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**The Works Of the late Right Honorable Henry St. John,  
Lord Viscount Bolingbroke**

In Five Volumes, complete.

**Bolingbroke, Henry St. John**

**London, 1754**

The substance of some letters, written originally in French, about the year  
one thousand seven hundred and twenty, to Mr. de Pouilly.

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[urn:nbn:de:hbz:466:1-60908](https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:hbz:466:1-60908)

THE  
SUBSTANCE  
OF SOME  
LETTERS,

Written originally in FRENCH, about the Year 1720,

TO

Mr. de P O U I L L Y.

SUBSTANTIVE

THE

SUBSTANTIVE

OF SOME

LETTERS

Written originally in French about the Year 1730

TO

M. de P O U L L Y

T H E  
S U B S T A N C E  
O F S O M E  
L E T T E R S,

Written originally in F R E N C H, about the Year 1720,

T O

Mr. de P O U I L L Y.

**S**INCE you are so curious to know what passed in a conversation lately between one of your acquaintance and myself, wherein you have been told that I maintained a very singular paradox; I will give you some account of it, a general and short account, at least, of the first part, and one more particular and more full of the last, which is called paradoxical. You led me first, in my retreat, to abstract philosophical reasonings: and, tho' it be late to begin them at forty years of age, when the mind has not been accustomed to them earlier, yet I have learned enough under so good a guide, not to be afraid of engaging in them, whenever the cause God and of natural religion is concerned.

THEY were both concerned, very deeply, on the occasion you refer to. There had been much discourse, in the company.

pany that was present, concerning the absurd opinions, which many theistical philosophers entertained of old about the supreme Being. Many had been cited, and many reflections had been made on them, by several, when the dispute became particular between \* Damon and me, he denying, and I affirming, that there are sufficient proofs of the existence of one supreme Being, the first intelligent cause of all things. You may be sure, I made use of those you furnished me with by a geometrical application of the doctrine of final causes, which shews, in various instances, what numberless chances there are against one, that intelligence and design were employed in the production of each of these phaenomena.

WHEN I could not silence my adversary by these proofs, tho they carry probability up to a reasonable, if not to an absolute, certainty, I insisted on a proof which must give this certainty, I think, to every one who acknowledges that we are capable of demonstrative knowledge. I argued, "à posteriori," from the intuitive knowledge of ourselves, and the sensitive knowledge of objects exterior to ourselves, which we have, up to that demonstrative knowledge of God's existence, which we are able to acquire by a due use of our reason. Here we stuck a little, and he was ready to deny all sensitive knowledge, on the chimerical notions of father MALEBRANCHE, and some other philosophers, without considering that he deprived himself, in denying the existence of God, of those expedients, by which the others pretended to account for the perception of the ideas of objects exterior to the mind, independently of any sensitive knowledge. I endeavoured to shew him, that to renounce sensitive knowledge, was to renounce, in some sort, humanity, and to place ourselves in some unknown rank, either above it, or below it. I

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\* I choose to call him by this feigned name here.

endeavoured to state the true notion, by stating the true bounds, of sensitive knowledge, which is not sufficient indeed to shew us the inward constitutions of substances, and their real essences; but which is sufficient to prove to us their existence, and to distinguish them by their effects. I concluded this article by quoting to him a passage in the logic of PORT-ROYAL, wherein it is said, that no man ever doubted, in good earnest, whether there is an earth, a sun, and a moon, no more than he doubted, whether the whole is bigger than a part; that we may say, with our mouths, that we doubt of all these things, because we may lie; but that we cannot oblige our minds to say so: from whence it is concluded, more generally than I shall conclude, that Pyrrhonians are not a sect persuaded of what they say, but a sect of liars. He did not insist much longer, but left me to pursue my argument from intuitive and sensitive knowledge, to a demonstration of God's existence, which great and fundamental truth results necessarily from a concurrence of all the kinds of human knowledge employed in the proof of it.

I WAS not interrupted by him in the course of this argument, nor did he attempt to break any links of this chain of demonstration, but followed the example of all those who refuse to yield to it. They are so far from considering the degrees, the bounds, and within these, the sufficiency, of human knowledge, that they ask continually, and that others endeavour, very often, vainly to give them, knowledge concerning the divine nature and attributes particularly, which it is impossible and unnecessary we should have, even on the supposition that there is a God. Unable to break thro' this demonstration, they hope to weaken the effect of it, on themselves and others, by sounding high the difficulties that present themselves whenever we reason on the manner of God's existence, on

his attributes, on his providence, and on many points relative to these. That is, they will not receive a demonstration, made according to the clearest and most distinct ideas that we have, and by the most precise connection of them, because there are other things which we cannot demonstrate, nor explain, for want of other ideas. This proceeding is so unreasonable, that the atheist himself does not hold it on any other occasion; but admits the truth of many propositions, tho he be unable to resolve several difficulties that are, some way or other, relative to them. He reasons on this important article of human knowledge, as he would be ashamed to reason on any other.

I MIGHT have rested the argument here, because, tho there are secrets of the divine nature and oeconomy which human reason cannot penetrate, yet several of the objections to them, which atheists commonly make, even that of physical and moral evil, and the supposed unjust distribution of good and evil, which has been made in all ages, and which is now more prevalent than ever, by the joint endeavours of atheists and christian divines, are easy to be refuted. These subjects have been so often treated between you and me, that I shall say nothing of them here, tho I did not decline them there. On the contrary, if I do not flatter myself, I said enough to defeat the attack of the atheist, and to disappoint the treachery of the divine. After which I insisted, with great reason surely on my side, that these difficulties, and more of the same sort, were so little able to embarrass the theist, that, instead of being repugnant to his system, a necessary consequence of it is, that such difficulties should arise. He is so little surpris'd to find them, that he would be surpris'd not to find them. In demonstrating, to him, the existence of God, his reason has not demonstrated to him a being little rais'd above humanity,

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and about whom he may always assume on human ideas, such as the divinities of the heathen were. She has demonstrated to him the existence of an all perfect self-existent being, the source of all existence, invisible and incomprehensible; the author, not only of all that is visible and comprehensible to his creatures, but of all that is, in the whole extent of nature, whether visible or comprehensible to them or not. From hence he concludes, and well he may, that there must be many phaenomena physical and moral for which he can, and many for which he cannot, account. The system of God's attributes being, like the exercise of them, infinite, and our system of ideas and of mental operations being very narrow and imperfect, it follows necessarily, that some few parts of the former system are proportionable to the latter, and that a multitude of others are not so. A thief may suffer himself to be led into difficulties; but the atheist, take what system of atheism you please, must fall into absurdity, and be obliged to assert what implies contradiction.

I CONSIDERED the supreme Being, in all I said, as a first intelligent cause, and as the creator of the universe. From hence my antagonist took occasion to ridicule what theistical poets, philosophers, and legislators have advanced concerning the first principles or the beginning of things, and the operations of a divine wisdom and power, in the production of them, as if they had been cotemporary historians and spectators of what they related most affirmatively and circumstantially. I joined with him, for the most part, in giving them this ridicule, and expressed myself with a just indignation against them, for attempting to impose so many fictions on mankind, and for presuming to account for the proceedings of infinite wisdom and power, by the whimsies of their own imaginations. He did not spare MOSES, nor I PLATO. But



when he went so far as to deny, on the strength of a very weak sophism, that we are obliged to ascribe the creation or formation of the world to intelligence and wisdom, he turned, I think, the ridicule on himself, for he reasoned thus :

WHEN you investigate the proceedings of nature, you observe certain means, that seem, to you, proportioned to certain ends. You perceive too, that you cannot imitate nature any other way than by proportioning means to ends, and thus you frame that complex idea of wisdom, to which you ascribe the phaenomena, and the imaginary final causes of them. But you are grossly mistaken when you assume, that nature acts by such means as seem to you proportioned to these ends. Here is a clock which marks the hours and minutes, and strikes regularly, at certain periods, a certain number of times. The inward construction of this clock is unknown to you. But you see one made, which, by the means of certain weights, produces all the same effects. Will you assert now, that the motions of the first clock are regulated by weights, because those of the second are so? You will be much deceived if you do, for the motions of the first clock are produced and regulated by a spring.

