘ Forget therefore all the subtle Speculations of
 ‘ the Doctors. I shall speak to you a more sure
 ‘ and simple Language. I shall propose nothing
 ‘ to you but palpable Facts, of which the Eyes,
 ‘ Ears, and all the Senses of Men, are Judges.

‘ You have already learn'd by the universal Doc-
 ‘ trine of all Nations, that Man is fallen from the
 ‘ Purity of his Original. By discontinuing to be
 ‘ just, he ceas'd to be immortal. Sufferings fol-
 ‘ low'd close upon Crimes, and Men were con-
 ‘ demn'd to a State of Pain and Misery, in order
 ‘ to make them breathe perpetually after a better
 ‘ Life.

‘ For the first Ages after the Fall, Religion was
 ‘ not written. The moral Part of it was found in
 ‘ Reason it self, and the Mysteries of it were trans-
 ‘ mitted by Tradition from the Antients. As Men
 ‘ liv'd then several Ages, it was easy to preserve
 ‘ that Tradition in its Purity.

‘ But the sublime Knowledge of the first Men
 ‘ having serv'd only to increase the Corruption of
 ‘ their Hearts, the whole Race of Mankind, ex-
 ‘ cept one Family, was destroy'd, in order to stop
 ‘ the Course of Impiety, and the multiplying of
 ‘ Vices. The Fountains of the great Abyss were
 ‘ broken up, and the Waters cover'd the Earth
 ‘ with an universal Deluge, of which there are yet
 ‘ some Traces in all Nations. The Constitution
 ‘ of the World, which had been chang'd by the
 ‘ Fall, was impair'd a-new. The Juices of the
 ‘ Earth were impoverish'd and spoil'd by this In-
 ‘ undation. The Herbs and Fruits had no longer
 ‘ the

the same Virtue. The Air, loaded with an excessive Moisture, strengthened the Principles of Corruption, and the Life of Man was shortened.

From that Time God chose a particular People to be the Depositary of Religion, Morality, and all divine Truths, that they might not be degraded and entirely obscur'd by the Imagination, Passions and vain Reasonings of Men.

The Most High, after having illuminated our Law-giver with the purest Lights lent him his Almighty Power, to prove his divine Mission by the Most signal Wonders. These Wonders, which were done in the Sight of a numerous People, were nothing less than the entire changing and overturning of Nature at every Instant. *Moses* speaks, the Sea divides; a miraculous Food descends from Heaven; dry Rocks become Sources of living Water. *Josua* continues the same Prodiges; Rivers run back to their Fountain-Head; and the Sun suspends its Course.

Moses establishes solemn Festivals, and august Ceremonies, to call to Remembrance continually his Miracles, and thereby to prove to all future Ages, that they could not be supposititious. A whole Nation conquers loudly, universally, and successively, to give Testimony to them, by publick Monuments, perpetuated from Generation to Generation.

Further, our great Legislator gives the *Israelites* a holy and pure Law, which he writes in a Book, and puts into the Hands of all the People. It was necessary at every Instant to consult this Book, in order to know, not only the religious, but civil Laws. Each *Hebrew* is oblig'd to read

it over once a Year, and to transcribe the whole, at least once in his Life. It was impossible to alter or corrupt it without the Imposture's being discover'd, and punish'd, as High-Treason against God, and an Attempt against the Civil Authority.

Moreover, God has in every Age rais'd up Prophets to preserve, renew, and explain, the primitive Tradition. Being separated from all Terrestrial Pleasures, in a Life of Austerity and Retirement, they unite themselves to the eternal Wisdom. The Eyes of the Soul, which have been shut since the Origin of Evil, are open'd in these divine Men, to see into the Councils of *The Most High*, and to know all his Secrets; and it is for this Reason that they are called *Seers*.

Further, our Books contain the most salutary and most important Truths. The Design of the Law and the Prophets is to shew, That all Creatures were pure in their Original, and had nothing contagious or mortal in them; that all Men are at present born, sick, corrupt and ignorant, even to the Degree of not knowing their Disease; and that human Nature cannot be restor'd to its Perfection, but by the coming of a Messiah. All the Ceremonies and Sacrifices of our Religion are but the Shadows of these three Celestial Truths. The History of our Nation is writ with such divine Art, that the Facts, strictly true in themselves, are likewise Images of those other Truths. The Bondage of the *Israelites* in *Egypt*; their Journey through the Desert, and their Arrival in the promis'd Land, represent to us the Fall of Souls, their Sufferings in this mortal Life, and their Return to their heavenly Country. All other Nations have their Allegories, we have ours. Those who stop at the latter, are sometimes

offend-

‘ offended. They find expressions which seem too
 ‘ much to humanize, and even to corporalize, the Di-
 ‘ vinity. But the true Sage penetrates their pro-
 ‘ found Meaning and discovers Myſteries of the
 ‘ higheſt Wiſdom.

‘ Theſe three Ideas, the Traces of which are to
 ‘ be obſerv’d in all Religions, have been transmit-
 ‘ ed from Age to Age, from the Deluge to our Time.
 ‘ *Noah* taught them to his Children, whoſe Poſte-
 ‘ rity ſpread them afterwards over all the Earth.
 ‘ But in paſſing from Mouth to Mouth, they have
 ‘ been alter’d and obſcur’d, by the Imagination of
 ‘ the Poets, the Superſtition of the Priests, and the
 ‘ different Genius of each Nation. We find more
 ‘ remarkable Footſteps of them among the Eaſtern
 ‘ Nations and the *Egyptians*, than any where elſe;
 ‘ becauſe *Abraham*, our firſt Patriarch, was famous
 ‘ in *Aſia*; and becauſe the People of God were a
 ‘ long time in Captivity, on the Borders of the
 ‘ *Nile*. But thoſe ancient Truths have been no
 ‘ where preſerv’d in their perfect Purity, except
 ‘ in the Oracles written by our Law-giver, our
 ‘ Hiſtorians and our Prophets.

‘ But this is not all. There is a miſtery pecu-
 ‘ liar to our Religion, of which I would not ſpeak
 ‘ to you, O *Cyrus*, if you were not the Anointed
 ‘ of *The Moſt High*, and his Servant, choſen for
 ‘ the Deliverance of his People.

‘ The Prophecies mention two Advents of the
 ‘ *Meſſiah*: One in *Suffering*; the other in *Glory*.
 ‘ *The Deſire of all Nations* will, many Ages before
 ‘ his triumphant Appearance in the Clouds, live
 ‘ here upon Earth in a State of Humiliation. He
 ‘ will expiate Sin by the Sacrifice of himſelf, be-
 ‘ fore he reſtores the Univerſe to its primitive
 ‘ Splendor. God

‘ God has no need of a bloody Victim to ap-
 ‘ peale his Wrath. But he would offend his
 ‘ Juſtice if he pardon’d the Criminal without ſhew-
 ‘ ing his Abhorrence of the Crime. This is what
 ‘ the *Meſſiah* will do. The great *EMANUEL*, God’s
 ‘ Man, will deſcend upon Earth, to ſhew by his
 ‘ Sufferings the infinite Aversion of *The Moſt High*,
 ‘ for the Violation of Order. ’Tis thus that he will
 ‘ reconcile the divine Juſtice and Mercy.

‘ I ſee from far that Day which will be the Joy
 ‘ of Angels, and the Conſolation of the Juſt. All
 ‘ the heavenly Powers, all the Spirits who fill Im-
 ‘ menſity, will be preſent at this Myſtery, and
 ‘ adore its Depth. Mortals will ſee nothing but
 ‘ the Shell and the Outside, the Sufferings of a
 ‘ Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with Grief: But
 ‘ we ſhall be healed by his Wounds. This is the
 ‘ great Myſtery unknown in all other Religions,
 ‘ becauſe none but that of the *Hebrews* teaches
 ‘ what is due to the infinite Purity of the divine
 ‘ Nature.

‘ Thoſe *Jews* who expect only a triumphant
 ‘ *Meſſiah*, will not comprehend this firſt Advent.
 ‘ The Pretenders to Wiſdom in all Nations, who
 ‘ judge only by Appearances, will blaſpheme a-
 ‘ gainſt what they underſtand not. Nay, *The moſt*
 ‘ *juſt among Men* will, in this Life, ſee only as through
 ‘ a Cloud, the Beauty, Extent, and Neceſſity, of that
 ‘ GREAT SACRIFICE.

‘ At length the *Meſſiah* will come in his Glory
 ‘ to renew the Face of the Earth, and reſtore the
 ‘ Univerſe to its primitive Brightneſs. Then all
 ‘ Spirits, in Heaven, on Earth and in Hell below,
 ‘ will bow the Knee before him. And the Pro-
 ‘ phecies will be accompliſh’d in their full Extent.

Here *Daniel* ceas'd, and *Cyrus* cry'd out, ' *Zoroaster, Hermes, Orpheus, Pythagoras*, all your Discoveries are but imperfect Traces and chance Rays of the Religion of the *Hebrews*. In *Persia, Egypt, Greece*, and in all other Nations, I have found only oral, uncertain, and loose Traditions; but you, O *Daniel*, have antient Books, the Authority of which is incontrollable. Your Lawgiver prov'd his Mission by publick Miracles; you have Predictions, of which I am myself the Accomplishment. Books, Prodigies, and Prophecies like these, are not to be found elsewhere.

' O *Cyrus*, reply'd *Daniel*, you do not comprehend these Truths in all their Extent. Religion is not a System of Philosophical Opinions, nor yet a History of Miracles, or supernatural Events; but an experimental Science which God reveals only to Souls who love Truth for its own sake. We may admire its Doctrines, and be struck with its Prodigies, and yet be Strangers to its Spirit. To know its Secrets, and feel its Energy, a superior Power, must descend and take Possession of your Heart. This happy Moment is not yet come, but it draws near *. In the mean while be content with knowing that the God of *Israel* loves you, will go before you, and will accomplish his Will by you. Make haste to verify his Oracles, and return with speed to *Persia*, where your Presence is necessary.

The young Hero, soon after, left *Babylon*, and the Year following *Nabuchodonosor* dy'd. His Successors broke the Alliance sworn between the *Affrians* and *Persians*. *Cyrus* spent twenty whole Years

* See Theoporet de side.

in War with the *Affrian* Kings and their Allies. At length he took *Babylon*, which made him Master of all the East, from the River *Indus* to *Greece*, and from the *Caspian* Sea to *Egypt*.

In the Midst of his Wars and Victories, he never forgot the Instructions of the Prophet: But seeing the Oracles of *Isaiah* accomplish'd, chose *Daniel* for his first Minister, deliver'd the *Hebrews* from their Captivity, and loudly acknowledg'd the God of *Israel* by this solemn Edict, for Rebuilding the Temple of *Jerusalem*.

Thus saith *Cyrus*, King of *Persia*. ' The Lord God of Heaven hath given me all the Kingdoms of the Earth: and he hath charg'd me to build him a House at *Jerusalem*, which is in *Judab*. Whoever among you is of his People, his God be with him: And let him go up to *Jerusalem*, and build the House of the Lord God of *Israel*. HE IS THE GOD.

FINIS.





A
DISCOURSE
UPON THE
THEOLOGY
AND
MYTHOLOGY
OF THE
ANTIENS.



Y first Design was to intersperse some Notes in the Body of the Book; but as the attending to such critical Remarks would divert the Mind too often from the principal Story, I thought it would be more agreeable to the Reader to digest them into the Form of a Discourse, which I divide into two Parts.

In the *first* I shall shew, that the Philosophers of all Ages and all Countries have had a Notion of a
Vol. II. B b b SU-

2 *Of the* THEOLOGY
SUPREME DEITY *distinct and different from*
Matter.

From the *second* it will appear, that there are
Traces of the principal Doctrines of *revealed Re-*
ligion with regard to the *three States of Nature* to be
found in the Mythology of all Nations.



PART

of the ANTIENTS. 3



PART I.

Of the THEOLOGY *of the*
ANTIENTS.

TO begin with the *Magi* or *Persian* Philosophers:
According to the Testimony of *Herodotus* *,
the ancient *Persians* had neither Statues, nor Tem-
ples, nor Altars: ' They think it ridiculous, (says
' this Author,) to fancy, like the *Greeks*, that the
' Gods have an human Shape, or derive their Ori-
' ginal from Men. They chuse the highest Moun-
' tains for the Place of their Sacrifice: They use nei-
' ther Libations, nor Musick, nor hallow'd Bread,
' but when any one has a mind to sacrifice, he leads
' the Victim into a clean Place, and wearing a
' Wreath of Myrtle about his Head, invokes the God
' to whom he intends to offer it. The Priest is not
' allow'd to pray for his own private Good, but
' for that of the Nation in general, each particular
' Member finding his Benefit in the Prosperity of
' the Whole.

Strabo † gives the same Account of the ancient
Persians. ' They neither erected Statues nor Altars,
says this Historian; ' they sacrificed in a clean

* Herod. Clio. lib. 1. p. 56. §. 131. Edit. Francof. 1608.

† Strabo lib. 15. p. 732. Ed. Paris, 1620.

4 *Of the THEOLOGY*

Place, and upon an Eminence, where they offered up a Victim crowned. When the Priest had cut it into small Pieces, every one took his share. They left no Portion of it for the Deities, saying, that God desires nothing but the Soul of the Victim.

The Eastern People, full of the Notion of Transmigration, imagined that the Victim was animated by a Soul in a State of Punishment, whose expiatory Pains were completed by the Sacrifice.

The Persians indeed, as well as other Pagans, worshipped the Fire, the Sun, and the Stars: but we shall see that they consider'd them only as visible Images and Symbols of a supreme God, whom they believed to be the Sovereign Lord of Nature.

Plutarch has left us in his Treatise of Isis and Osiris, a Fragment of the Theology of the Magi. This Philosophical Historian assures us, that they called the Great God, Oromazes, or the Principle of Light that produced every thing, and worketh all in all. * They admitted however another God, but of an inferior Nature and Order, whom they called Mithras or the Middle God. They did not think him a Being coeternal with the supreme Divinity, but the first Production of his Power, the chief of all Spirits, and placed by him in Authority over them. This will appear from the following Passages.