THIS argument would have some force in opposition to such naturalists as STRATO of Lampfacus, as DES CARTES, and as others who have made hypothetical worlds, and have pretended to account for all the phaenomena by such laws of matter and motion as they have thought fit to establish. But in the present case it is a mere paralogism, and unworthy of the man who employed it, since it serves to explain and confirm that very reasoning which it is intended to oppose. The same motions are produced indeed by different means, but still these different means are proportioned alike to the same end, which

proves the very thing I would prove, the intelligence of a workman.

WHEN we had done speaking of philosophers who admit the beginning of the world, we proceeded to those who deny it; and DAMON seemed to think himself strongly intrenched in the system of it's eternity. As we cannot conceive, said he, that matter was created and brought out of nothing, so we cannot conceive, neither that matter could of itself produce motion, nor that matter and motion together could produce thought. But there arises from hence no necessity of assuming, that there is any superior being. Matter, motion, thought are eternal, and have been always what they are. The same nature, and the same course of things, that exist actually, have always existed.

To this it was easy to answer, that if I agreed with him in owning the eternity of the world, this concession would not infirm the proofs I had brought of an eternal Being, distinct from the world, as the workman is from his work. We may allow the world to be eternal, without allowing that it is the sole eternal Being. All that exists, has a cause of it's existence, either out of itself, or in itself. It has no cause of it's existence out of itself, if it is the sole eternal Being. It has this cause then within itself, and exists by the necessity of it's own nature. The atheist affirms then, that it is impossible to conceive that this world should not exist; or should exist any otherwise than it does exist, both in matter and in form. This seems to me infinitely absurd; for the atheist either has no ideas in his mind when he pronounces these words, "exists by the necessity of it's nature;" or he understands such a necessity of existence, that a supposition of the contrary would imply contradiction. If the atheist says, he has no idea of such a  
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necessity, he has then no idea of the eternity of the world. If he says, as DAMON did say, that he can no more conceive this world not to exist, or to exist differently from it's present existence, than he can conceive the equality of twice two to four not to exist, he says nothing to the purpose; since the necessity of existence, according to him, cannot be admitted till he has given us another definition of what we are to understand by these words; and another definition, intelligible and reasonable, I think, he never will be able to give.

AFTER having pushed this argument beyond reply, which I borrowed but did not weaken, I added, that ARISTOTLE, and other antient philosophers, who believed the world eternal, did not fall into the absurdity of believing it uncaused. They believed it eternal, in the order of time, but they believed it the effect of a superior cause, in the order of causality. The distinction is, perhaps, too metaphysical, but it serves to shew, since they made it, to what shifts they were driven in maintaining the eternity of the world, and how little reason the modern atheist has to lean on their authority.

FROM refuting his opinions, I was led to advance one of my own, and to assert, that this fact, "The world had a beginning," is a fact, founded on such a tradition, as no reasonable man can refuse to accept. This is the paradox, in advancing of which, I had, not only DAMON, but almost all those who were present, against me. It took up the rest of our conversation, and I will tell you, not only what I said, to support my opinion then, but what has come into my thoughts upon the same subject since.

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THO we cannot have, strictly speaking, a certain knowledge of any fact whereof we have not been ourselves witnesses, yet are there several such facts whereof we cannot doubt. High probability must stand often in lieu of certainty, or we must be, every moment, at a loss how to form our opinions and to regulate our conduct. Such is our condition, and we cannot think it unreasonably imposed, since we are able, by a right use of our reason, to ascend thro various degrees from absolute improbability, which is little distant from evident falshood, to that degree of probability which is little distant from evident truth. On this principle let us proceed to consider, how high this proposition, "The world had a beginning," stands in the scale of probability. We shall find, perhaps, that it stands too high to have the proposition pass for a paradox, when I have told you what was said in conversation, and what has occurred to me since, on the same subject.

AN historical fact, which contains nothing that contradicts general experience, and our own observation, has already the appearance of probability; and, if it be supported by the testimony of proper witnesses, it acquires all the appearances of truth; that is, it becomes really probable in the highest degree. A fact, on the other hand, which is repugnant to experience, shocks us from the first; and if we receive it afterwards for a true fact, we receive it on outward authority, not on inward conviction. Now to do so is extremely absurd; since the same experience that contradicts this particular fact, affirms this general fact, that men lie very often, and that their authority alone is a very frail foundation of assent.

IT may seem a little extraordinary, and perhaps chimerical, to our first thoughts, to examine which is most conformable to experience, the eternity of the world, or the beginning of  
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it in time; and it would be really so, if, to constitute this conformity to experience, it were strictly necessary, on every occasion, to cite a fact of similar kind. But there is no such necessity in the nature of things, and this conformity may be sufficiently constituted otherwise. Were it not so, our ignorance would produce very contrary effects, equally absurd; for this mother of superstitious credulity, would be the mother likewise of most unreasonable incredulity.

THE probability of a fact, whereof there are frequent and notorious examples, may force our assent at once, like those which happen constantly in the ordinary course of things. But still it is true, that a fact of which we find no precise example within our knowledge, may have a conformity, properly so called, with our experience. The probability arising from this sort of conformity will not be perceived, indeed, so soon as the other, but when it is perceived, will determine alike. This case may be compared to that of the mathematician, who arrives at truth by a long process of demonstration, and who can doubt of this truth afterward, no more than he doubted of those self-evident truths which carry instantaneous conviction to the mind.

A FACT may be, in the respect we speak of here, indifferent. We may discover, in our experience, none of the same sort; and yet none that imply contradiction with it. Such a fact, therefore, is merely new; and experience will be far from teaching us to reject any fact on this account alone. When such facts, therefore, new to us, according to the extent of our knowledge, but not so to other men, are attested by credible witnesses, he must act very unreasonably, who refuses to give that degree of assent to them, which is proportionable to the credibility of the witnesses. Again, the fact may be conformable

able to experience by a certain analogy physical or moral, if not by particular examples, and may be admitted therefore, on proper testimony, more easily still, than one of those which I called indifferent. One rests wholly on testimony, but experience gives to the other an indirect, if not a direct, confirmation.

LET me quote a story, which will serve to illustrate all I have been saying. A certain king of Siam was firmly persuaded that SOMMONA-CODOM had straddled over the gulph of Bengal; that the print of his right foot was seen at Pra-bat, and that of his left foot at Lanca. This pious legend was certainly repugnant to his majesty's experience, the first foundation of probability: and he fell into the absurdity of believing it on the most precarious of human authorities, the authority of his priests, who had taught him, perhaps, that the merit of his faith in the legend of SOMMONA-CODOM increased as the probability of what it contained diminished. When the Dutch ambassador assured the same prince, that the surface of the water hardened so much in his country, during the winter, that men, and beasts, and heavy carriages passed over it, the prince treated him as a liar. He knew no example of this kind: and the seeming nonconformity to experience, in this case, had the effect which the real nonconformity to experience should have had in the other. I call this a seeming nonconformity; because altho the good Siamese knew no example, in point, of what the ambassador told him, yet he might have reflected on several particular objects of his knowledge, that would have brought it up to a real conformity. He knew, for I think the art of casting cannon was known in his country, that extreme heat could give fluidity to the hardest metals: from whence he might have concluded, very naturally, that extreme cold was capable of producing a very

contrary effect, that of condensing and hardening fluid substances. In his country there was no ice; but he knew that there fell sometimes on the neighbouring mountains of Ava, of Pegu, and of Laos, a certain white cold and solid substance, which was nothing else than water, condensed and hardened in one season, and melting and flowing in another. He was a man of good sense, they say, and therefore we may believe that these considerations discovering to him a real, tho' not exact, conformity to his experience, he gave credit to the Dutchman afterwards.

LET us consider now, on our part, whether there are not facts that contain all that is necessary to establish the highest probability, tho' there are no examples of the same, and tho' we should allow, that a bare non-repugnancy to experience, or a strong analogy to it, do not afford sufficient grounds of probability. Suppose then a fact, preserved in history or tradition, which has the two conditions of non-repugnancy and of analogy, and the contrary to which cannot be asserted without absurdity. If the negative be absurd, is it not agreeable to right reason that we adhere to the affirmative?

IT may be said, perhaps, that the supposition I make cannot have place in historical facts, that these are in some sort arbitrary, they may be affirmed or denied, according to the credibility of the testimony. That JULIUS CAESAR conquered the Britons, or that GENGHIZ-CAN conquered China, may be true; but it may be true, likewise, that CAESAR was beat by the Britons, and that GENGHIZ-CAN did not even march into China. It may be said, that when such facts, as we meet with frequently in the romances of all kinds, are concerned, we may affirm that the contrary is true, or that no such events ever happened; but that it will not follow, that an historical or  
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traditional fact is true, because it appears to us, that to suppose the contrary is absurd. I enter no further into this disquisition, but I content myself to say, that there is, at least, one such fact conveyed to us by tradition, the truth of which we must admit, because it is absurd to assume the contrary, and because one or the other must be necessarily true. The fact I mean is this, that the world, we inhabit, had a beginning in time, and the same may be said of our whole solar system, and of the whole system of the universe. Now this fact being denied very dogmatically, and there neither being nor ever having been any living cotemporary human testimony for it or against it, we must, I think, be decided in this case, by considering, whether the beginning or eternity of the world implies any contradiction with what we know, or is repugnant to our clearest, most distinct, and best determined ideas. One of these facts must be true, since the world exists actually. If it can be shewn, therefore, that the opinion of its eternity is an absurd opinion, I must be convinced that it had a commencement.

To prove the absurdity of the former, there seems to be a very obvious method, and an argument the more conclusive, because it is, in opposition to the atheist, an argument "ad hominem," an argument drawn from the only solution of one of the greatest difficulties which the theist proposes to him. If this solution be not good, he remains without a reply, and if it be good, as I think indeed that it is sufficient to answer this particular difficulty, there arises from it an argument against himself, much stronger than that which the theist opposed to him, and which I am ready to acknowledge, that he has fully answered. What is here said, requires to be explained by a deduction of particulars.



HE who denies the commencement, and asserts the eternity of the world, must believe that this planet of ours has been, from all eternity, such as we see that it is. I say, that he must believe it to be so, since, if he admitted such changes in it as had overturned the whole order of physical nature, destroyed all the species of animals, and confounded all the elements in a new chaos, the dispute would be over, and he convicted, at once, of the grossest absurdity, because a God, a *Δημιουργος*, would be as necessary in this case, as in that of an original creation. In short, such a renewal of the world requiring no less wisdom and power than the formation of it, the dispute, on the atheist's part, would sink into a cavil about words. He is obliged therefore to maintain, that this planet of ours has been always, upon the whole, much what it is; that there have been, from eternity, the same general laws, and the same order of physical nature; an infinite succession of material causes and effects, blind causes of uniform effects, uniform in kind, if not in degree; causes, which have been effects; effects, which become causes in their turn, and proceed in this manner round the circle of eternity. When we quote to the atheist the universal consent of tradition, in affirming that the world had a beginning, he laughs at the proof. Whether he has any right to do so, will be seen presently. In the meantime, we cannot be surpris'd that he, who rejects a demonstration, should pay no regard to a tradition; but we may be well surpris'd, when, following the atheist on, we find him calling tradition to his aid, and leaning wholly upon it.

IF the world is eternal, why does our knowledge of it go no further back, why have we not more antient memorials, says the divine? The same reason, says the atheist, which hinders us from having records, where we have any, beyond

two or three thousand years in a space of five or six thousand, to which, according to you, the antiquity of the world extends, is just as good to hinder us from seeing further backwards, in a longer, and even in an infinite space of time. Now here theology comes in to the aid of atheism, as it does upon more occasions than this. The history, which is ascribed to the legislator of the Jews, and which it is required that we should believe implicitly, assures us, that the world was once entirely drowned; and thro the whole course of sacred, as well as profane, scriptures, we hear of other inundations, of earthquakes, of plagues, of devastations of countries, and of captivities of people, by all, or some of which, not only numbers of men have been destroyed, but whole political societies have been lost. Thus the atheist has it in his power to make the same use of holy writ, which the divine makes of profane history; that is, he adopts whatever makes for his purpose, and rejects whatever does not. He finds antient governments frequently dissolved, and new ones rising. The records of the former, as well as their laws and customs, perish with them. The latter remain often very long in ignorance and barbarity, and have not the means, nor even the desire, of conveying the events of their own time, nor the traditions of former times by authentic records to posterity. He will not fail to observe, that all we know of antient history, except those broken scraps of it which Jewish traditions mention, has come down to us from the Greeks; that many centuries passed, after the deluge, before CADMUS, or any one else, carried the use of letters to this people; and that this people, not having employed them to write history till many centuries afterwards, it is not astonishing that we know as little as we do concerning times more antient than those. The atheist triumphs in this answer to the divine, and tho no man abhors his cause more than I do, I think him thus far in the right. But the  
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scene will soon change, if a thief interposes. His answer to the divine's question will indeed stand good, but out of this very answer there will arise a decisive argument against him.

WHEN the atheist has founded the deluge of DEUCALION high, and admitted, for the sake of his argument, that of NOAH; when he has added to these, all those other deluges, of which tradition speaks, that of XISUTHRUS, that of OGYGES, that which the Chinese annals mention, that whereof the priests of Sais informed SOLON, and that, if it was not the same, whereof the memory had been preserved among the people of America, besides a multitude of devastations of other kinds, he will think himself very strong. But the thief may ask him a very puzzling question, Was there any thing supernatural in the production of these terrible catastrophes? The divine might answer, that there was; but he could not: for if he did, he would acknowledge the existence of a supreme Being, which he denies. It remains then, that all he has said about the immutable order and laws of nature, which have maintained the world in much the same state, and such as it is, from all eternity, must pass for nothing, and the thief will insist, that if such events as these, which tend directly to the dissolution of our planet, and the extermination of the whole human race, have been produced so often, in five or six thousand years, by the action of blind causes, matter and motion alone, it is repugnant to common sense to believe, either that such events have not happened an infinite number of times, in an infinite space of time; or that having so happened, they should not have once destroyed the world entirely, and made the supposition of a God necessary to restore it to the state in which we see it. The thief will insist further against the atheist, that it is absurd to confine these phaenomena to such bounds, and to accompany them with just such circumstances

stances as suit his purpose. The purpose of the atheist required that these destructions of mankind should happen often enough to defend his hypothesis against that question, Why have we not more antient memorials of the world, and of the inhabitants of it? What his purpose required, is exactly answered, by the eternal complaisance of blind material causes. The world was never entirely destroyed nor mankind entirely exterminated, nor any necessity created of a God to restore them. But there have been as many of these destructions, as may be improved to extricate the atheist out of the difficulty which is laid in his way.