The finest Definition we have of the Deity among all the Writings of the Antients, is that of

* Plut. de Isis. & Osir. Edit. Paris, 1624. P. 370.

Zoroaster

of the ANTIENTS. 5

Zoroaster. It has been transmitted down to us by Eusebius in his *Præparatio Evangelica*: an Author so far from being over favourable to the Pagans, that he makes it his Business continually to expose and degrade their Philosophy. And yet he says, that he had read the following Words *verbatim* in a Book of Zoroaster that was extant in his Time, and known by the Title of *The Sacred Collection of Persian Monuments*.

† God is the first of all incorruptible Beings, eternal and unbegotten: He is not compounded of Parts. There is none like nor equal to him. He is the Author of all good, and entirely disinterested, the most excellent of all excellent Beings, and the wisest of all intelligent Natures; the Father of Equity, the Parent of good Laws, Self-instructed, Self-sufficient, and the first Former of Nature.

The modern Writers among the Arabians and Persians, who have preserved to us what Remains are left of the ancient Doctrine of Zoroaster among the Guebrii or Worshippers of Fire, maintain, that the first Magi admitted only one eternal Principle of all things.

Abulfeda, cited by the famous Dr. Pocock, says, that according to the primitive Doctrine of the Persians *, God was prior to both Light and Darkness, and had existed from all Eternity in an adorable Solitude, without any Companion or Rival.

† Euseb. Præp. Evang. lib. 1. p. 41. Edit. Paris.

* Pocock Specim. Hist. Arab. p. 148

Smiffhani,

Saristhani, quoted by Dr. Hyde, says, 'That the first *Magi* † did not look upon the good and evil Principles as both of them co-eternal, but thought that the Light was indeed eternal, and that the Darkness was produced in time by the Disloyalty of *Ahriman*, Chief of the *Genii*.'

Such was the Theology of the ancient *Persians*, which in the foregoing Work I have put in the Mouth of *Zoroaster*.

M. Bayle says in his Dictionary, that the ancient *Persians* were all *Manichæans*; however he came to entertain this Notion, he must certainly have given it up, if he had consulted the original Authors: a Method which that famous Critick did not always take. He had a Genius capable of going to the bottom of any Subject whatever: but he wrote sometimes in a hurry, and treated superficially the gravest and most important Subjects. Besides, there is no clearing him from the Charge of loving too much the dismal Obscurity of Scepticism. He is always upon his guard against the pleasing Ideas of Immortality. He shews with Art and Subtlety all the dark Sides of a Question; but he very rarely represents it in that Point of Light, which shines with Evidence. What Encomiums would he not have merited, had he employed his admirable Talents more for the Benefit of Mankind?

The *Egyptians* had much the same Principles as the oriental Nations. There is nothing more absurd than the Notion generally given us of their Theo-

† Hyde Reliq. Ant. Persar. cap. 9. p. 161, & cap. 11. p. 192.

logy; nor is any thing more extravagant than the allegorical Sense which certain Authors fancy they have discovered in their Hieroglyphicks.

On one hand, it is hard to believe that human Nature could ever sink so low as to adore Insects, Reptiles, and Plants, which they see produced, growing, and dying every day, without ascribing certain divine Virtues to them, or considering them as Symbols of some invisible Power. In the most barbarous Countries we still find some Knowledge of a superior Being, which is the Object of the Hope and Fear of the most stupid Savages. But though we should suppose there are some Nations in the World sunk into so gross an Ignorance as to have no Notion of a Deity, yet it is certain that *Egypt* cannot be charged with this Ignorance. All Historians, as well sacred as profane, agree in speaking of this People as the wisest of all Nations; and one of the Encomiums that the Holy Spirit gives to *Moses*, is, that he was learned in all the Wisdom of the *Egyptians*. Would the Holy Ghost ever have spoken in such a manner of a Nation that was fallen into so senseless and barbarous an Ignorance, as to worship Onions, Crocodiles, and the most despicable Reptiles?

On the other hand, there are certain modern Writers who exalt the Theology of the *Egyptians* too high, and fancy that they find in their Hieroglyphicks all the Mysteries of the Christian Religion. After the Deluge, *Noah* doubtless would not leave his Children ignorant of the great Principles of Religion, with regard to the three States of Mankind: and that Tradition might have been spread from Generation to Generation over all Nations of the World. But we should not infer from thence, that the Heathens had as clear Notions of the Divine Nature

Nature and the *Messias*, as the *Jews* had themselves. Such a Supposition, far from doing Honour to Holy Writ, would only derogate from its Dignity. I shall endeavour to keep the just Medium between these two Extremes.

Plutarch in his Treatise of *Isis* and *Osiris*, tells us, * ' That the Theology of the *Egyptians* had two Meanings; the one holy and symbolical, the other vulgar and literal; and consequently that the Figures of Animals which they had in their Temples, and which they seemed to adore, were only so many Hieroglyphicks to represent the Divine Attributes.'

Pursuant to this Distinction, he says, that *Osiris* signifies the active Principle, or the most holy Being †; *Isis* the Wisdom or Rule of his Operation, *Orus* the first Production of his Power, the Model or Plan by which he produced every thing, or the Archetype of the World.

It would be rash to assert, That the Pagans ever had any Knowledge of a Trinity of distinct Persons in the indivisible Unity of the Divine Nature. But it is plain, that the *Chaldeans* and *Egyptians* believed that all the Attributes of the Deity might be reduced to three, *Power*, *Understanding*, and *Love*. They distinguished also three sorts of Worlds, the *sensible* World, the *aerial* World, and the *ethereal* World. In each of these Worlds, they asserted likewise three principal Properties, *Figure*, *Light*, and *Motion*: *Matter*, *Form*, and *Activity* ‡: and on this

* *Plut. de Isis. & Osir.* p. 354.

† *Ibid.* p. 373, 374, 375.

‡ See *Athan. Kirch. Oedip. Egypt. tom. 1. p. 144, Sec. 6 p. 151, & tom. 1. p. 132.*

account the ancient Philosophers looked upon the Number *three* as mysterious.

If any Man reads with Attention the aforementioned Tract of *Plutarch*, the Works of *Jamblichus*, and what Accounts are left of the Religion of the *Oriental*s and *Egyptians*, he will easily see, that the Mythology of those Nations chiefly regards the *internal* Operations, and the *Attributes of the Deity*, as that of the *Greeks* does his *external* Operations, or the *Properties of Nature*. The *Oriental*s and *Egyptians* had a more refining and metaphysical Genius than the *Greeks* and *Romans*, who were fondest of the Sciences that depend on *Imagination* and *Sense*. This Key may contribute a great deal towards understanding the ancient Mythologies.

Plutarch concludes his Treatise of *Isis* and *Osiris* in this manner: * ' As he that reads the Works of *Plato*, may be said to read *Plato*, and he that acts the Comedy of *Mevander*, may be said to act *Mevander*: so the Antients gave the Name of Gods to the various Productions of the Deity. (*Plutarch* had said a little before,) that care should be taken not to transform, dissolve and scatter the Divine Nature into Rivers, Winds, Vegetables, or bodily Forms and Motions. This would be as ridiculous as to imagine, that the Sails, the Cables, the Rigging, and the Anchor are the Pilot; or that the Thread, the Woof, and the Shuttle are the Weaver. Such senseless Notions are an Indignity to the Heavenly Powers, whom they blaspheme, whilst they give the Name of Gods to Beings of an insensible, inanimate, and corruptible Nature. Nothing, as he goes on, that is without

* *Pag. 377 & 378.*

' a Soul, nothing that is material, and to be perceived by our Senses, can be God. Nor yet must we imagine, that there are different Gods according to the different Countries of *Greeks* and *Barbarians*, *Northern* and *Southern* People. As the Sun is common to all the World, tho' called by different Names in different Places; so there is but one sole supreme Mind or Reason, and one and the same Providence that governs the World, tho' he is worshipped under different Names, and has appointed some inferior Powers for his Ministers. Such, according to *Platarch*, was the Doctrine of the first *Egyptians*, with regard to the Divine Nature.

Origen, who was co-temporary with *Platarch*, follows the same Principles in his Book against *Celsus*, a Pagan Philosopher, who pretended to understand Christianity, because he knew some Ceremonies of that Religion, tho' he never entered into the Spirit of it. Now *Origen* expresses himself in this manner: * 'The *Egyptian* Philosophers have sublime Notions with regard to the Divine Nature, which they keep secret, and never discover to the People, but under a Veil of Fables and Allegories. *Celsus* is like a Man, who has travelled into that Country; and tho' he has conversed with none but the ignorant Vulgar, yet takes it into his Head, that he understands the *Egyptian* Religion. All the *Eastern* Nations, (continues he) the *Persians*, the *Indians*, the *Syrians* conceal secret Mysteries under their religious Fables. The wise Men of all those Religions see into the Sense and true Meaning of them, whilst the Vulgar go no further than the exterior Symbol, and see only the Bark that covers them.'

* *Orig. contra Cell. lib. 1. p. 11.*

Let us next hear the Testimony of *Jamblichus*, who had studied the Religion of the *Egyptians*, and understood it thoroughly. He lived in the beginning of the third Century, and was a Disciple of the famous *Porphyry*. As both *St. Clement* * and *St. Cyril of Alexandria* † assure us, there were at that time, a great many *Egyptian* Books extant, which have been since lost: Several of these were highly respected for their Antiquity, and ascribed to *Hermes Trismegistus*, or one of his first Disciples. *Jamblichus* had read these Books, which had been translated by the *Greeks*; and this is the Account that he gives of the Theology which they taught.

* According to the *Egyptians*, the first God existed in his solitary Unity before all Beings. He is the Fountain and Original of every thing, that either has Understanding, or is to be understood. He is the first Principle of all things, Self-sufficient, Incomprehensible, and the Father of all Essences.

† *Hermes* says likewise, (as *Jamblichus* goes on to tell us) * that this supreme God has constituted another God, called *Emeph*, to be Head over all Spirits, whether *Ethereal*, *Empyrean*, or *Celestial*; and that this second God, whom he stiles the *Guide*, is a Wisdom that transforms and converts into himself all spiritual Beings. He makes nothing superior to this *God-Guide*, but only the first *Intelligent*, and first *Intelligible*, who ought to be adored in Silence.

* *Strom. l. 6. p. 133.* † *Contra Julian. lib. 1.*
 † *Jamb. de Myst. Egyp. Ed. Lugd. 1533. p. 152. 154.*

He adds, ' That the Spirit which produceth all Things, has different Names according to its different Properties and Operations; that he is called in the *Egyptian* Language *Amoun*, as he is wise; *Pthor*, as he is the Life of all Things; and *Osiris*, as he is the Author of all Good.'

Such, according to *Jamblichus*, was the Doctrine of the *Egyptians*; and it is evident from thence, that they admitted only one Principle, and a middle God, like the *Mystras* of the *Persians*.

The Notion of a Spirit constituted by the supreme God, to be the Head and Guide of all Spirits, is very Antient. The *Hebrew* Doctors believed that the Soul of the *Messias* was created from the Beginning of the World, and appointed to preside over all the Orders of Intelligences. This Opinion was founded on a Notion, that finite Natures cannot incessantly contemplate the Brightness and Glories of the Divine Essence, and must necessarily sometimes turn off their View, and adore the Creator in his Works; that at such Times there must be an Head to lead Spirits thro' all the Regions of Immensity, and shew them all its Beauties and Wonders.

To have a more perfect Knowledge of the Theology of the *Oriental* and *Egyptians*, it may not be improper to examine that of the *Greeks* and *Romans*, which is derived originally from it. The Philosophers of *Greece* went to study Wisdom in *Asia* and *Egypt*. *Thales*, *Pythagoras*, *Plato*, drew the best of their Knowledge from thence. The Traces of the *Oriental* Tradition are now indeed in a manner worn out: but as there are several Monuments of the Theology of the *Greeks* still preserved, we may judge of the Masters by their Disciples.

We

We must however distinguish between the Gods of the Poets, and those of the Philosophers. Poetry deifies all the various Parts of Nature, and gives Spirit to Bodies, as well as Body to Spirits: It expresses the Operations and Properties of Matter by the Actions and Passions of such invisible Powers, as the Pagans supposed to be the Directors of all the Motions and Events that we see in the Universe. The Poets pass in a Moment from Allegory to the literal Sense, and from the literal Sense to Allegory; from real Gods to fabulous Deities: and this occasions that jumble of their Images, that Absurdity in their Fictions, and that Indecorum in their Expressions, which are so justly condemned by the Philosophers.

Notwithstanding this Multiplication of inferior Deities, these Poets however acknowledged, that there was but one only supreme God. This will appear from the very antient Traditions, which we still have left of the Philosophy of *Orpheus*. I am very far from thinking, that *Orpheus* was the Author of those Works which go under his Name. I believe with the famous *Grotius*, that those Books were wrote by the *Pythagoreans*, who professed themselves Disciples of *Orpheus*. But whoever is the Author of these Writings, 'tis certain that they are older than *Herodotus* and *Plato*, and were in great Esteem among the Heathens; so that by the Fragments of them still preserved, we may form a Judgment of the antient Theology of the *Greeks*.

I shall begin with the Abridgment, which *Timotheus* the Cosmographer gives us of the Doctrine of *Orpheus*. This Abridgment is preserved in *Suidas* *.

* Suidas de Orph. p. 350.

: There

* There is one unknown Being exalted above, and prior to all Beings, the Author of all Things, even of the Æther, and of every thing that is below the Æther: This exalted Being is Life, Light, and Wisdom; which three Names express only one and the same Power, which has created all Beings, visible and invisible, out of nothing.*

It appears by this Passage, that the Doctrine of the Creation, that is, of the Production of Substances, was not unknown to the Heathen Philosophers. We shall soon find it laid down in *Plato*.

Proclus has transmitted down to us this extraordinary Passage of the Theology of *Orpheus*†. 'The Universe was produced by *Jupiter*, the *Empyrium*, the deep *Tartarus*, the Earth, and the Ocean, the Immortal Gods and Goddesses; all that is, all that has been, and all that shall be, was contained originally in the fruitful Bosom of *Jupiter*. *Jupiter* is the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End. All Beings derive their Origin from him. He is the Primitive Father, and the Immortal Virgin. He is the Life, the Cause, and the Energy of all Things. There is but one only Power, one only God, and one sole universal King of all.'