THE divine would sit down well satisfied with the state to which, I suppose, the dispute is reduced by the theist, if he had nothing more at heart, than to maintain the existence of God, by maintaining the commencement of the world. But he has something more at heart, it must have commenced, it must have been renewed, and it must have been repopled, in the manner MOSES relates, and just at the time which he fixes, according to the calculations that learned men have grounded on the genealogies contained in the book of Genesis. For this purpose a system has been invented by crowding profane into the extent of sacred chronology, and by making as many anecdotes of the former, as can be so made, seem to coincide with those of the latter. Divines would be thought to prove the latter by concurrent evidence; but in reality they assume it to be true, and by this assumption alone, can the violence, with which they drag profane anecdotes to their purpose, be in any sort excused. That I may not quote to you any of those numberless heavy writers, who have taken this task upon them, I will bring forward on this occasion Mr. de MEAUX, the honor of the Gallican or rather of the christian church, and the shame of that of Rome. This writer, who possessed

possessed in the highest degree the talent of seducing the imagination, when he could not convince the judgment, running over, in his discourse on universal history, those ages which succeeded the deluge, in a very agreeable manner, but on very precarious authority, makes no scruple of affirming, that there is no antient history wherein the marks of a new world do not appear manifestly in these early times, and long after them. These endeavours to confirm the Mosaic system by a multitude of uncertain traditions, as well as the history itself, compiled, no doubt, from other traditions, might be sufficient to take all authority from tradition, if these authors did not mistake the notion of it, and if a just distinction, that ought to be made, did not escape them.

TRADITION is first oral, the first authors of it unknown: and when it comes afterwards into history, the genealogical descent of it nothing more than tradition, and we must say, in general, very absurdly, that it proves itself, or, very truly, that it has no proof at all. From hence it follows, that particular circumstantial facts, conveyed to us by particular traditions, are destitute of historical proof. But still it will be agreeable to nature and reason, that the unanimous concurrence of many traditions, to which no contrary traditions can be opposed, may constitute the truth of a general fact. Public report, as *PLINY* the younger observes, relates facts in the gross, and naked of circumstances. So it must do, to deserve any credit; and so does this tradition, that the world had a beginning. It is rather a fact, resulting from the concurrence of traditions, than a fact founded on the authority of any. Nothing can be less credible than all that we read in antient story, about the Assyrians for instance. It is a wild heap of inconsistent traditions which cannot be reconciled, nor verified for want of an historical criterion. *CTESIAS*, it  
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is said, boasted that he had extracted the materials of his history, whilst he was in the service of the king of Persia, out of the authentic records of that monarchy. But his account, those of other greek writers, and even those of the old testament, are so contrary to one another, and, on the whole, so improbable, that they may be all comprehended under the name of Assyriacs, which ARISTOTLE brought into proverbial use, and which was meant to signify all sorts of fabulous relations. What are we now to believe in this case? Not any particular tradition, to be sure; but thus much, in general, that there was an empire once founded in Asia, to which the Assyrians gave their name.

THESE traditions, those of Egypt, and many of Greece, come from those dark ages which may be called heroical or fabulous, after VARRO the most learned of the Romans. More modern Greeks, like ecchoes, repeated these traditions, and, in repeating, multiplied them all, so that the sound of them rings still in our ears, and they remain objects of learned curiosity. Shall we give credit now to the traditions, that came down from fabulous ages, about the expedition of the Argonauts; about the war of Thebes, and that of Troy; about the adventures of HERCULES, of THESEUS, and a multitude of other romantic stories? No, most certainly. It would be ridiculous to give credit to any of them. But it is not ridiculous, it is reasonable, to be persuaded that they had some foundation in the truth of things. Every tradition, considered apart, may be safely denied; because no one of them has an historical proof: but yet a truth, which may be called with little impropriety historical, results from the combination of all these fabulous traditions. There were no doubt, in unknown ages, maritime expeditions, famous leagues, cruel wars, and heroes who rendered their names illustrious.

ONE tradition reports, that PERSEUS carried a colony into the east; another, that TITHONUS did the same "usque ad Aethiopas," as far as the Indies. Is not the voyage of Io, daughter of INACHUS, into Egypt long before, and the expedition of the Cimmerians into Asia long after, famous in tradition? Many others of the same kind might be mentioned; and tho they are all fabulous, they leave no reason to doubt, that arts and sciences, and even barbarity, were carried from the west to the east, as well as from the east to the west, in ages quite unknown to us; which is enough to shake the authority of that particular history wherein it is reported, that the world was repopled from one spot, and by one family, after an universal deluge. But I need insist on this head no longer. So many general truths, of which it is impossible to doubt, result from the concurrence of fabulous traditions, that there remains no reason to doubt of the truth of this fact, "The world had a beginning."

WILL it be said, that if there has been such a tradition, it has not been so universal as to establish this truth, according to my rule? Left this should be said, it is necessary that I prove the universality of it; and that by shewing, particularly, for what reasons we admit other facts to be true, tho founded only on tradition, it may appear that the beginning of the world is still better founded, and this important tradition advantageously distinguished from all others.

WHILST I am writing on this subject, to you, a dissertation, I had never seen before, is fallen into my hands. The author \* of it pretends not only to prove, that the world had a beginning, but also, that this beginning was the same which  
MOSES.

\* JACQUELOT.

MOSES gives it. He is so fond of the second proposition, that he employs all his skill and all his learning to establish it. He ventures to assert, that the history of the world was very well known, when that of MOSES became public by the spreading of the gospel; that profane history agreed with sacred, in this respect, and did not reach beyond the bounds MOSES had set. One would think that these writers imagine, for this writer is a divine too, that none but themselves can read, and that they have still the advantage, which they had before the resurrection of letters, the advantage of imposing whatever they please on an ignorant world. The world had a beginning; tradition proves it had. But tradition is far from proving that it began, either in the manner MOSES relates, or at the time which he is thought to have fixed. Profane and sacred history were as little agreed, when christianity was published and the Jewish scriptures were better known, as they are at this time; notwithstanding all the pains taken by JOSEPHUS, EUSEBIUS, and others, to reconcile them; and notwithstanding all the pains that have been taken, by modern scholars, to confirm sacred by profane anecdotes.

LET US neglect such writers, therefore, who make a shew of learning, always futile, and often false. Let us examine and compare for ourselves; look into the authors they cite; but trust neither their citations nor their reasonings. DIODORUS the Sicilian, and STRABO, in the reign of AUGUSTUS; PLINY and PLUTARCH in those of VESPASIAN and TRAJAN, very respectable authors certainly, give us a different idea of their knowledge in the history of the world, from that which the author of this dissertation would give us. They knew a little better than this modern writer, what histories and what traditions they had of any authenticity. They made no great account of those canticles or hymns, of those inscriptions and



other expedients, which had been employed, in more early times, to preserve the memory of past events, and concerning which the writer we refer to, enters into a chimerical and tiresome detail. These antient writers looked on their histories to be more modern, and their traditions to be more antient, than our tribe of scholars would make them, the last especially. That profound antiquity, wherein these men affect dogmatically to make great discoveries, with very particular and critical exactness, was, for the others, a dark abyss, wherein they saw but few objects, and those few rather general than particular, and, on the whole very imperfect. They acknowledged, that the first of the greek historians had writ no earlier than the time about which the Persians began to make their expeditions into Europe. They confessed, that neighbouring nations had some historical monuments of a much greater antiquity; but they confessed too, that these monuments were very imperfect and very precarious, broken into discordant anecdotes, and mingled up with romance and poetical fiction. In a word, they owned themselves able to pierce a very little way into antiquity: but none of them pretended, that the bounds of their historical knowledge were the bounds of antiquity. Let us see now, whether the beginning of the world may not be, even at this time, reputed equivalent to the best established historical fact, notwithstanding the avowed ignorance of the most learned and curious inquirers, who wrote, two thousand years ago, about the beginning of nations, and much more of the world.

THE Egyptians seem to have been reputed the most antient, or one of the most antient, nations of the world, by the Greeks, from whom all our knowledge of profane history descends. They gave to their nation an immense antiquity, and in part, perhaps, fabulous. But I am at a loss, however, to discover what

what means, and therefore what right, the scholars of these ages have to decide, as dogmatically as they have done, about the egyptian dynasties. Why, for instance, the jesuit PETAVIUS required that we should, upon his word, reject them all? Or, why the author of the dissertation, after touching the matter very lightly and very superficially, should expect to be believed, when he conjectures that there were no monuments of egyptian antiquity later than MOERIS, tho he has in this the authority of as great a man as MARSHAM on his side? DICARCHUS, the disciple of ARISTOTLE, who had not, most certainly inspired him with much credulity in antient traditions, had studied the antiquities of Egypt. MANETHO had done the same in the time of PTOLEMY PHILADELPHUS, and ERATOSTHENES in the time of PTOLEMY EVERGETES. The first of the two was himself an Egyptian, and had extracted his chronology and history from the books of MERCURY, that is, from the sacred and most authentic writings of the Egyptians. Why has his chronology been called in question, or why was it not received by christian writers beyond a certain epocha? Is there any pretence to say, that he altered what he found in the books of MERCURY; as we know that JULIUS AFRICANUS, and EUSEBIUS, altered and transposed his dynasties, to make them, as near as they could, conformable to the mosaic chronology? With what front can we suspect the authenticity of books, compiled and preserved by egyptian priests, when we receive the old testament on the faith of jewishe scribes, a most ignorant and lying race? Were the sacred books of the Egyptians taken from them, by a king of Persia? DIODORUS says it. But the same DIODORUS assures us, that the Egyptians purchased their scriptures again, and that they were restored to them by the eunuch BAGOAS: whereas the scriptures of the Jews were lost, more than once; and how they were recovered, the last time at least, is unknown to us:

nay,

may, whether they were recovered at all, in a strict sense, may be, and has been, questioned by some Christians and Jews too. Is the immense antiquity, which MANETHO ascribed to his nation, or the tales of OSIRIS, and ISIS, and TYPHON, too ridiculous to be admitted? I shall not plead in favor of them. But, in truth, are the anecdotes of jewish antiquity a whit more conformable to experience, to reason, and to all our notions of things divine or human, whatever regard we may pay to some passages in the Pentateuch, because of the use to which they are put by theology. No man, who has the least pretence to candor, and who dares speak out, will assert so much. But still, how little credit soever we may give to the particular traditions of either sort, all of them together are the general voice of antiquity, and extort our assent to this truth, "The world had a beginning."

THIS truth seems to have been propagated by them in those hieroglyphs, and that sacred language, wherein they recorded whatever was most antient and most respected. HORUS, or the world, was represented like a youth whose beard was not yet grown. An egg was the famous symbol of the generation, as well as figure, of the world; and the Thebans, who were the most antient egyptian dynasty, had an hieroglyphical representation of the Divinity with an egg coming out of his mouth; which symbol of an egg was adopted by the Phoenicians, and by the Persians, and became an object of worship in the orgia, or mysteries of BACCHUS. These monuments came down from the first MERCURY, at whose antiquity we cannot so much as guess; for the second, who followed, and probably very long after him, our chronologers are obliged to place as high as the age of MOSES or of JOSHUA.

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SANCHONIATHON, that we may say something of phoenician as well as egyptian traditions of this sort, is another author that may vie, perhaps, with the most antient for antiquity. BOCHART, and all our divines, think fit to place him in the time of GIDEON. It is not convenient for them that he should stand backwarder. They build their assertion on a passage concerning him in the writings of PORPHYRY, who says, that SANCHONIATHON had the materials of his history from JEROMBAL, a priest of the God JAO. Now JEROMBAL sounds too like to JERUBAAL, the name GIDEON wears in scripture, and JAO sounds too like JEHOVAH, to leave any doubt on this subject in the minds of men who can make systems and write volumes on the affinity of sounds. SANCHONIATHON then, being cotemporary to GIDEON, had a knowledge of the books of MOSES, and took from thence all he knew concerning the beginning of the world; so that these two are but one and the same tradition, according to this opinion. But there is great reason to doubt of the first part, and the second is evidently false.—The anachronism of PORPHYRY, who supposed SEMIRAMIS cotemporary with the siege of Troy, will not make SANCHONIATHON cotemporary with GIDEON: since the last was, unluckily, not a priest, and since the JEROMBAL, from whose writings the phoenician historian is said to have borrowed, was one. The answers made to this objection are trifling. A pagan, it is said, might take a general of an army for a priest, and PORPHYRY was guilty of this blunder. The Jews called their chiefs or principal men sometimes priests, it is said. Therefore PORPHYRY, who was no more a Jew than he was a Christian, might make use of an appellation peculiar to the Jews.—But, further, in what time soever SANCHONIATHON lived, he did not relate what he said concerning the commencement of the world from the mosaic history, or any other jewish traditions; since

he affirmed positively that he derived the cosmogony from TAAUT or MERCURY. Have we not reason to be surpris'd, as much as we are accus'd to it, at the boldness of scholars who presume to oppose their frivolous conjectures, to what an historian himself says of the materials which he followed?—The second part of what is said concerning this phoenician historian being false, it follows that SANCHONIATHON, one of the most antient writers whose name is come down to us, SANCHONIATHON, a lover and follower of truth, according to the etymology of his name, learned and curious in searching the original of things, furnished with the most authentic materials that Egypt and Phoenicia could afford him, and writing in an age when the authenticity of these materials might be known, affirmed the beginning of the world; and is, therefore, a voucher of the same truth, distinct from MOSES.

WHETHER the books of the Pentateuch were writ by MOSES himself, or whether the traditions contained in them were compiled after his time, which is not at all improbable; certain it is, that these traditions are of very great antiquity. Now these traditions confirm the same general fact, in a more circumstantial account of it, than we may suppose that SANCHONIATHON gave. I have read that SIMPLICIUS laughed at the whole story, and at GRAMMATICUS for quoting some passages of it. This interpreter of ARISTOTLE affirmed, that the whole was taken from egyptian fables. But SIMPLICIUS might have considered, as we do, that how ridiculous soever the circumstances might be, the fact, affirmed by so many traditions, might be true, tho he was led to deny it by arguments which ARISTOTLE himself owned to be very problematical. ARISTOTLE, who employed logic very absurdly in physics, might employ it, as absurdly, about history and tradition. Let it be, that the account MOSES gives of the creation, and the cosmogony of SANCHONIATHON, are alike fabulous; yet still the  
general

général fact, advanced by them, may be reputed true. The various fables annexed to it do, in effect, prove it; since it is not likely that they would have been invented, if the foundation of them had not been laid in tradition, if there had not been a stock of truth whereon to graft them.