I shall conclude the Theology of *Orpheus*, with a famous Passage of the Author of the *Argonautica*, who is looked upon to be a Disciple of his †. 'We will sing first an Hymn upon the antient Chaos, how the Heavens, the Sea, and the Earth were formed out of it. We will sing likewise that Eter-

* *Proclus de Timæo*, p. 95.

† *Argon.* apud *Steph.* p. 71. Edit. *Tuegger*. An. 1566.

* nal, Wise, and Self-perfect Love, which reduced this Chaos into Order*.

'Tis clear enough from the Doctrine of the Theogony, or Birth of the Gods, which is the same as the Cosmogony, or Generation of the Universe, that the antient Poets ascribed it entirely to a First Being, from whom all other Beings derived theirs. The Poem of the *Theogonia*, which is ascribed to *Hesiod* †, speaks of Love as the first Principle which brought the Chaos into Order; † and from that Chaos sprung the Night, from the Night the Æther, from the Æther the Light; then the Stars, the Planets, the Earth, and at last the Deities that govern all.

Ovid speaks likewise to the same Effect in the first Book of his *Metamorphoses* §. 'Before there was a Sea and an Earth, says he, before there was any Heaven to cover the World, universal Nature was but one indigested sluggish Mass, called a Chaos. The Seeds of all things jumbled together were in a perpetual Discord, till a beneficent Deity put an end to the Difference.' Words which shew plainly that the *Latin* Poet who followed the *Greek* Tradition makes a Distinction between the Chaos, and God who by his Wisdom brought it out of Confusion into Order.

I ought however in this Place to observe, that the *Greek* and *Roman* Mythology in relation to the Chaos is much more imperfect than that of the *Oriental*s and the *Egyptians*, who tell us, that there

* 423. *These* *words* *are* *found* *in* *the* *original* *Text* *of* *Hesiod* *in* *the* *edit.* *of* *Steph.* *p.* *120.*
† *Hesiod. Theog.* Edit. *Steph.* p. 120.
‡ *Ovid. Metam.* l. 1. p. 1.
§ *Ovid. Metam.* l. 1. p. 1.

was an happy and perfect State of the World prior to the Chaos; that the good Principle could never produce any thing that was evil; that his first Work could not be Confusion and Disorder, and in a word, that physical Evil is nothing else but a Consequence of moral Evil. 'Twas the Imagination of the Greek Poets that first brought forth the monstrous Manichean Doctrine about two co-eternal Principles, a supreme Intelligence and a blind Matter, Light and Darkness, an indigested Chaos, and a Deity to range it in Order.

I pass from *Hesiod* and *Orid* to speak of the Theology of *Homer* and his Imitator *Virgil*. Let any one read these two Epick Poets with a proper Attention, and he will see that the *Marvellous* which runs thro' their Fable is founded upon these three Principles. 1. That there is one supreme God, whom they every where call *the Father, and the Sovereign Lord of Men and Gods, the Architect of the World, the Prince and Governour of the Universe, the First God, and the Great God*. 2. That universal Nature is full of subordinate Spirits, which are the Ministers of that supreme God. 3. That Good and Evil, Virtue and Vice, Knowledge and Error, arise from the different Influence and Inspiration of the good and evil *Genii* who dwell in the Air, the Sea, the Earth, and the Heavens.

The Tragick and Lyrick Poets express themselves after the same manner as the Epick Poets. *Euripides* expressly acknowledges the Dependance of all Beings upon one sole Principle: 'O Father, and King of Men and Gods! says he; why do we miserable Mortals fancy that we know or do any thing? Our Fate depends upon your Will *.'

* Eurip. Supplic. Act. 3. v. 734; Exc. Edit. Cant.
Sophocles

Sophocles represents the Deity to us as a sovereign Intelligence, which is the Truth, the Wisdom, and the Eternal Law of all Spirits †. 'Tis not, says he, to any mortal Nature, that Laws owe their Origin. They come from above. They come down from Heaven itself. The *Olympian Jupiter* alone is the Father of them.

Pindar says ‡, that *Chiron* taught *Achilles* to adore *Jove*, who lances the Thunder, as superior to all the other Deities.

Plautus introduceth an inferior Deity, speaking in this manner * : 'I am a Citizen of the celestial City, of which *Jupiter*, the Father of Gods and Men, is the Head. He commands the Nations, and sends us over all Kingdoms to take an Account of the Conduct and Actions, the Piety and Virtue of Men. In vain do Mortals endeavour to bribe him with their Oblations and Sacrifices. They lose their Pains, for he abhors the Worship of impious Persons.

'O Muse, says *Horace*, pursuant to the Custom of our Ancestors, celebrate first the Great *Jove*, who rules over Gods and Men, the Earth, the Seas, and the whole Universe. There is nothing greater than he, nothing that is like, nothing that is equal to him *.'

I shall conclude my Quotations out of the Poets with a surprising Passage of *Lucan*. When *Cato*,

† In *Ædip. Tiran.*
‡ *Pyth. Ode 6. p. 265. Ed. Oxon.*
* *Plaut. Rudens.*
* *Il. 1. Ode 12.*

after crossing the Deserts of *Lybia*, arrives at the Temple of *Jupiter Ammon*, *Labiennus* is for persuading him to consult the Oracle. Upon which Occasion the Poet puts this Answer into the Mouth of that philosophical Hero. * * Why do you, *Labiennus*, propose to me to ask the Oracle whether we should chuse to die in a State of Freedom with Swords in our Hands, rather than see Tyranny enslave our Country? whether this mortal Life be only a *Remora* to a more lasting one? whether Violence can hurt a good Man? whether Virtue does not make us superior to Misfortunes? and whether true Glory depends upon Success? We know these Truths already, and the Oracle cannot give us clearer Answers than what God makes us feel every Moment in the Bottom of our Heart. We are all united to the Deity. He has no need of Words to convey his Meaning to us; and he told us at our Birth every thing that we have occasion to know. He hath not chosen the parched Sands of *Lybia* to bury Truth in those Deserts, that it might be understood only by a small Number. He makes himself known to all the World, he fills all Places, the Earth, the Sea, the Air, the Heavens. He makes his particular Abode in the Soul of the Just: Why then should we seek him elsewhere;

Let us pass from the Poets to the Philosophers, and begin with *Thales* the *Milesian*, Chief of the *Ionick* School †, who lived above six hundred Years before the Birth of Christ. We have none of his Works now left; but we have some of his Maxims, that have been transmitted down to us by the most venerable Writers of Antiquity.

* *Lucan. lib. 9. v. 166.*

† *Flor. Olymp. 50.*

* God is the most ancient of all Beings. He is Author of the Universe, which is full of Wonders *. He is the Mind which brought the *Chaos* out of Confusion into Order †. He is without Beginning and without Ending, and nothing is hid from him; Nothing can resist the Force of Fate; but this Fate is nothing but the immutable Reason, and eternal Power of Providence **.

What is still more surprising in *Thales*, is his Definition of the Soul. He calls it a * *Self-moving Principle* ††, thereby to distinguish it from Matter.

Pythagoras § is the second great Philosopher after *Thales*, and Chief of the *Italic* School. Every body knows the Abstinence, Silence, Retirement, and great Purity of Morals that he required of his Disciples. He was very sensible that human Understanding alone could never attain to the Knowledge of Divine Things, unless the Heart was purged of its Passions. Now these are the Notions which he has left us of the Deity.

* God is neither the Object of Sense, nor subject to Passion; but invisible, only intelligible †, and supremely intelligent ††. In his Body he is like the Light, and in his Soul he resembles Truth.
* He is the universal Spirit that pervades and

* *Dioy. Lacrt. Vita Thal. lib. 1.*

† *Cicero de Nat. Deor. lib. 1. p. 1113. Ed. Amst. 1664.*

‡ *St. Clement. Alex. Strom. 5.*

** *Stob. Ecl. Phys. cap. 5.*

†† *Plut. de Plat. Phil. lib. 4. cap. 2. Stob. Ecl. Phys. cap. 40.*

§ *Flor. Olymp. 60.*

† *Plut. Vita Numx.*

‡† *Dioy. Lacrt. lib. 11. Vita Pyth. Porphy.*

diffuseth itself over all Nature. All Beings receive their Life from him *. There is but one only God, who is not, as some are apt to imagine, seated above the World, beyond the Orb of the Universe; but being himself all in all, he sees all the Beings that fill his Immensity, the only Principle, the Light of Heaven, the Father of all. He produces every thing, He orders and disposes every thing; He is the Reason, the Life, and the Motion of all Beings †.

He taught, that, besides the First Principle, there were three sorts of intelligent Beings, *Gods, Heroes, and Souls* ‡. He considered the first as the unalterable Images of the Sovereign Mind, human Souls as the least perfect of reasonable Substances, and Heroes as a sort of middle Beings placed between the two others, in order to raise up Souls to the Divine Union †.

Thus he represents to us the Divine Immensity, as filled with Spirits of different Orders †. *Thales* had the same Notion; a Notion which those two Philosophers had learned in *Egypt*, where they thought it was to stint the Divine Power to suppose it less productive in intelligent Beings, than in material Ones.

This is the true Sense of that famous Expression ascribed to the *Pythagoreans*, that Unity was the Principle of all Things, and that from this Unity there sprung an infinite Duality. We are not by this Duality to understand two Persons of the Christian

* Last. Inſ. lib. 5. † St. Juſt. Serm.
 ‡ Diog. Laert. lib. 8.
 † Pavescl. Com. in Carm. Aurea Pyth.
 † Laert. de Pyth. Cic. de Leg. l. 2. p. 1197.

Trinity,

Trinity, nor the two Principles of the *Manichæes*; but a World of intelligent and corporeal Substances, which is the Effect, whereof Unity is the Cause *. This is the Sentiment of *Porphyry*, and it ought to be preferred before that of *Plutarch*, who is for ascribing the *Manichean System* to *Pythagoras*, without producing for it any Proof.

Pythagoras agreed with *Thales*, in defining the Soul to be a Self-moving Principle †. He maintained further, that when it quits the Body, it is re-united to the Soul of the World; That it is not a God, but the Work of an Eternal God **, and that it is immortal on account of its Principle ††.

This Philosopher was of opinion, that Man was composed of three Parts, of a pure Spirit, of an ethereal Matter, (which he called the *subtile Vehicle* of the Soul) and of a mortal or gross Body. He was indebted likewise for this Notion to the *Egyptians*, who borrow'd it from the *Hebrews*; these last in their Divinity, distinguishing the pure † Spirit, the animal †† Soul, and the terrestrial † Body.

The *Pythagoreans* speaking of the subtile Vehicle or the ethereal Body, frequently call it the Soul, because they consider it as the active Power, which animates the terrestrial Body. This has made such as do not understand their Philosophy thoroughly, imagine, that they believed the *thinking Substance* to be material; whereas nothing is more false. They always distinguished between the Understanding, or the pure Spirit, and the animal Soul or ethereal Body.

* Porphyr. Vita Pyth. † Plut. Plac. Phil. l. 4. cap. 2.
 † Cicero. de Senect. c. 21. ** Ib. de Nat. Deor. l. 2.
 †† Tuse. lib. 1. de Conſol. p. 1300.
 † Hæſt. †† Hæſt. † Hæſt.

They

They considered the one as the Source of our Thoughts, the other as the Cause of our Motions. They believed them to be two different Substances. *Anaxagoras*, as we shall soon see, rectified this Mistake.

The old *Greek* Poets had dressed up this Opinion in a different Guise; they called the ethereal Body the Representation, the Image, or the Shadow; because they fancy'd that this subtle Body, when it came down from Heaven to animate the terrestrial Body, assumed its Form just as melted Metal takes that of the Mold in which it is cast. They said, that after Death, the Spirit still clothed with this subtle Vehicle, flew up to the Regions of the Moon, where they placed the *Elysian* Fields. And there, as they imagined, a sort of second Death ensued by the Separation of the pure Spirit from its Vehicle. The one was united to the Gods, the other staid in the Abode of the Shades. This is the Reason why *Ulysses* says in the *Odyssey*. * That he saw in the *Elysian* Fields the Divine *Hercules*; i. e. his Image, † says the Poet; for as for him, he is with the immortal Gods, and assists at their Banquets †.

Pythagoras did not adopt the Poetick Fiction of a second Death. He held, that the pure Spirit, and its subtle Vehicle being born together, were inseparable, and returned after Death to the Star, from whence they descended.

I do not speak here of Transmigration, which only related to such Souls as were degraded and corrupted in mortal Bodies. I shall treat of it in the second Part of this Discourse.

* *Od. l. 11. p. 137.*

I cannot conclude this Article of *Pythagoras*, better than with the Summary which *St. Cyril* gives us of the Doctrine of this Philosopher. * We see plainly, says that Father, that *Pythagoras* maintained, that there was but one God, Principle and Cause of all Things, that enlightens every Thing, that animates every Thing, from whom every Thing proceeds, who has given Being to all Things, and is the Source of all Motion *.

After *Pythagoras* comes *Anaxagoras* † of the *Ionick* Sect, born at *Clazomena*, and Master to *Pericles* the *Athenian* Hero. This Philosopher was the first after *Thales* in the *Ionick* School, who perceived the Necessity of introducing a supreme Intelligence for the Formation of the Universe. He rejected with Contempt, and with great Strength of Reason, refused the Doctrine of such as held, that † a blind Necessity, and the casual Motions of Matter had produced the World. He endeavoured to prove, that a pure and un-compounded Spirit, presides over the Universe.

According to *Aristotle's* Account, the Reasoning of *Anaxagoras* was founded upon these two Principles: * 1. That the Idea of Matter, not including that of active Force, Motion could not be one of its Properties. We must therefore, said he, seek somewhere else, to find out the Cause of its Activity. Now this Active Principle, as it was the Cause of Motion, he called the Soul, because it animates the Universe †.

* *St. Cyril. contra Julian. lib. 1. p. 83.*

† *Flor. Olymp. 80.*

‡ *Plut. Vita Pyth.*

†† *Arist. de Anim. lib. 1. cap. 1. p. 619. Ed. Paris 1629.*

‘ 2. He distinguished between this universal Principle of Motion, and the *Thinking Principle*, which last he called the *Understanding* *. He saw nothing in Matter that had any resemblance to this Property, and from thence he inferred, that there was in Nature another Substance besides Matter. But he added, that the *Soul* and *Spirit* were one and the same Substance, distinguished by us only in regard of its different Operations, and that of all Essences, it was the most simple, the most pure, and the most exempt from all Mixture and Composition.’

This Philosopher passed at *Athens* for an Atheist, because he denied that the Stars and Planets were Gods †. He maintained, that the first were Suns, and the latter habitable Worlds. So very ancient is the System of a Plurality of Worlds, which has been generally thought to be modern.

Plato ‡ accuses *Anaxagoras* of having explained all the *Phænomena* of Nature by Matter and Motion. *Descartes* has only revived this Opinion. I cannot but think it very unjust to attack the Philosopher of *Clazomena* or his Follower on this account, since they both lay it down for a Principle, that Motion is not a Property of Matter, and that the Laws of Motion are settled with Thought and Design. Supposing these two Principles, 'tis to have a nobler Idea, and one every way more worthy of the Deity to maintain, that being always himself present to his Work, he gives Life, Being, and Motion to all Creatures, than to imagine with the *Peripateticks*,

* *Ib.* p. 670.† *Plat.* de. Legib. 10. 586.‡ *Plat.* Phæd. p. 73.

that

that certain inferior Spirits, substantial Forms, or middle Beings, which they cannot define, produce all the various Modifications and Arrangements of Matter. *Aristotle* and his School, by multiplying second Causes, seem to have robbed the first Cause in some measure of his Power and Glory.

Socrates * follows close after *Anaxagoras*. The common Notion is, that he was a Martyr for the Unity of the Godhead, in having refused to pay his Homage to the Gods of *Greece*; but it is a Mistake. In the *Apology* that *Plato* makes for this Philosopher, *Socrates* acknowledgeth certain subordinate Deities, and teaches that the Stars and the Sun are animated by the Intelligences that ought to be worshipped with Divine Honours. The same *Plato* in his Dialogue upon Holiness † tells us, that *Socrates* was not punished for denying that there were inferior Gods, but for declaiming openly against the Poets who ascribed human Passions and enormous Crimes to those Deities.

Socrates however, whilst he supposed several inferior Gods, admitted all the while but only one Eternal Principle. *Xenophon* has left us an excellent Abridgment of the Theology of that Philosopher. 'Tis perhaps the most important Piece we have left of Antiquity. It contains the Conversation of *Socrates* with *Aristodemus*, who doubted of the Existence of God. *Socrates* makes him at first take notice of all the Characters of Design, of Art, and of Wisdom that appear all over the Universe, and particularly in the Mechanism of the human Body.

* *Flor.* Olymp. 90.† *Plat.* Eutyph. p. 5 & 6.

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* * Do you believe, says he then to *Aristodemus*, can you believe that you are the only intelligent Being; You know that you possess but a little Particle of that Matter which composes the World, a small Portion of that Water which moistens it, a Spark of that Flame which animates it. Is Understanding peculiar to you alone; Have you so engrossed and confined it to yourself, that it is to be found no where else? Does blind Chance work every thing, and is there no such thing as Wisdom besides what you have?

* *Aristodemus* having reply'd, that he did not see that wise Architect of the Universe; *Socrates* answer'd him, Neither do you see the Soul which governs your own Body, and regulates all its Motions: You might as well conclude, that you do nothing yourself with Design and Reason, as maintain that every thing is done by blind Chance in the Universe.

Aristodemus at length acknowledging a supreme Being, is still in doubt as to Providence; not being able to comprehend how the Deity can see every thing at once. *Socrates* replies, * If the Spirit that resides in your Body moves and disperses it at its pleasure; why should not that sovereign Wisdom which presides over the Universe, be able likewise to regulate and order every thing as it pleases? If your Eye can see Objects at the distance of several Furlongs; why should not the Eye of God be able to see every thing at once; If your Soul can think at the same time upon what is at *Athens*, in *Egypt*, and in *Sicily*; why should not the Divine Mind be able

* Xen. Mem. Sec. Ed. Basil. 1579. lib. 1. p. 573.

to take care of every thing, being every where present to his Work?

Socrates perceiving at last that the Infidelity of *Aristodemus* did not arise so much from his Reason as from his Heart, concludes with these Words: * O *Aristodemus*, apply yourself sincerely to worship God; he will enlighten you, and all your Doubts will soon be removed!

Plato *, a Disciple of *Socrates*, follows the same Principles. He lived at a time when the Doctrine of *Democritus* had made a great Progress at *Athens*. The Design of all his Theology is to give us noble Sentiments of the Deity, to shew us that Souls were condemned to animate mortal Bodies, only in order to expiate Faults they had committed in a pre-existent State; and in fine, to teach that Religion is the only Way to restore us to our first Glory and Perfection. He despises all the Tenets of the *Athenian* Superstition, and endeavours to purge Religion of them. The chief Object of this Philosopher is *Man in his immortal Capacity*, he only speaks of him in his *politick one*, to shew that the shortest Way to Immortality, is to discharge all the Duties of Civil Society for the Love of Virtue.

Plato in one of his Dialogues defines God, the efficient Cause which makes things exist that had no Being before †. A Definition which shews that he had an Idea of the Creation. Matter, in his Way of thinking, was not eternal in any Sense but as it

* Olymp. 100.

† *Platonis Opera* Edit. J. J. Valart. 1729. p. 100. § *Plato* Septim. p. 185. Ed. Franc. 1677.

was created from Eternity. He never thought it either independent upon God, or any Emanation of his Substance, but a real Production *. Speaking indeed of the Divine Substance in his *Timæus Lectius*, he calls it an *uncreated Matter* †. But he distinguishes it always from the sensible Universe, which he considers merely as an Effect and a Production.

Nor is it surprising that *Plato*, who had only the Light of Nature to instruct him, should be convinced of the Creation. That Truth, however incomprehensible it may appear to finite Minds, does yet imply no Contradiction. In reality, when God creates, he does not draw a Being out of nothing, as out of a Subject upon which he works; but he makes something exist which did not exist before. The Idea of infinite Power necessarily supposes that, of being able to produce new Substances, as well as new Forms. To make a Substance exist which did not exist before, has nothing in it more inconceivable than the making a Form exist which was not before; for in both Cases there is a new Being produced; and whatever Difficulties there are in conceiving the Passage *from Nothing to Being*, they are as puzzling in the one as in the other. As therefore it cannot be denied but that there is a *moving Power*, though we do not conceive how it acts; so neither must we deny that there is a *creating Power*, because we have not a clear Idea of it.

* See Cic. *Tuf. Quæst. lib. 1. p. 1059.* Possumusne habitare quin mundo præsit aliquis Efficer ut Platoni videtur, vel Moderato tanti operis ut Aristoteli placet.

† *Ibid. libro de æternitate, in fine tertio.* Plat. *Tim. Loc. pag. 1089.*

To return to *Plato*. * He calls 'God the supreme Architect that created the Heavens, the Earth, and the Gods, and that does whatever he pleases in Heaven, in Earth, and in the Shades below.'

He considers the Deity in his eternal Solitude before the Production of finite Beings. He says frequently like the *Egyptians*, 'That this first Source of the Deity is surrounded with thick Darkness, which no Mortal can penetrate, and that this inaccessible God is only to be adored by Silence.' † 'Tis this first Principle which he calls in several Places *the Being, the Unity, the supreme Good*; ‡ the same in the intelligent World, that the Sun is in the visible World. ¶ 'Tis in *Plato's* Opinion, this Fountain of the Deity that the Poets called *Calus*.

This Philosopher afterwards represents to us this first Being as fallying out of his Unity to consider all the various Manners by which he might represent himself exteriorly; and thus the intelligible World, comprehending the Ideas of all Things, and the Truths which result thence, was formed in the Divine Understanding. *Plato* always distinguishes between the supreme Good, and that Wisdom which is only an Emanation from him. 'That which offers us Truth, says he, and that which gives us Reason is *the supreme Good*. He is the Cause and Source of Truth. † He hath begotten it like himself. ‡ As the Light is not the Sun,

* Plat. *de Rep. lib. 10. p. 749.*

† *De Rep. l. 6. p. 686.* ‡ *De Rep. l. 6. p. 687.*

‡ *Ibid. Τὸ πρῶτον αἰεὶ φαναι μετὰ τὴν τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ἰσχυρὴν ἐκ τῆς αἰτίας ἐξ ἧς αὐτὸς ἀδύνατος γίνεσθαι.*

but an Emanation of it, so Truth is not the first Principle, but his Emanation. As the Sun not only gives Light to Bodies, and makes them visible, but contributes likewise to their Generation and Growth; so the supreme Good not only gives Knowledge to Creatures, but gives them their Being and Existence too. This Emanation he calls *Saturn*, or the Son of *Cælus*.

In short, he considers the productive Cause of all Things, as animating the Universe, and giving it Life and Motion. In the tenth Book of his Laws, he proves that the Cause of Motion cannot be corporeal, because Matter is not active in its Nature; and supposes another Principle to put it in Motion. This first Mover he calls the Soul of the World, and *Jupiter*, or the Son of *Saturn*. So that it is plain from hence, that the Trinity of *Plato* comprehends only three Attributes of the Deity, and not three Persons.

Aristotle, *Plato*'s Disciple, and Prince of the *Peripatetick* Philosophers, calls God § 'the eternal and living Being, the most noble of all Beings, a Substance entirely distinct from Matter, without Extension, without Division, without Parts, and without Succession; who understands every thing by one single Act, and continuing himself immovable, gives Motion to all Things, and enjoys in himself a perfect Happiness, as knowing and contemplating himself with infinite Pleasure.'

In his *Metaphysics*, he lays it down for a Principle, that God; 'is a supreme Intelligence that

* Lib. 10. p. 951, 952.

§ *Arist.* Ed. Paris. 1629. *Metaph.* lib. 12. Cap. 7. p. 1002.

† *Metaph.* lib. 12. c. 10. p. 1005.

acts with Order, Proportion and Design; and is the Source of all that is good, excellent and just.'

In his Treatise of the Soul, he says, 'That the *supreme Mind*: is in its Nature prior to all Beings, that he has a sovereign Dominion over all. And in other Places he says, 'that the first Principle is neither the Fire, nor the Earth, nor the Water, nor any thing that is the Object of Sense; but that a spiritual Substance is the Cause of the Universe, and the Source of all the Order, and all the Beauties, as well as of all the Motions, and all the Forms which we so admire in it.'

These Passages shew that *Aristotle* held the Eternity of the World only in Consequence of his Notion, that it was an Emanation posterior in Nature to the Divine Mind, who being all Act, and all Energy, could not rest in a State of Inactivity.

Besides this first and eternal Substance, he acknowledges several other intelligent Beings, that preside over the Motions of the celestial Spheres. There is, says he, but one only Mover, and several inferior Deities. † All that is added about the human Shape of these Deities, is nothing else but Fiction, invented on purpose to instruct the common People, and engage them to an Observance of good Laws. All must be reduced to one only primitive Substance, and to several inferior Substances, which govern in Subordination to the first. This is the genuine Doctrine of the Antients, escaped from the Wreck of vulgar Errors and poetick Fables.

‡ *Id.* de *Anim.* l. 1. c. 7. p. 628.

• *Met.* l. 1. c. 2, 3. p. 814, 815.

† *Met.* l. 12. c. 9. p. 1005.

Cicero lived in an Age when Corruption of Manners and Scepticism were at their Height. The Sect of *Epicurus* had got the Ascendant at *Rome* over that of *Pythagoras*; and some of the greatest Men, when they were reasoning about the Divine Nature, thought fit to suspend their Judgment, and waver between the two Opinions of a *supreme Intelligence*, and a *blind Matter*. Cicero, in his Treatise of the Nature of the Gods, pleads the Cause of the Academick Philosophers who doubted of every Thing. It is however to be observed, that he refutes *Epicurus* with great Force of Reason in his first Book, and that the Objections which he makes in his third, as an Academick, are much weaker than the Proofs that he draws from the Wonders that appear in Nature, which he insists on in his second Book, to demonstrate the Existence of a *supreme Intelligence*.

In his other Works, and particularly in his Book *de Legibus*, he describes the Universe to us †† as a Republick, of which *Jupiter* is the Prince and the common Father. The great Law imprinted in the Hearts of all Men, is to love the Publick Good, and Members of the common Society as themselves; this Love of Order is the supreme Justice, and this Justice is amiable for its own Sake. To love it only for the Advantages it procures us, may be politick, but there's little of Goodness in it. 'Tis the highest Injustice to love Justice only for the Sake of Recompence. In a Word, the universal, immutable and eternal Law of all intelligent Beings, is to promote the Happiness of one another, like Children of the same Father.

†† Cic. de Leg. Ed. Amst. 1661. L. 1. p. 1189, 1189, 1190, 1191, &c.

He next represents God to us as a Sovereign Wisdom, from whose Authority it is still more impracticable for intelligent Natures to withdraw themselves, than it is for corporeal ones. * According to the Opinion of the wisest and greatest Men, † says this Philosopher, the Law is not an Invention of human Understanding, or the arbitrary Constitution of Men, but a Consequence of the eternal Reason that governs the Universe.

* The Rape which *Tarquin* committed upon *Lucetta*, continues he, was not less criminal in its Nature, because there was not at that time any written Law at *Rome* against such sort of Violences. The Tyrant was guilty of a Breach of the eternal Law, the Obligation whereof did not commence from the time it was written, but from the Moment it was made. Now its Origin is as antient as the divine Intellect, for the true, the primitive, and the supreme Law is nothing else but the sovereign Reason of the great *Force*. † This Law, says he, in another Place, is universal, eternal, immutable. It does not vary according to Times and Places it is not different now from what it was formerly. The same immortal Law is a Rule to all Nations, because it has no Author but the one only God who brought it forth and promulged it.