I AM as much persuaded, as SIMPLICIUS himself, that the Israelites might borrow some egyptian traditions, as it is notorious that they borrowed many civil and religious institutions from the same people. I can believe too, on the faith of learned men, that there is some analogy between the mosaic account of the creation and the phoenician cosmogony. There is nothing extraordinary to alter the state of the question in this. I can believe too, that the six times, in which God made the world, according to an antient tradition of the Persians, are relative to the six days in which he made it, according to the jewish traditions. The Israelites had been slaves to the Egyptians, captives among the Chaldaeans, and subjects to the Persians. They boasted their descent from ABRAHAM; and the magi acknowledged this patriarch for their legislator, and for the institutor of their religion. The reformation, which ZOROASTER made in this, was made after the return of some of the Jews, from Babylon, into their own country. But it was made, according to HIDE and other modern critics, in the reign of DARIUS, son of HYSTASPES, a little before ESDRAS and NEHEMIAS went from the court of Persia to restore the religion, to settle the government, and to compile the traditions of the Jews at Jerusalem. ESDRAS set out from Persia and Babylonia when the disputes between the magians and the sabians ran the highest, and when the new doctrines of ZOROASTER prevailed in the first fervor of reformation. ESDRAS, therefore, and the other Jews, who could not fail to be favorable to the first sect, and averse to the latter, might very

well take, as it is highly probable that they did, the names of the months, the names of angels, many ridiculous anecdotes, and, among the rest, some concerning the creation, from the magians. The tradition was common to all these nations, but they invented and they borrowed, from one another, various circumstances, in which they dressed it up differently, each historian according to his fancy, and conformably to the established system of his religion. This hypothesis is so well founded, and so very probable, that our divines do nothing better than weaken the credibility of the fact, when they assume, on the similitude of some circumstances, that this tradition, as well as the belief of one God, was preserved by the Jews alone.

THEY were both much more antient among the Persians than ZOROASTER or ZERDUSHT. We have to do here only with the first: and as to that, PORPHYRY cites in his treatise, "De antro nympharum," a certain EUBULUS, who writ the history of MITHRAS, and assured in it, that ZOROASTER consecrated a round grotto, such as nature had formed it, adorned with flowers and watered by springs, to MITHRAS, the creator of all things, which grotto was the symbol of the world, as the world is the work of MITHRAS. The same reformer instituted festivals likewise to commemorate the beginning of it; and not content with this, he descended into particulars; fixed the number of days contained in every one of the six times that had been imagined; and marked the gradual progress of the creation in each of them.

THE Chaldaeans may be coupled, on this occasion, with the Persians, as the Phoenicians and the Israelites were with the Egyptians. They were all distinct nations; they had all their distinct religions and traditions; but they all agreed in  
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one, the beginning of the world, how many different fictions soever they might relate concerning the time and manner of this beginning. I do not cite the chaldaic oracles. They were as much forged or corrupted, perhaps, as the sibyline verses. But we have no need of leaning on their authority. EUSEBIUS has preserved a remarkable passage that was in the history of BEROSUS. An antient tradition of the Chaldaeans reported, that our world was formed out of a chaos. All was night and water, till BEL cut this night in two, separated the heavens from the earth, and formed the world. The stars, the sun, the moon, and the planets, were the productions, according to this tradition, of the same BEL, by which name the Chaldaeans meant to signify the KNEPH of the orthodox Egyptians, their own invisible MITHRAS, or, in one word, the supreme Being.

I KNOW very well that DIODORUS says, the Chaldaeans believed the world eternal by it's nature, and incapable of generation or corruption. But, in the first place, the authority of BEROSUS seems to deserve, on this occasion, much more credit than that of DIODORUS, not only because he was much nearer to the times of which he speaks, but because he was a babylonian and a priest, and, therefore, better instructed, without doubt, than the latter in the traditions of his own country.— In the next place, the difficulty of reconciling these two authors, does not seem insuperable. The Greek, in the beginning of his first book, speaks of those, who believed the world eternal, and of those, who were of a contrary opinion. But this dispute seems to have risen among the naturalists or the learned, as he calls them, and not among those who contented themselves to know, about past events, what the history and tradition of their country taught them.— Thus we may understand, and should, I think, understand what he says of



the Chaldaeans; for after having said, that they maintained the eternity of the world, and believed it incapable of generation or corruption, he adds, that they believed the world to be governed by a divine providence, and every thing which happened, to be ordered by the gods, not to happen by chance. Now the greatest part of what he says being manifestly an account of philosophical opinions, and not of facts preserved in history or in tradition, it seems most natural to understand the whole in the same manner; besides which, it is to be considered, that there might be a tradition of the commencement, and that there could be none of the eternity of the world. From all which, it seems evident to me, that the whole of what DIODORUS says, is applicable to philosophical opinions alone, which are sometimes opposed to matters of fact sufficiently established; whereas every such hypothesis should have its foundation in fact, not to be chimerical. BEROSUS relates what he found in the chaldaic traditions; and DIODORUS tells us, what the opinions were of some philosophers at least. We shall see presently, that this opposition of a philosophical hypothesis to tradition was not confined to Egypt or Chaldea, and that it does not affect the truth of the proposition we defend.

STRABO relates, in his fifteenth book, that the brachmans in India agreed with the Greeks in many things, and particularly in this, that "the world had a beginning;" to which he adds, and that "it will be destroyed." Advantage may be taken from hence to turn my own way of reasoning against me. It may be said, that, since the brachmans believed the future destruction of the world, which could not be the subject of any tradition, and was not certainly revealed to them by prophecy, the assumed commencement of the world might be, and certainly was, merely founded, as well as its assumed destruction,

destruction, on their philosophical speculations. It may be said, that we ought to explain this passage of STRABO, much as I have explained that of DIODORUS, and to suppose the whole system of these indian brachmans philosophical.

I SHALL have occasion to consider, more at length, the true difference between a tradition of opinion, and a tradition of fact. But, in the mean time, I observe, that since the opinion of the future destruction of the world, founded manifestly in speculation, was entertained by the Greeks, at the same time as the opinion of it's beginning, founded not less manifestly in tradition; and since STRABO assures us, that there was a great conformity between the opinions of the Greeks, and the opinions of the Indians, we may well believe that there was the same conformity between the principles on which their opinions were framed. Those among the Greeks, who believed the world had a beginning, believed it on the faith of tradition. They who imagined it would have an end, were led to imagine so both by physical and metaphysical speculation. Since they were sure it had a beginning, they concluded, from both, that it would have an end, and grafted opinion on fact. Thus it happened among the Greeks, and thus it might happen among the Indians.