What a noble Idea does Cicero give us of the Nature of the Soul in his Treatise of Consolation. † *Thales*, says he, whom *Apollo* himself pronounced to be the wisest of all Men, always maintained, that the Soul is a Particle of the Divine Substance, and that it returns to Heaven as soon as

* Cic. de Leg. L. 2. p. 1199.

† Fragm. of the *Republick* of *Cicero* first translated by *Lactantius*, lib. 6. c. p. 11.

† Cic. de Consol. p. 132.

it gets rid of the mortal Body to which it is united here. All the Philosophers of the *Italick* School followed this Opinion. 'Tis their constant Doctrine, that Souls come down from Heaven, and are not only the Work of the Deity, but a Participation of his Essence.

If any one doubts of these Truths, continues he, 'tis easy to prove them. The immortal Nature of the Soul is demonstrated by two Properties that we discover in it, its Activity and its Simplicity.

'Tis active of itself; it is the Source of all its own Motions; it has no Principle from whence it borrows its Power: It is therefore an Image of the Deity, and an Emanation of his Light. Now if God be immortal, how can the Soul perish that is a Part of him?

Besides, the Soul is of a simple Nature, without any Mixture or Composition. It has nothing in common with the Elements, nothing that resembles the Earth, the Water, the Air, or the Fire. We do not see in Matter any Property like the Memory which retains what is passed, like the Reason which foresees what is to come; or like the Understanding which apprehends what is present. All these Qualities are divine, and can come from none but God alone. The Soul which proceeds from God partakes of his Eternity. 'Tis this Hope which makes wise Men easy at the Approaches of Death. 'Twas this Expectation which made *Socrates* drink the fatal Cup with Joy. Souls sunk in Matter are afraid of the Dissolution of this Body, because they dream of nothing but what is Terrestrial. O shameful Thought! such as Mortals ought to blush at entertaining. Man is the only Creature upon Earth that is allied to the Deity, or hath any Knowledge

ledge of him, and yet he is blind and senseless enough to forget his heavenly Original, and be afraid of returning to his native Country.'

Such were the Reasonings of *Cicero*, when he consulted natural Light, and was not carried away by a Fondness of shewing his Wit to defend the Doctrine of the *Scepticks*.

To come at last to *Seneca* the Stoick. He was *Nero's* Tutor, and lived in an Age when Christianity was not in Credit enough to engage the Heathens to borrow any philosophical Principles from thence.

'§ 'Tis of very little Consequence, says he, by what Name you call the first Nature, and the Divine Reason that presides over the Universe, and fills all the Parts of it. He is still the same God. He is called *Jupiter Stator*, not as Historians say, because he stopp'd the *Roman* Armies as they were flying, but because he is the constant Support of all Beings. They may call him *Fate*, because he is the first Cause on which all others depend. We Stoicks call him sometimes *Father Bacchus*, because he is the universal Life that animates Nature, *Hercules*, because his Power is invincible, *Mercury*, because he is the Reason, the Order, and the eternal Wisdom. You may give him as many Names as you please, provided you allow but *one sole omnipresent Presence* that fills all that he hath made.'

Agreeable to *Plato's* Notions, he considers the Divine Understanding as comprehending in itself the Model of all things, which he stiles the immutable and almighty Ideas, * 'Every Workman, says he,

§ Senec. Ed. Antw. a Lipsio. 1632. de Benef. l. 4. p. 311.
* Sen. Ep. 65. p. 493.

‘ hath a Model by which he forms his Work. It
 ‘ signifies nothing whether this Model exists out-
 ‘ wardly and before his Eyes, or is formed within
 ‘ him by the Strength of his own Genius. So God
 ‘ produces within himself that perfect Model, which
 ‘ is the Proportion, the Order and the Beauty of
 ‘ all Beings.’

† ‘ The Antients, says he in another Place, did
 ‘ not think *Jove* such a Being as we represent him
 ‘ in the Capitol and in our other Buildings. But
 ‘ by *Jove* they meant the Guardian and Governour
 ‘ of the Universe, the Understanding and the Mind,
 ‘ the Master and the Architect of this great Machine.
 ‘ All Names belong to him. You are not in the
 ‘ Wrong if you call him *Fate*, for he is the Cause
 ‘ of Causes, and every thing depends on him.
 ‘ Would you call him *Providence*? you fall into no
 ‘ Mistake. ‘Tis by his Wisdom that this World is
 ‘ governed. Would you call him *Nature*? you
 ‘ will not offend in doing so: ‘Tis from him that
 ‘ all Beings derive their Origin; ‘tis by him that
 ‘ they live and breath.’

There is no reading the Works of *Epictetus*, of
Arrian his Disciple, and of *Marcus Antoninus* with-
 out Admiration. We find in them Rules of Mora-
 lity worthy of Christianity, and yet those Disci-
 ples of *Zeno* believed like their Master, that there
 was but one Substance, that the supreme intelli-
 gent Being was material, and that its Essence was
 a pure *Aether* which filled all by local Diffusion.
 The Error of these Materialists does not in any wise
 prove them to be Atheists, a false Notion about the
 Deity being far from proving that they believed
 none at all. What constitutes an Atheist is, not

† *Ib. Natur. Quæst. lib. 2. p. 715.*

the maintaining with the Stoicks that Extension
 and Thought may be Properties of the same Sub-
 stance; or with *Pythagoras* and *Plato* that Matter is
 an eternal Production of the Deity; but real A-
 theism consists in denying that there is a supreme
 Intelligence which made the World by his Power,
 and governs it by his Wisdom.

For our fuller Satisfaction with regard to the The-
 ology of the Heathens, let us see what the Fathers
 of the Church thought of it. They had sufficient
 Opportunities of knowing it thoroughly, by the
 frequent Disputes which they held with them.
 And as this is a Matter of a very nice Nature, I will
 not propose any of my own Conjectures, but
 cite their own Words.

Arnobius introduces the Heathens complaining of
 the Injustice of the Christians. ‘ ‘Tis a mere Ca-
 lumny, say those Heathens, to charge us with
 such a Crime, as the denying of a supreme God.
 We call him *Jove*, the supremely Great, and so-
 vereignly Good. We dedicate our most magnifi-
 cent Structures and our Capitols to him, to shew
 that we exalt him above all other Deities.

§ *St. Paul* in his preaching at *Athens*, says *St.*
Clement of Alexandria, insinuates that the *Greeks*
 had a Knowledge of the Deity. He supposes that
 those People adore the same God as we do, tho’ not
 in the same manner. He does not forbid us to a-
 dore the same God as the *Greeks*, but he forbids us
 to adore him after the same way. He orders us to
 change the Manner, and not the Object of our
 Worship.’

† The Heathens, says *Lactantius*, who admit se-
 veral Gods, say nevertheless, that those subordi-

§ *Arnob. lib. 1. p. 19* § *Strom. l. 6. p. 625.* † *Lib. 1. p. 16.*

• nate Deities, though they preside over all the various Parts of the Universe, do it in such a manner, as that there is still but one sole Ruler and supreme Governour. From whence it follows, that all the other invisible Powers are not properly Gods, but Ministers or Deputies of the only Great and Almighty God, who appointed them Executors of his Will and Pleasure.

Eusebius of Cesarea goes farther. * † The Heathens own that there is but one only God, who fills, pervades and presides over universal Nature; but maintain, that as he is present to his Work only in an incorporeal and invisible manner, they are therefore in the right to worship him in his visible and corporeal Effects.

I shall conclude with a famous Passage of *St. Augustine*, who reduces the Polytheism of the Heathens to the Unity of one sole Principle. † *Jupiter*, says this Father, is, according to the Philosophers, the Soul of the World, who takes different Names according to the different Effects which he produces. In the Æthereal Spaces he is called *Jupiter*, in the Air *Juno*, in the Sea *Neptune*, in the Earth *Pluto*, in *Hel* *Proserpina*, in the Element of Fire *Vulcan*, in the Sun *Phœbus*, in Divination *Apollo*, in War *Mars*, in the Vintage *Bacchus*, in the Harvest *Ceres*, in the Forrests *Diana*, and in the Sciences *Minerva*. All that Crowd of Gods and Goddesses are only the same *Jupiter*, whose different Powers and Attributes they express by different Names.

It is therefore evident by the Testimony of profane Poets, Heathen Philosophers, and Fathers of the Church, that the *Pagans* acknowledged one su-

* PRXP. EVANG. l. 3. ch. 13. p. 103.

† St. AUG. de CIV. DEI. l. 4. ch. 15.

preme Deity. The Eastern People, the *Egyptians*, the *Greeks*, the *Romans*, and all Nations agreed universally in teaching this Truth.

About the fifteenth Olympiad, six hundred Years before the Christian *Æra*, the *Greeks* having lost the traditional Knowledge of the *Oriental*s, began to lay aside the Doctrine of the *Antients*, and to reason about the Divine Nature from Prejudices, which their Senses and Imagination suggested. *Anaximander* lived at that time, and was the first that set himself to destroy the Belief of a supreme Intelligence, in order to account for every thing from the Action of blind Matter, which by necessity assumes all Sorts of Forms. He was followed by *Leucippus*, *Democritus*, *Epicurus*, *Strato*, *Lucretius*, and all the School of the *Atomical* Philosophers.

Pythagoras, *Anaxagoras*, *Socrates*, *Plato*, *Aristotle*, and all the great Men of *Greece*, opposed this impious Doctrine, and endeavoured to prove the ancient Theology of the *Oriental*s. These Philosophers of a superior Genius, observ'd in Nature, *Motion*, *Thought* and *Design*. And as the Idea of Matter includes none of these three Properties, they inferred from thence, that there was another Substance different from Matter.

Greece being thus divided into two Sects, they disputed for a long time, without either Party being convinced. At length about the 12th Olympiad *Pyrrho*, formed a third Sect, whose great Principle was to doubt of every thing, and determine nothing. All the *Atomists* who had laboured in vain to find out a Demonstration of their false Principles, presently struck in with the *Pyrrhonian* Sect. They ran wildly into the System of an universal Doubt, and carried it almost to such an Excess of Frenzy, that they doubted of the clearest, and most sensible Truths. They maintained without any Allegory, that every thing we see is only an Illusion, and that the whole Series of Life is but a perpetual Dream

of which those of the Night are only so many Images.

At last *Zeno* set up a fourth School about the 130th Olympiad. This Philosopher endeavoured to reconcile the Disciples of *Democritus* with those of *Plato*, by maintaining that the first Principle was indeed an infinite *Wisdom*, but his Essence was only a pure *Aether*, or a subtile Light, which diffus'd it self every where, to give Life, Motion, and Reason to all Beings.

In these last Ages the modern Free-thinkers have done nothing, but revive the ancient Errors. *Jordano Bruno*, *Vannini*, and *Spinoza*, have vamped up the monstrous System of *Anaximander*; and the last of the three has endeavoured to dazzle weak Minds, by dressing it up in a Geometrical Form.

Some *Spinozists* finding that they were every Moment at a Loss for Evidence, in the pretended Demonstrations of their Master, are fallen into a senseless sort of Scepticism, called *Exonism*, where every one fancies himself to be the only Being that exists.

Mr. Hobbes, and several other Philosophers, without setting up for Atheists, have ventured to maintain, that Thought and Extension are Properties of the same Substance.

Des Cartes, *F. Malebranche*, *Leibnitz*, *Dr. Bentley*, *Dr. Clarke*, and several Philosophers of a Genius, equally subtile and profound, have endeavoured to refute these Errors, and brought Arguments to support the ancient Theology. Besides the Proofs which are drawn from the Effects, they have insisted on others drawn from the Idea of the first Cause. They shew plainly that the Reasons of believing, are infinitely stronger than any Arguments there are for doubting. This is all that can be expected in metaphysical Discussions.

The History of former Times, is like that of our own. Human Understanding takes almost the same Forms in different Ages, and loses its Way in the same Labyrinths.

PART

PART II.

Of the MYTHOLOGY of the ANTIENTS.

MEN left to the Light of their Reason alone, have always looked upon moral and physical Evil, as a shocking Phenomenon in the Work of a Being infinitely wise, good, and powerful. To account for it, the Philosophers have had recourse to several Hypotheses.

Reason told them all, that what is supremely good could never produce any thing that was wicked or miserable. From hence they concluded that Souls are not now what they were at first; that they are degraded for some Fault committed by them in a former State; that this Life is a Place of Exile and Expiation; and in a Word, that all Beings are to be restored to their proper Order.

These philosophical Notions, however, had another Original. Tradition struck in which Reason to gain them a Reception, and that Tradition had spread over all Nations certain Opinions which they held in common, with regard to the three States of the World, as I shall shew in this second Part, which will be a sort of Abridgment of the traditional Doctrine of the Ancients.

I begin with the Mythology of the *Greeks* and *Romans*. All the Poets speaking of the Golden Age or Reign of *Sarman*, describe it to us as an happy State, where there were neither Calamities nor

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Crimes, nor Labour nor Pains, nor Diseases, nor Death.*

They represent to us on the contrary, the Iron Age, as the time when physical and moral Evil first appeared; when Vices, Sufferings, and all manner of Evils came forth of *Pandora's* fatal Box, and overflowed the Face of the Earth. †

They speak to us of the Golden Age revived, as of a time when *Astrea* was to return upon Earth, when Justice, Peace and Innocence were to flourish again with their original Lustre; and when every thing was to be restored to its primitive Perfection.

In a Word, they sing on all Occasions the Exploits of a Son of *Jupiter*, who was to quit his heavenly Abode and live among Men. They give him different Names, according to his different Functions: Sometimes he is *Apollo* fighting against *Python* and the *Titan*, Sometimes he is *Hercules* destroying Monsters and Giants, and purging the Earth of their Enormities and Crimes. One while he is *Mercury*, or the Messenger of *Jove*, flying about every where to execute his Decrees; and another while he is *Perses* delivering *Andromeda* or human Nature, from the Monster that rose out of the great Deep to devour her. He is always some Son of *Jupiter* giving Battles and gaining Victories. ‡

I lay no great Stress upon those poetical Descriptions, because they may perhaps be looked upon as meer Fictions, and a Machinery introduc'd to embellish a Poem and amuse the Mind. Allegorical Explications are liable to Uncertainty and Mistake. So that I shall pass directly to represent the Doctrine of the Philosophers, particularly that of *Plato*; who is the Source

* See Hesiod. de Secl. auro. Orpheus apud Proclum. Theol. Plat. lib. 1. cap. 10. Lucretius lib. 5. Ovid Metam. lib. 1. lib. 2. Virg. Georg. lib. 2. line 536.
 † Ovid Metam. lib. 1. fab. 4. 5. & 6. Virg. Georg. lib. 1. line 125. Juvenal. Satyr. 6.
 ‡ Virg. Lib. 4. Georg. Tragic. Oedip. Act 1.

from whence *Plotinus*, *Proclus*, and the *Platonists* of the third Century drew their principal Notions.

To begin with the Dialogue of *Phædo*, or of Immortality, and give a short Analysis of it. *Phædo* gives his Friends an Account of the Condition that he saw *Socrates* in at the time of his Death. 'He quitted Life, (says he) with a peaceable Joy, and a noble Intrepidity.' His Friends asking him the Reason of it, 'I hope, (says *Socrates* in his Answer) to be re-united to the good and perfect Gods, and to be associated with better Men than those I leave upon Earth.' *

When *Cebes* objects to him that the Soul vanished after Death, like a Smoke, and was entirely annihilated, *Socrates* sets himself to refute that Opinion, and endeavours to prove that the Soul had a real Existence † in an happy State, before it informed an human Body.

This Doctrine he ascribes to *Orpheus* **. 'The Disciples of *Orpheus*, (says he) call'd the Body a Prison, because the Soul is here in a State of Punishment till it has expiated the Faults that it committed in Heaven. Souls, (continues *Plato*) that are too much given to bodily Pleasures, and are in a manner besotted, wander upon the Earth, and are put into new Bodies. For all Sensuality and Passion bind the Soul more closely to Bodies, make her fancy that she is of the same Nature, and render her in a manner corporeal. So that she contracts an Incapacity of flying away into another Life, and being oppressed with the Weight of her Impurity and Corruption, sinks deeper into Matter, and becomes thereby disabled to re-mount towards the Regions of Purity, and attain to a Re-union with her Principle.

* P. 48. † P. 57. ** Plat. Cratyl. p. 276.
 ‡ Phæd. p. 61, 62, 63.

Upon this Foundation is built the Doctrine of the Transmigration of Souls, which *Plato* represents in his *Timæus* *Locrus* as an Allegory, and at other times as a real State, where Souls that have made themselves unworthy of the supreme Beatitude, sojourn and suffer successively in the Bodies of different Animals, till they are purged at last of their Crimes by the Pains they undergo. This hath made some Philosophers believe that the Souls of Beasts are degraded Spirits.

* Pure Souls, adds *Plato*, that have exerted themselves here below to get the better of all Corruption, and free themselves from the Impurities of their terrestrial Prison, retire after Death into an invisible Place, unknown to us, where the pure unites with the pure, the good cleaves to its like, and our immortal Essence is united to the divine.

He calls this Place the first Earth, where Souls made their Abode before their Degradation. The Earth, says he, is immense; we know and we inhabit only a small Corner of it*. The æthereal Earth, the ancient Abode of Souls, is placed in the pure Regions of Heaven, where the fixed Stars are seated. We that live in this low Abyss, are apt enough to fancy that we are in an high Place, and we call the Air the Heavens, just like a Man that from the Bottom of the Sea should view the Sun and Stars thro' the Water, and fancy the Ocean to be the Firmament it self. But if we had Wings to mount on high, we should see that there is the true Heaven, the true Light, and the true Earth. As in the Sea every thing is changed, and disfigured by the Salts that abound in it; so in our present Earth every thing is deformed, corrupted, and in a ruinous Condition, if compared with the primitive Earth.

Plato gives afterwards a pompous Description of that æthereal Earth, of which ours is only a shattered

* P. 22.

Crust. He says, * that every thing there was beautiful, harmonious and transparent; Fruits of an exquisite Taste grew there naturally, and it was watered with Rivers of Nectar. They breathed there the Light as here we breathe the Air, and they drank Waters that were purer than Air it self.

This Notion of *Plato* agrees in a great Measure with that of *Des Cartes*, about the Nature of the Planets. This modern Philosopher thinks that they were at first Suns, which contracted afterwards a thick and opaque Crust; but he does not enter into the moral Reasons of this Change, his View being only to consider the World as a natural Philosopher.

This same Doctrine of *Plato* is likewise clearly explained in his *Timæus*. There he tells us how *Solon* in his Travels discoursed with an *Egyptian* Priest about the Antiquity of the World, its Origin, and the Revolutions which had happened in it according to the Mythology of the *Greeks*. Upon which the *Egyptian* Priest says to him, † O *Solon*, you *Greeks* are always Children, and you never come to an Age of Maturity: Your Understanding is young, and has no true Knowledge of Antiquity. There have been several Deluges and Conflagrations upon Earth, caused by Changes in the Motion of the heavenly Bodies. Your History of *Phaeton*, whatever Air it has of a Fable, is nevertheless not without a real Foundation. We *Egyptians* have preserved the Memory of these Facts in our Monuments and Temples; whereas it is but a very little while that the *Greeks* have had any Knowledge of Letters, of the Muses, and of Sciences.

This Discourse puts *Timæus* upon explaining to *Socrates* the Origin of Things, and the primitive State of the World. † Whatever has been produced, says he, has been produced by some Cause. 'Tis no easy

* P. 52. § Tim. P. 104.

† P. 104.

‘ Matter to know the Nature of this Maker and Father of the Universe, and though you should discover it, it would be impossible for you to make the Vulgar comprehend it.

‘ This Architect of the World, continues he, ‘ has a Model by which he produced every thing, and this Model is himself. As he is good, and what is good, has not the least Tincture of Evill, he made all Things, as far as was possible, like himself. He made the World perfect in the whole of its Constitution, perfect too in all the various Parts that compose it, which were subject neither to Diseases, nor to Decay of Age.

In the Dialogue which bears the Title of *Politics*, Plato mentioning this primitive State of the World, calls it the Reign of *Saturn*, and describes it in this Manner. ‘ * God was then the Prince and common Father of all. He governed the World by himself, as he governs it now by inferior Deities. Rage and Cruelty did not then reign upon Earth. War and Sedition were not so much as known. God himself took care of the Subsistence of Mankind, and was their Guardian and Shepherd. There were no Magistrates, nor civil Polity, as there are now. In those happy Days Men sprung out of the Bosom of the Earth, which produced them of it self, like Flowers and Trees. The fertile Fields yielded Fruits and Corn without the Labour of Tillage. Men had no Occasion for Clothes to cover their Bodies, being troubled with no Inclemency of the Seasons; and they took their Rest upon Beds of Turf of a perpetual Verdure.

‘ Under the Reign of *Jupiter* the Master of the Universe, *Saturn* having quitted as it were the Reins of his Empire, hid himself in an inaccessible Retreat. The inferior Gods that governed under him, retired

* P. 537, 538.

‘ too; the very Foundations of the World were shaken by Motions contrary to its Principle and its End, and it lost its Beauty and its Lustre. Then the Goods of Nature were mixed and blended with Evils. But in the End, lest the World should be plunged in an eternal Abyss of Confusion, God, the Author of the primitive Order will appear again, and resume the Reins of Empire. Then he will change, amend, embellish and restore the whole Frame of Nature, and put an End to Decay of Age, to Diseases and Death.

In the Dialogue under the Title of *Phaedrus*, Plato enquires into the secret Causes of moral Evil, which brought in physical Evil. ‘ * There are in every one of us, says he, two leading and principal Springs of Action, the *Desire of Pleasure*, and the *Love of Virtue*, which are the Wings of the Soul. When these Wings are parted, when the Love of Pleasure and the Love of Virtue move contrary Ways, then Souls fall down into mortal Bodies. Let us see here his Notion of the Pleasures which Spirits taste in Heaven, and of the Manner how Souls fell from the happy State which they enjoy'd there.

‘ † The great *Jupiter*, (says he) pushing on his wing'd Chariot, marches first, follow'd by all the inferior Gods and *Genii*; thus they traverse the Heavens, admiring the infinite Wonders thereof. But when they go to the great Banquet, they raise themselves to the Top of Heaven, and mount above the Spheres. None of our Poets ever yet sung, or can sing that *Supercælestial Place*. § There Souls, with the Eyes of the Mind, contemplate the truly existing Essence, which has neither Colour nor Figure, nor is the Object of any Sense, but is purely intelligible. There they see Virtue, Truth and Justice, not as they are here below, but as they exist in him who is the *Being* itself. There they are delighted with that Sight till they are no longer able to bear the Glory of it, and then they

* P. 1216.

† P. 1222.

§ P. 1222.

* return back to Heaven, where they feed again on *Nectar* and *Ambrosia*. Such is the Life of the Gods.

* Now, continues *Plato*, * every Soul that follows God faithfully into that Super-celestial Place, continues pure and without Blemish; but if it takes up with *Nectar* and *Ambrosia*, and does not attend on *Jupiter's* Chariot to go and contemplate Truth, it grows heavy and sluggish. It breaks its Wings, it falls upon the Earth, and enters into an human Body more or less vile, according as it has been more or less elevated. Souls less degraded than others, dwell in the Bodies of Philosophers. The most despicable of all animate the Bodies of Tyrants and evil Princes. Their Condition alters after Death, and becomes more or less happy, according as they loved Virtue or Vice in their Lifetime. After ten thousand Years, Souls will be re-united to their Principle. During that Space of Time their Wings grow again and are renew'd.

Such was the Doctrine which *Plato* opposed to the profane Sect of *Democritus* and *Epicurus*, who denied an eternal Providence, on Account of the physical and moral Evils which they saw in the World. This Philosopher gives us a fine Description of the Universe. He considers it as an Immensity filled with free Spirits, which inhabit and inform innumerable Worlds. These Spirits are qualified to enjoy a double Felicity; the one consisting in the Contemplation of the divine Essence, the other in admiring his Works. When Souls no longer make their Felicity consist in the Knowledge of Truth, and when lower Pleasures turn them off from the Love of the supreme Essence, they are thrown down into some Planet, there to undergo expiatory Punishments till they are cured by their Sufferings. These Planets are consequently according to *Plato's* Notion, like Hospitals or † *Places instituted for the Cure of distempered Intelligences*. This is the inviolable Law established § for the Preservation of Order in the Celestial Spheres. This

* P. 1223.

† *Nosocomia*.§ *Orbis dispositio*.

This doubtful Employment of Celestial Spirits, is one of the sublimest Notions of *Plato*, and shews the wonderful Depth of his Genius. This was the System adopted by the Heathen Philosophers, whenever they attempted to explain to us the origin of Evil. And thus they regard; if Souls could without Intermision contemplate the Divine Essence by a direct View, they would be impeccable, the Sight of the supreme Good necessarily engaging all the Love of the Will. To explain therefore the Fall of Spirits, they were forced to suppose an Interval, when the Soul withdraws from the Divine Presence, and quits the Supra-Celestial Abode, in order to admire the Beauties of Nature, and entertain it self with *Ambrosia*, as a Food less delicate, and more suitable to a finite Being. 'Tis in these Intervals that she becomes false to her Duty.

Pythagoras had learned the same Doctrine among the *Egyptians*. We have still a very valuable Monument of it left in the Commentary of *Hierocles* upon the golden Verses ascribed to that Philosopher. As our Distance from God, says this Author, and the Loss of the Wings which used to raise us up to heavenly Things, have thrown us down into this Region of Death which is over-run with all manner of Evils: So the stripping our selves of earthly Affections*, and the Revival of Virtues in us make our Wings grow again, and raise us up to the Mansions of Life, where true Good is to be found without any Mixture of evil. The Essence of Man being in the Middle between Beings that contemplate God without ceasing, and such as are not able to contemplate him at all, has it in its Power to raise

* *Hierocles* Com. in *Aurea Carm.* p. 187. Ed. Cant. 1709.

‘ itself up towards the one, or sink down towards the
‘ other.’

‘ * The wicked Man, says *Hierocles* in another
‘ Place, ‘ does not care that the Soul should be immor-
‘ tal for fear he should live after Death only to suffer
‘ Punishment. But the Judges of the Shades below,
‘ as they form their Judgment upon the Rules of
‘ Truth, do not decree, that the Soul should exist no
‘ longer, but that it should be no longer vicious.
‘ Their Business is to correct, and cure it, by preferib-
‘ ing Punishments for the Health of Nature, just as
‘ Physicians heal the most inveterate Ulcers by Inci-
‘ sions. These Judges punish the Crime in order to
‘ extirpate Vice. They do not annihilate the Essence
‘ of the Soul, but bring it back to its true and genu-
‘ ine Existence, purifying it from all the Passions
‘ that corrupt it. And therefore when we have sin-
‘ ned, we should be glad to embrace the Punishment,
‘ as the only Remedy for Vice.’

‘ Tis therefore evidently the Doctrine of the most
‘ famous Greek Philosophers. 1st, That Souls had a
‘ Pre-existence in Heaven. 2dly, That the *Jupiter*
‘ who marched at the Head of Souls before the Loss of
‘ their Wings, and he to whom *Saturn* gave the Reins
‘ of his Empire after the origin of Evil is a distinct Be-
‘ ing from the supreme Essence, and is very like the *My-
‘ thras* of the *Persians*, and the *Orus* of the *Egyptians*. 3dly,
‘ That Souls lost their Wings, and were thrust down
‘ into mortal Bodies, because that instead of follow-
‘ ing *Jupiter's* Chariot, they gave themselves too much
‘ up to the enjoyment of lower Pleasures. 4thly, That at
‘ the End of a certain Period of time, the Wings of the
‘ Soul shall grow again, and *Saturn* shall resume the

* *lb. Carm. p. 110.*

Reins of his Empire in order to restore the Universe
to its original Perfection.