I OBSERVE, in the next place, that if there was any author of equal authority, who asserted that the brachmans believed the eternity of the world, to oppose to STRABO, as we have BEROSUS, to oppose to DIODORUS, this circumstance might afford some pretence to say that the brachmans, having framed, from observations of the present state of the material world, an opinion that it would be some time or other destroyed by age or accident, were led from thence, by carrying their speculations backwards, to the opinion that it had a beginning: but

but that as there is no such authority to oppose to STRABO, we ought to conclude, that the knowledge they had by tradition of the beginning of the world, led them to believe, on physical observation and metaphysical reasoning, it's future destruction, rather than to conclude this philosophical conjecture led them to imagine, without any foundation in tradition, that the world had a beginning. So that I might very well quote the Indians, as an antient nation who concurred in establishing the truth of this fact on the faith of their traditions.

I MIGHT go further on to the eastward, and bring the testimony of the Chinese, on the same side: a most antient nation surely, and possessed of more antient records, perhaps, than any other, tho we have been little acquainted till very lately with their history, chronology, and traditions. But I choose to proceed in quoting authors better known to us, and shall therefore cite once more STRABO, whose authority, of all the antient writers, is perhaps of the greatest weight. STRABO represents the Aethiopians rather barbarous than civilised; and yet this people believed a supreme immortal Being, the first cause of all things. This people therefore believed the beginning of the world, and this people could not fail to have most antient traditions, since, as rude as they were, the use of letters had been known by them from a time immemorial. Enough has been said of the most antient nations that are mentioned in history; and if we descend to the Greeks, modern, with respect to them, tho antient, with respect to us, we shall find the same tradition established and further reasons to persuade that it was universal, allegorised, disguised, disputed, and even weakened by time; but still universally received, and strongest as we remount highest in our inquiries after it. Such it was when the Greeks, from whom it has descended to us, adopted and transmitted it. This tradition seems to rise out of the abyss  
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of time with the impetuosity of a great source. But then as the water, which spouted out with much noise and force in the beginning, runs silently and gently on, the further it runs; so this tradition grew weaker, but continued to run, when the authors, whom we read at this time, began to write.

THE Egyptians were the first masters of the Greeks. Before any of these went into Egypt to acquire science, they had received much instruction from thence; principles of religion and of civil government and anecdotes of antiquity. ORPHEUS may pass for the first of these egyptian missionaries; since he came from Egypt, tho he was a thracian. I abandon the verses, which have gone under his name, as easily as the chaldaic oracles; but that I should believe there was no such man, is too much to require. ARISTOTLE asserted, as we learn in the first book of the nature of the gods, "ORPHEUM poetam nunquam fuisse." But we find in the same treatise, that ORPHEUS, MUSAEUS, HESIOD, and HOMER, were reckoned among the most antient poets. It would not be difficult, perhaps, to discover the principle of philosophical interest which induced ARISTOTLE to deny the existence of a man so famous in all the traditions of his country, and who had been the subject of so many fables. What traditions of greater antiquity than ORPHEUS the Greeks might have, we know not. But he was, certainly, the principal channel, thro which that of the commencement of the world passed, from the Egyptians, to MUSAEUS, HESIOD, and HOMER, who received first, or were confirmed in the belief of it, by this authority, and who preserved and propagated it in all their songs. PYTHAGORAS took it from the Egyptians likewise, and from other eastern nations. The whole italic school, and all those of the ionic, who did not prefer their own speculations to a matter of fact, and PLATO, the famous founder of the academy, followed them.

None

None of these invented the fact; but all of them dressed it up and delivered it down in different garbs, according to their different systems of philosophy and religion. Even the christians, who came so long afterwards, helped to corrupt this tradition, by interpolating the famous verses, ascribed to ORPHEUS, which I have for this reason, among others, consented to lay aside; tho' still, if we believe these verses were composed by ONOMACRITUS, and not by ORPHEUS, they were composed at least as early as the age of PISISTRATUS, and contain, therefore, a very antient tradition.

I MIGHT have named, as the preservers of this tradition, among the Greeks, LINUS, THAMYRAS, and others. I might quote several Theogonias, that, it is said, were writ, like that of ARISTAEUS of the island of Proconnesus, or that of EPIMENIDES of the island of Crete; all which would have been more ridiculous, than they were, if the beginning of the world had not been established in general belief; but I will mention, particularly, that of HESIOD only. He invokes the muses to sing the divine race of those immortal gods born of the earth, of the heavens, and of night, and who have been nourished by the salt sea. He goes on to bid them sing, how the gods and the earth were first made, with the rivers and the immense sea, with the stars and the heavens, with the gods who proceeded from them, and who are the authors of all good things. The same extravagant ideas are to be found in HOMER. The ocean was, according to him, the original of all things: and this notion coincides with that of THALES, who taught that all things proceeded from water as their material principle; by which he meant, no doubt, a certain chaos, wherein all the elements were confounded, till they were reduced into order, that is, till the world began.

THE proofs of the univerfality of this tradition, muffled up almoft always in allegories and fables are fo numerous that we run more risk of being loft in the multiplicity of them, than of wanting any. ABARIS, the fcythian, had writ concerning thefe generations of gods. The world was not eternal in the fystem of the druids; and the antient Etrurians had their fables concerning the beginning of it, as well as the Egyptians and the Perfians. The magi, fays DIOGENES LA-  
ERTIUS, taught the generation of the gods: and by thefe gods, they underftood fire, earth, and water. One of the magi, fays HERODORUS, fung the fame generation, in an hymn, at all the facrifices of the Perfians.

As poetry perfonified every thing, antient philofophy, which was little elfe than poetry, animated all the elements; and every part of corporeal nature was filled with inferior divinities: for they acknowledged fome that were fuperior, and even a fupreme Being, who, far from being born of the world, made it, and was the father of gods and men; which puts me in mind of a paffage in CICERO, where it is faid, of this fupreme Being, “deos alios in terrâ, alios in lunâ, alios in  
“ reliquas mundi partes fpargens Deus quafi ferebat.”

IT would have been very convenient for all the atheiftical philofophers to have affumed the eternity of the world; but few of them durft do fo, in oppofition to this univerfality of tradition. They were obliged, therefore, either to reject this tradition, or to find fome way of accounting for the exiftence of our planet, without fuppoſing a ſelf-exiſtent Δημιουργος, or architect, the firſt mind of ANAXAGORAS. They choſe the laſt, as the moſt eaſy taſk, and EPICURUS ſeemed to think his abſurd ſyſtem more likely to prevail, for this very reaſon,

because it assumed that the world had a beginning conformably to tradition. The author of the dissertation, I have before me, asserts, that all the philosophers, except the epicureans, under which name he comprehends all the atomic philosophers, held, that the world was eternal. A passage in the beginning of the fourth chapter of the treatise of CENSORINUS, "De die natali," led him into this error. What he advances may be proved false by a deduction of many particulars; but this may be said, with truth, that an opinion of the eternity of the world grew up or spread more after ARISTOTLE. Even the latter platonicians took part on this head with the peripatetics. They treated their master, as St. JEROM accuses others, and might have been accused himself, of treating the scriptures. Whatever new opinions philosophers framed, they dragged in the text of their masters to support them; which calls to my mind the proceedings of a Jew and of a stoical philosopher. PHILO found a trinity of divine hypostases in the writings of PLATO. He adopted the opinion, would needs find it in the sacred writings of his fathers, and reconcile the legislator of the Jews with the founder of the academy. Just so CLEANTHES endeavored to make the fables of ORPHEUS, MUSAEUS, HESIOD, and HOMER agree with what he taught concerning the gods, "Ut veterrimi poetae, qui haec ne suspicati quidem sint, stoici fuisse videantur.\*" But after all, nothing can be more strongly asserted than the commencement of the world is by PLATO; and even ARISTOTLE himself acknowledged, that this philosopher thought it generated.