Let us now examine the *Egyptian* Mythology, the
Source from whence that of the *Greeks* was derived.
I shall not offer to maintain the mystical Explicati-
ons that *Kircher* gives of the famous Table of *Isis*, or
of the *Obelisks* that are to be seen at *Rome*: I confine
myself to *Plutarch*, who has preserved us an admiral
Monument of that Mythology. To represent it in
its real Beauties, it will be proper to give a short and
clear Analysis of his Treatise of *Isis* and *Osiris*, which
is a Letter written to *Clea* Priestess of *Isis*.

‘ † The *Egyptian* Mythology, says *Plutarch*, ‘ has
‘ two Sentes, the one sacred and sublime, the other
‘ sensible and palpable. ‘ Tis for this Reason that the
‘ *Egyptians* put *Sphinxes* before the Door of their
‘ Temples; designing thereby to signify to us that
‘ their Theology contains the Secrets of Wisdom
‘ under enigmatical Words. This is also the Sense
‘ of the Inscription upon a Statue of *Pallas* or *Isis* at
‘ *Sais*, *I am all that is, has been, and shall be, and no Mor-
‘ tal has ever yet removed the Veil that covers me.*’

‘ * He afterwards relates the *Egyptian* Fable of *Isis*
‘ and *Osiris*. They were both born of *Rhea* and the
‘ *Sun*: Whilst they were still in their Mother’s
‘ Womb, they copulated and ingender’d the God
‘ *Orus*, the living Image of their Substance. *Ty-
‘ phon* was not born, but burst violently through the
‘ Ribs of *Rhea*. He afterwards revolted against *Osiris*,
‘ filled the Universe with his Rage and Violence,
‘ tore the Body of his Brother in Pieces, mangled
‘ his Limbs and scatter’d them about. Ever since

† *Pag. 354.*

* *Pag. 365.*

† that time *Isis* goes wandering about the Earth
 † to gather up the scatter'd Limbs of her Brother
 † and Husband. The eternal and immortal Soul of
 † *Osiris* led his Son *Orus* to the Shades below,
 † where he gave him Instructions how to fight, and
 † beat *Typhon*. *Orus* returned upon Earth, fought
 † and defeated *Typhon*, but did not kill him. All
 † that he did was to bind him, and take away his Pow-
 † er of doing Mischief. The wicked one made his
 † Escape afterwards, and was going to renew his
 † Malice: But *Orus* fought him in two bloody Battles
 † and destroyed him entirely.

Plutarch goes on thus, "Whoever applieth these
 † Allegories to the blessed immortal Divina Nature,
 † deserves to be treated with Contempt. We must
 † not however believe that they are mere Fables with-
 † out any Meaning, like those of the Poets. They
 † represent to us things that really happened.

† It would be likewise a dangerous Error, and ma-
 † nifest Impiety to interpret what is said of the Gods,
 † as *Euemerus* the *Messianian* did, and apply it to the
 † ancient Kings and great Generals. This would in
 † the end serve to destroy Religion, and estrange Men
 † from the Dicty.

† † There are others, adds he, much juster in
 † their Notions, who have wrote, that whatever
 † is related of *Typhon*, *Osiris*, *Isis*, and *Orus* must
 † be understood of *Genii* and *Demons*. † This was
 † the Opinion of *Pythagoras*, *Plato*, *Xenocrates*, and
 † *Cicero*, who followed the ancient Theologians
 † in this Notion. All those great Men maintained
 † that these *Genii* were very powerful, and far super-

* Pag. 35E.

†† Pag. 35E.

‡ Pag. 360.

† rior to Mortals. They did not however partake
 † of the Deity in a pure and simple manner, but were
 † composed of a spiritual and corporeal Nature;
 † and consequently capable of Pleasures and Pains,
 † Passions and Changes; for there are Virtues and
 † Vices among the *Genii* as well as among Men.
 † Hence come the Fables of the *Greeks* about the
 † *Titans* and the Giants, the Engagements of *Pytho*
 † against *Apollo*, the Furies and Extravagance of
 † *Bacchus*, and several Fictions like those of *Osiris*
 † and *Typhon*. Hence it is that *Homer* speaks of
 † good and evil *Demons*. *Plato* calls the first *Tu-*
 † *lary-Deities*, because they are Mediators between
 † God and Man, and carry up the Prayers of Mor-
 † tals to Heaven and bring us from thence the Know-
 † ledge and Revelation of secret and future Things.

† * *Empedocles*, continues he, says, that the evil
 † *Demons* are punished for the Faults they have
 † committed. The Sun precipitates them at first
 † into the Air, the Air casts them into the deep
 † Sea. The Sea vomits them upon the Land, and
 † from the Earth they are raised up at last towards
 † Heaven. Thus are they transported from one
 † Place to another, till being in the End punished
 † and purified, they return to the Place adapted to
 † their Nature.

Plutarch, after having given such a Theological
 † Explanation of the *Egyptian* Allegories, gives like-
 † wise the physical Explications thereof, but he re-
 † jects them all, and returns to his first Doctrine.
 † ~~Plutarch~~ is neither the Sun, nor the Water, nor
 † the Earth, nor the Heaven, but whatever there
 † is in Nature well disposed, regulated, good and

* Pag. 361.

† Pag. 366.

‘ perfect, all *that* is the Image of *Osiris*. *Typhon* is
 ‘ neither scorching Heat, nor the Fire, nor the Sea,
 ‘ but whatever is hurtful, inconstant and irregular.’

Plutarch goes farther in another Treatise, and enquires into the Cause of the origin of Evil: The Argument he makes use of on this Occasion is equally solid and subtle, and is expressed thus: † The
 ‘ Maker of the World being perfectly good formed all Things at first, as far as was possible, like himself. The World at its Birth received, from him that made it, all Sorts of good Things: Whatever it has at present unhappy and wicked in it, comes from a Disposition foreign to its Nature. God cannot be the Cause of Evil, because he is sovereignly good; Matter cannot be the Cause of Evil, because it has no active Force. But Evil comes from a third Principle, neither so perfect as God, nor so imperfect as Matter. This Third Being is an intelligent Nature, which being self-moving hath within itself a Source, a Principle, and a Cause of Motion.’

I have already shewn that the Schools of *Pythagoras* and *Plato* asserted Liberty of Will. The former expresses it by the Nature of the Soul, which can either raise or sink itself; the other by the *Itself of the Soul*, which may move different ways and be parted. *Plutarch* follows the same Principles, and makes Liberty consist in the Activity of the Soul, by which it is the Source of its own Determination.

This Opinion therefore ought not to be looked upon as modern. It is at once both natural and philosophical. The Soul can always separate and re-unite, recal and compare her Ideas, and on this

† *Plot. de Anim. form. p. 1015.*

Activity depends her Liberty. We can always think upon other Goods than those we are actually thinking of. We can always suspend our Consent to consider if the Good that we enjoy, be, or be not the true Good. Our Liberty does not consist in willing without any Reason for willing, nor in preferring a lesser Good to what appears to us to be a greater; but it consists in examining whether the present Good be a real or an imaginary Good. The Soul exerts its Liberty only when it is placed between two Objects that seem worthy of some Choice. It is never carried away invincibly by the Impression of any finite Good, because it can think upon other Goods much greater than they, and thereby discover a superior Charm and Attraction that is sufficient to get the better of the apparent and deceitful Good.

It must be owned that the Passions by the lively Impressions which they make on us, sometimes take up all the Capacity of the Soul, and hinder it from reflecting. They darken its discerning Faculty, and hurry it on to an Assent: They transform Objects, and place them in a wrong Light. But strong as they are, they are never invincible; 'tis difficult indeed, but not impossible, to surmount them. 'Tis always in our Power to diminish their Force gradually, and prevent their Excess. This is the Warfare of Man on Earth, and this is the Triumph of Virtue.

The Heathens feeling this Tyranny of the Passions, were convinced by the Light of Nature alone, of the Necessity of a celestial Power to subdue them. They always represent Virtue to us as a *Divine Energy descending from Heaven*. They are continually bringing into their Poems Guardian Deities that inspire, enlighten and strengthen us, to shew that heroick Virtues can only proceed from the Gods.

These were the Principles upon which the wise Antients went, in their Arguments against these Notions of *Fatality*, which are alike destructive to Religion, Morality and Society. To return to the *Egyptians*.

Their Doctrine, according to *Plutarch*, supposes
1. That the World was created without any physical or moral Evil, by a Being infinitely Good. 2. That several *Genii* abusing their Liberty, fell into Crimes, and consequently into Misery. 3. That these *Genii* must suffer expiatory Punishments till they are purified and restored to their first State. 4. That the God *Orus*, the Son of *Ijis* and *Osiris*, and who fights with the evil Principle, is a subordinate Deity, like *Jupiter* the Son of *Saturn*.

Let us pass next into *Persia*, to consult the Mythology of the Orientals. The nearer we approach the first Origin of Nations, the clearer shall we find their Theology.

* *Zoroaster*, says *Plutarch*, taught that there are two Gods contrary to each other in their Operations, the one the Author of all the Good, the other of all the Evil in Nature. The good Principle he calls *Oromazes*, the other the Daemon *Arimanius* †. He says that the one resembles Light and Truth, the other Darkneis and Ignorance. There is likewise a middle God between these two, named *Mythras* *. whom the *Persians* call the Intercessor or Mediator. The *Magi* add, that *Oromazes* is born of the purest Light, and *Arimanius* of Darkneis; that they make War up-

† De Isid. & Osir. p. 370.

* Ibid.

* Δις ναυ Μήτρον γέγονας τῆς Μετῆρος ἑσπῆς Ἰσταν.

on one another, and that *Oromazes* made six *Genii*, Goodneis, Truth, Justice, Wisdom, Plenty and Joy; and *Arimanius* made six others to oppose them, Malice, Falshood, Injustice, Folly, Want and Sadneis. *Oromazes* having withdrawn himself to as great a Distance from the Sphere of *Arimanius*, as the Sun is from the Earth, beautified the Heavens with Stars and Constellations. He created afterwards four and twenty other *Genii*, and put them into an Egg; (by which the Antients mean the Earth) but *Arimanius* and his *Genii* pierced through this shining Egg, and immediately Evil was blended and confounded with Good. But there will come a Time appointed by Fate, when *Arimanius* shall be entirely destroyed and extirpated; the Earth shall change its Form, and become plain and even, and happy Men shall have only one and the same Life, Language and Government.

Theopompus writes also, that according to the Doctrine of the *Magi*, these Gods must make War for nine thousand Years, the one destroying the other's Work, till at last Hell shall be taken away. Then Men shall be happy, and their Bodies become transparent. The God who was the Author of their Being, keeps himself retir'd till that time; an Interval not too long for a God, but rather like a Moment of Sleep.

We have lost the ancient Books of the first *Persians*; so that in order to judge of their Mythology, we must have recourse to the oriental Philologists of our own time, and see if there be still left among the Disciples of *Zoroaster* any Traces of the ancient Doctrine of their Master. The famous *Dr. Hyde*, a Divine of the Church of *England*, who had travelled into the East, and perfect-

ly understood the Language of the Country, has translated the following Passages out of *Sbarijsbani*, an *Arabian* Philosopher of the fifteenth Century.

‘ The first *Magi* did not look upon the two Principles as coeternal, but believed that the Light was eternal, and that the Darkne’s was produced in time; and the Origin of this evil Principle they account for in this Manner: Light can produce nothing but Light, and can never be the Origin of Evil; how then was Evil produced, since there was nothing coequal or like the Light in its eternal Production? Light, say they, produced several Beings, all of them spiritual, luminous and powerful. But their Chief, whose Name was *Abriman* or *Arimanus*, had an evil Thought contrary to the Light. He doubted, and by that Doubt he became dark. Hence arose all the Evils, the Dissention, the Malice, and every thing else of a contrary Nature to the Light. These two Principles made War upon one another, till at last Peace was made, upon Condition that the lower World should be in Subjection to *Arimanus* for seven Thousand Years; after which space of time, he is to surrender back the World to the Light.’

Here we see the four Notions that I speak of in the foregoing Work: 1. A State before Good and Evil were blended and confounded together. 2. A State after they were so blended and confounded. 3. A State when Evil shall be entirely destroyed. 4. A middle God between the good and the evil Principle.

As the Doctrine of the *Persian Magi* is a Sequel of the Doctrine of the *Indian Brachmans*, we must consult the one to put the other in a clear Light. We have but few Traces left of the ancient Theology of

* Hyde Rel. Ant. Pers. c. 9. p. 163. & c. 11. p. 194.

the *Gymnosophists*, yet those which *Strabo* has preserved, suppose the three different States of the World.

After that Historian has described the Life and Manners of the *Brachmans*, he adds, ‘ Those Philosophers look upon the State of Men in this Life, to be like that of Children in their Mother’s Womb, Death according to their Notion being a Birth to a true and an happy Life. They believe that whatever happens to Mortals here, does not deserve the Name either of good or evil. Agreeable to the *Greeks* in several Things, they think that the World had a Beginning, and that it will have an End; that God who made it †, and who governs it, is every where present to his Work.

The same Author goes on in this Manner; ‘ *Onesicritus* being sent by *Alexander* the Great to learn the Life, the Manners, and the Doctrine of those Philosophers found a *Brachman* named *Calanus*, who taught him the following Principles. (1.) Formerly Plenty reigned over all Nature; Milk, Wine, Honey and Oil, flowed in a continual Stream from Fountains. (2.) But Men having made an ill use of this Felicity, *Jupiter* deprived them of it, and condemned them to labour for their Sustenance of their Lives. (3.) When Temperance and the rest of the Virtues shall return upon Earth, then the ancient Plenty shall be restor’d *.

For forming a better Judgment of the Doctrine of the ancient *Gymnosophists*, I have consulted what

* Lib. 15. p. 713. 714. Ed. Paris 1620. † *Ibid.*

* *as is* is the first Aorist of the Verb *as is*, and ought to be translated *est*, not *erat* as *Nylander* has rendered it, for want of understanding the Notion of *Calanus*.

has been translated of the *Vedam*, which is the sacred Book of the modern *Bramins*. Though its Antiquity is not perhaps so great as they affirm it to be, yet there is no denying but it contains the ancient Traditions of those People, and of their Philosophers.

'Tis plain by this Book, * That the *Bramins* acknowledge one sole and supreme God, whom they call *Vishnou*. That his first and most ancient Production, was a secondary God, named *Brama*, whom the supreme God formed out of a Flower that floated upon the Surface of the great Deep before the Creation of the World, and that *Vishnou* afterwards, on account of *Brama's* Virtue, Gratitude and Fidelity, gave him Power to create the Universe.

They believe moreover, † That Souls are eternal Emanations of the Divine Essence, or at least that they were produced long before the Creation of the World; that they were originally in a State of Purity, but sinned, and have been ever since thrown down into the Bodies of Men and Beasts, according to their several Demerits; so that the Body, where the Soul resides, is a sort of Dungeon or Prison.

In a Word, they hold, that † After a certain Number of Transmigrations, all Souls shall be re-united to their Origin, shall be re-admitted into the Company of the Gods, and shall be at last deified.*

* See Alesh. Roger, of the Religion of the Bramas. Part. 2. ch. 1. & Kircher's Asia Illustr.

† Ind. Roger, Part 1. ch. 7.

‡ Ab. Kircher, Asia Illustr.

I should hardly have thought these Traditions authentick, or brought myself to trust to the Translators of the *Vedam*, if this Doctrine had not been perfectly agreeable to that of *Pythagoras*, which I gave an Account of a little before. This Philosopher taught the *Greeks* nothing but what he had learned from the *Gymnosophists*.

The Discovery of these uniform and agreeing Sentiments, in *Greece*, in *Egypt*, in *Persia*, and in the *Indies*, made me desirous to advance further into the East, and to carry my Searches as far as *China*. I applied my self accordingly to such as understood the Language of that Country, had spent several Years together in it, and were well versed in the original Books of that Nation. And in this Point particularly I have made great use of the Informations I have received from a Gentleman of a superior Genius, who does not care to be mentioned till he has published a large Work upon these Matters, which will be of Service to Religion, and do Honour to humane Understanding. In the mean time he has allowed me to publish the following Passages, which he translated himself out of some ancient *Chinese* Books that have been brought into *Europe*, and which may be seen both at *Paris* and at *Rome*; so that all who understand the Language, may judge of the Faithfulness of the Translation.

The Book *Yking*, i. e. the *Book of Changes*, is continually speaking of a double Heaven; a *primitive* Heaven, and a *posterior* Heaven. The first Heaven is there described in the following Manner: All things were then in an happy State, every thing was excellent every thing was good, all Beings were perfect in their kind. In this hap-

‘py Age, Heaven and Earth employed their Virtues jointly to embellish Nature. There was no jarring in the Elements, no Inclemency in the Air. All Things grew without Labour, an universal Fertility reigned every where. The active and passive Virtues conspired together without any Effort or Opposition, to produce and perfect the Universe.’

In the Books which the *Chinese* call *King* or *Sacred*, we read the following Passage; ‘Whilst the first State of Heaven lasted a pure Pleasure and a perfect Tranquility reigned over all Nature. There were neither Labour nor Fatigues, nor Pains, nor Crimes. Nothing made Opposition to the Will of Man.’

The Philosophers who stuck to these ancient Traditions and particularly *Tcheangsi* says, ‘That in the State of the first Heaven, Man was united inwardly to the supreme Reason, and outwardly he practised all the Works of Justice. The Heart rejoiceth in Truth, and there was no Mixture of Falshood. Then the four Seasons of the Year succeeded each other regularly without Confusion. There was no impetuous Winds, nor excessive Rains. The Sun and the Moon without ever suffering an Eclipse furnished a Light purer and brighter than at present. The five Planets kept under their Course without any Inequality. Nothing did Harm to Man, and Man did Harm to nothing. An universal Amity and Harmony reigned over all Nature.’

On the other Side, the Philosopher *Hochiantse* speaking of the latter Heaven, says, ‘The Pillars of Heaven were broken, the Earth was shaken to its very Foundations. The Heavens sunk lower towards the North; the Sun, the Moon, and the Stars

‘ Stars changed their Motions; the Earth fell to Pieces; the Waters enclosed within its Bosom, burst forth with Violence, and overflowed it. The Earth rebelling against Heaven, the System of the Universe was quite disordered, the Sun was eclipsed, the Planets altered their Course, and the universal Harmony was disturbed.’

The Philosophers *Tentsé* and *Lietse*, who lived long before *Hochiantse*, express themselves almost in the same Terms. The universal Fertility of Nature, say these ancient Authors, degenerated into an ugly Barrenness, the Plants faded, the Trees withered away, Nature desolate and in Mourning, refused to distribute her usual Bounty. All Creatures declared War against one another. Evils and Crimes overflowed the Face of the Earth.’

All those Evils arose, says the Book *Likiyki*, ‘from Man’s despising the supreme Monarch of the Universe. He would needs dispute about Truth and Falshood, and these Disputes banished the eternal Reason. He then fixed his Looks on terrestrial Objects, and loved them to Excess. Hence arose the Passions, and he became gradually transformed into the Objects he loved, and the celestial Reason abandoned him entirely. This was the original Source of all Crime, which drew after them all manner of Evils sent by Heaven for the Punishment thereof.’

The same Books speak of a time when every thing is to be restored to its first Splendor, by the coming of an Hero called *Kuantsé*, which signifies Shepherd and Prince, to whom they give likewise the Names of *The most Holy*, the *Universal Teacher*, and the *Supreme Truth*. He answers exactly to the *Myltras* of the *Persians*, the *Oras* of the *Egyptians*, the *Mercury* of the *Greeks*, and the *Brama* of the *Indians*. The

The *Chinese* Books speak likewise of the Sufferings and Conflicts of *Kiunté*, just as the *Cyrians* do of the Death of *Adonis*, who was to rise again to make Men happy *, and as the *Greeks* do of the Labours and painful Exploits of the Son of *Jupiter* who was to come down upon Earth. It looks as if the Source of all these Allegories was only an antient Tradition common to all Nations, that the Middle God, to whom they all give the Name of *Soter* or *Saviour*, was to put an End to Crimes by his great Sufferings. But I do not lay a Stress upon this Notion, my Design being only to speak of the Traces that appear in all Religions of a Nature *exalted, fallen, and to be repaired* again by a Divine Hero.

These Truths run equally throughout the Mythologies of the *Greeks*, the *Persians*, the *Egyptians*, the *Indians*, and the *Chinese*. 'Tis time to come at last to the *Jewish* Mythology.

I mean by it the Rabbinism or Philosophy of the *Jewish* Doctors, and particularly of the *Essenes*. These Philosophers asserted, according to the Testimony of *Philo* † and *Josephus* *, That the literal Sense of the Sacred Text was only an Image of hidden Truths. They changed the Words and Precepts of Wisdom into Allegories, after the Custom of their Ancestors, who had left them several Books for their Instruction in this Science.

'Twas the universal Taste of the *Oriental*s to make use of corporeal Images to represent the Properties and Operations of Spirits.

* See the Description that *Julius Firmicus* gives of the Feasts, Ceremonies and Mysteries of *Adonis*. * *Phil. de Leg. Aeg.* l. 2. p. 53.
† *Joseph. de Bello Jud.* lib. 2 c. 12.

This symbolical Style seems in a great Measure authorized by the sacred Writers. The Prophet *Daniel* represents God to us under the Image of the *Antient of Days*. The *Hebrew* Mythologists and Cabbalists, who are a Succession of the School of the *Essenes*, took Occasion from thence to explain the Divine Attributes, as Members of the Body of the *Antient of Days*. We see this Allegory carried to an Extravagance in the Books of the Rabbins. They speak there of the Dew that distilled from the Brain of the *Antient of Days*, from his Skull, his Hair, his Forehead, his Eyes, and especially from his wonderful Beard.

These Comparisons are undoubtedly absurd, and unbecoming the Majesty of God. But the cabbalistical Philosophers pretend to authorize them by some very metaphysical Notions.

The Creation, according to them, is a Picture of the Divine Perfections. All created Beings are consequently Images of the supreme Being, more or less perfect in Proportion as they have more or less Conformity with their Original.

Hence it follows that all Creatures are in some Respect like one another, and that Man, or the *Microcosm*, resembles the great World or *Macrocosm*, the material World resembles the intelligible World, as the intelligible World does the Archetype, which is God.

These are the Principles upon which the allegorical Expressions of the Cabbalists are founded. If we strip their Mythology of this mysterious Language, we shall find in sublime Notions very like those which we have before admired in the Heathen Philosophers. Now these are the four principal ones which I find clearly enough set forth in the Works of the Rabbins,

Irisa, Moscheeb, and Jitzack, which Rittangelius has translated in his Cabbala denudata.

1. ' All spiritual Substances Angels, human Souls, and even the Soul of the *Messias**, were created from the Beginning of the World: And consequently our first Parent, of whom *Moses* speaks, represents not an individual Person, but all Mankind governed by one sole Head. In that primitive State every thing was glorious and perfect, there was nothing in the Universe that suffered, because there was no such Thing as Crime. Nature was a real and a spotless Image of the Divine Perfections. This answers to the Reign of *Osiris, Oromazes, and Saturn.*

2. ' The Soul of the *Messias* by his Perseverance in the Divine Love, came to a strict Union with the pure Godhead, and was deservedly advanced to be the King, the Head and the Guide of all Spirits.

* This Notion has some Resemblance to those which the *Persians* had of *Mystbras*, the *Egyptians* of *Orus*, and the *Greeks* of *Jove*, the Guide that led Souls into the supra-celestial Abode.

3. ' The Virtue, Perfection and Beatitude of Spirits or *Zephirots*, consisted in continually receiving and rendring back the Rays which flowed from the infinite Center, that so there might be an eternal Circulation of Light and Happiness in all Spirits†. Two Sorts of *Zephirots* failed in the Observance of this eternal Law. The Cherubim, who were of a superior Order did not render back this Light but kept it within themselves, swelled, and became like Vessels that are too full, till at last they burst in Pieces, and the Sphere was changed into a gloomy

* Vision, Ezekiel, Marcar. Exp. apud Rittang. p. 225. T. 3.
† Ib. p. 226. † Ibid. de Revol. anim. Par. 1. Cap. 1. p. 244

4. ' Chaos. The *Isehim*, who were of an inferior Order, shut their Eyes against this Light, turning themselves towards sensible Objects*. They forgot the supreme Beatitude of their Nature, and took up with the Enjoyment of created Pleasures. They fell thereby into mortal Bodies.

4. ' Souls pass through several Revolutions before they return to their primitive State; but after the coming of the *Messias*, all Spirits will be restored to their Rank, and be put in Possession of the ancient Happiness which they enjoyed before the Sin of our first Parent †.

I leave the Reader to determine whether these four Notions do not resemble those which we have found in *Persia*, in *Egypt*, and in *Greece*. And this Resemblance I thought a sufficient Authority for me to give the four mythological Pictures which are inserted in the foregoing Work.

In all these Systems we see that the ancient Philosophers, in Order to refute the Objections of the Impious drawn from the Origin and Duration of Evil, adopted the Doctrine of the *Pre existence of Souls*, and their final Restoration. Several Fathers of the Church have maintained the first Opinion, as the only philosophical Way of explaining original Sin. And *Origen* made use of the latter, to oppose the Libertines of his time.

It is far from my Intention to defend these two Opinions discountenanced by the Church. All the use I make of the Arguments which the wise Ancients found out against Impiety, is to shew, that Reason alone furnishes Means sufficient to confound such

* Phil. Cabbal. diff. Sva. cap. 13. p. 173. T. 3. Rittang.
† De Revol. Anim. p. 307.

Philosophers as refuse to believe unless they can comprehend.

'Tis for this Reason that I make *Daniel* speak a different Language from *Eleazar*. The Prophet advises *Cyrus* to lay aside all subtle Speculations, and to leave to God the Care of justifying the incomprehensible Steps of his Providence. He plunges him again in an Obscurity more wholesome and more suitable to human Weakness, than all the Conjectures of Philosophers. He reduceth what we are to believe on this Subject, to these four principal Truths.

1. God being infinitely good, cannot produce wicked and miserable Beings, and therefore the moral and physical Evil which we see in the Universe, must come from the Abuse that Men make of their Liberty.
2. Human Nature is fallen from the first Purity in which it was created, and this mortal Life is a State of a Trial, in which Souls are cured of their Corruption, and aspire to Immortality by their Virtue.
3. God is united to human Nature in Order to expiate moral Evil by his Sacrifice. The *Messias* will come at last in his Glory to destroy physical Evil, and renew the Face of the Earth.
4. These Truths have been transmitted to us from Age to Age, from the time of the Deluge till now, by an universal Tradition. Other Nations have obscured and altered this Tradition by their Fables. It has been preserved in its Purity no where but in the Holy Scriptures, the Authority of which cannot be disputed with any Shadow of Reason.

'Tis

'Tis a common Notion that all the Footsteps of a natural and reveal'd Religion which we see in the Heathen Poets and Philosophers, are originally owing to their having read the Books of *Moses*. But 'tis impossible to answer the Objections which are made against this Opinion. The *Jews* and their Books were too long concealed in a Corner of the Earth, to be reasonably thought the primitive Light of the Gentiles. We must go further back even to the Deluge. 'Tis surprizing that those who are convinced of the Authority of the sacred Books, have not made Advantage of this System to prove the Truth of the *Mosaic* History concerning the Origin of the World, the universal Deluge, and the re-peopling of the Earth by *Noah*. 'Tis hard to explain otherwise than by the Doctrine I have put in the Mouth of *Daniel*, that Uniformity of Sentiments which we find in the Religions of all Nations.

The four great Principles I have spoken of, seem to me the Foundation of Christianity. I have had a Pleasure in paying this small Homage to our Religion by endeavouring to justify its Tenets against the superstitious Prejudices of weak Minds, and the vain subtleties of audacious Criticks, who cavil at eternal Wisdom.

F I N I S.