It may seem strange, but it is true, that we have a right to quote ARISTOTLE himself against the eternity of the world. He falls severely on the philosophical systems, that prevailed in his time, about the manner in which it began: but he acknowledges the uniformity of this ancient tradition. How could

\* TULLY de nat. Deor. l. 2.

could he avoid to do so? Or how could it be otherwise, since the Greeks, in his time, had found it established among all the nations with whom they became acquainted either by commerce or by war? That happened to them, which has happened to us, in much later ages. We have pushed our discoveries thro both hemispheres, and have found every where the same tradition established in the belief of mankind. The Chinese, whom I just mentioned above, would pass, like the Egyptians of old, for the most antient race of mankind, and they have traditions and records of immense antiquity and very singular authenticity. Now these traditions and these records agree, in one general fact, with all those that have been mentioned, "the world and mankind had a beginning." Even the name of a first man is preserved, and FOHI, who was the ORPHEUS of the east, precedes a very little their historical age. If we cross the South-sea, and visit the people of Peru or of Mexico, we find the same tradition established by universal consent, as they received it from their fathers. The world began and PACHA CAMAC created it: the sun, that enlightens the world now, is not eternal; there have been other suns before this. If we cross the continent of America and proceed to the islands, we find the inhabitants of them in the same belief; at least we might have found them so, whilst they preserved the primitive simplicity of their manners, and the traditions of their forefathers, and till spanish avarice and spanish bigotry had exterminated the whole species.

AFTER saying so much concerning this tradition, it is necessary, I think, to consider, more particularly, what those principles are, on which reason determines us to receive general facts that have no foundation out of tradition, as we receive the most authentic historical truths. I have touched this



subject already ; but, to treat it with more order and clearness, let us descend into some detail of the essential differences between history and tradition. Let us consider what those attributes are which the latter wants, and for the want of which this testimony cannot produce historical probability : for if we find that there is not the same necessity of relation between these attributes and the general facts, spoken of here, as there is between these attributes and every historical account of past events ; in short, if we find that such general facts are not in the case of those, in order to judge of which the rules of historical criticism have been established, it will follow, that these facts may be received for true, as well as any, and much better than several of those that are contained in history, and to the truth of which we assent.

A STORY, circumstantially related, ought not to be received on the faith of tradition ; since the least reflection on human nature is sufficient to shew, how unsafely a system of facts and circumstances can be trusted for its preservation to memory alone, and for its conveyance, to oral report alone ; how liable it must be to all those alterations, which the weakness of the human mind must cause necessarily, and which the corruption of the human heart will be sure to suggest. An event that is not circumstantially, is imperfectly related, not only with respect to the communication it should give, but with respect to the means we should have to judge of it's probability. The means I speak of are those of comparing the different parts of a story together, and of examining how well they coincide and render the whole consistent. In one case, then, different circumstances are to be compared ; in the other, all the traditions that can be collected on the same subject. Inconsistent circumstances destroy the credit of the story ; repugnant traditions, that of a general event. But the silence of some histories

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ries or of some traditions will destroy the credit of neither, when all those who speak of the same thing agree. The jewish history has preserved the memory of a babylonian kingdom, which we call the second empire of the Assyrians, unknown to profane history and tradition, which make mention only of one. That antient monument too of RHAMSES, which GERMANICUS went to see in his voyage into Egypt, and the inscription on it, which contained the names of all the nations whom this prince had conquered in Asia, makes no mention of the Assyrians among those who became tributary to the egyptian empire, as if their very name had not been known a century before the aera of NABONASSAR, tho it mentions the Persians, the Bactrians, and others, who must have been such to the Assyrians, if an assyrian empire had been established, as we assume, before the aera of NABONASSAR. Notwithstanding this silence, and the vain efforts of scholars to reconcile sacred and profane assyriacs, it would be unreasonable to deny that there was an assyrian empire in Asia. Upon the whole matter, that "the world had a beginning," is a general fact, even better founded than this, "there has been an assyrian monarchy." Some antient traditions, we have seen, do not concur with others about the latter. But I presume it would be hard to cite any body of antient traditions, wherein the commencement of the world is not directly affirmed, or constantly supposed. There is not even the silence of tradition against it; and as to traditions that deny the fact, there neither have been, nor could be, any.

It may be thought, and it is true, in general, that history has this advantage over tradition. The authors of authentic history are known; but those of tradition, whether authentic or unauthentic, are not known. The probability of facts must diminish by length of time, and can be estimated, at no time, higher.

higher than the value of that original authority, from which it is derived. This advantage, then, authentic history has, which no tradition can have. The degree of assent, which we give to history, may be settled, in proportion to the number, characters, and circumstances of the original witnesses; the degrees of assent to tradition cannot be so settled. Let us see, therefore, how far this difference may be thought to affect the tradition of the beginning of the world. We shall find, I think, that we are very liable to be deceived in all these respects which should constitute the authenticity of history, and that the difference I have observed cannot affect, in any sort, the true fact I assert.

WE are deceived, grossly, very often about the number of witnesses, two ways. Sometimes by applying testimonies that have no true relation to the things testified, and sometimes by taking different repetitions of the same testimony, for different testimonies. Both these ways are employed with success, artfully by some, habitually by others; and numerous citations improperly brought, and carelessly or ignorantly set to account, to increase the confusion and to promote the deception. Nothing can be more ridiculous, perhaps, than to see a great part of what we find in profane antiquity applied to confirm what we find in sacred. Numerous and astonishing examples of this kind might be brought from all the writers who have endeavoured to establish the authenticity of Jewish, by a supposed concurrence of profane, traditions. But I pass these over. It is full as ridiculous to see all the antient writers, who have spoke of the Assyrians and Persians, quoted as so many distinct witnesses, when they did, for the most part, nothing more than copy CTESIAs, first, and one another, afterwards. Neither CTESIAs, nor MOSES himself, may deserve belief in all the particulars related by them; but CTESIAs may be reckoned as a  
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witness the more of some general facts, as MOSES may be of some others.

THAT the world had a beginning is a naked fact, which neither contains nor implies any thing equivocal. It neither leans on the authority of one nation, nor of one system of traditions which many nations may adopt. Nations, the most distant in place, and the most opposite in opinions, customs, and manners, concur in affirming it. All these traditions, therefore, have had different originals, or they all proceed from one original tradition. If they had different originals, the truth of the fact is established by so great a number of independent testimonies. If they all proceed from one original tradition, the truth of the fact is established just as well; since such a tradition must have been that of one first family or society. As it would be absurd to assume that a tradition, which may be called that of mankind, could be founded originally in any thing else than the truth of a fact which concerned all mankind, and of which all mankind had once had a certain assurance; so it would be absurd to suppose that a tradition, arising in one family or society alone, could spread to all the corners of the earth, and be received alike by nations even unknown to one another, unless we suppose this family or society to be that from which all these nations, by whom this tradition was preserved, proceeded. It does not seem that this argument can be eluded.

As there is a great difference between circumstantial relations and general naked facts, so there is, likewise, between the tradition I contend for, and every other of the same kind. That there has been an universal deluge is a fact, as general and as naked as this, "the world had a beginning;" but I apprehend, that the tradition of it is not supported like that of  
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the commencement of the world. Has the memory of this event been preserved among all the antient nations? There are men bold enough to say so; but the contrary is true. The tradition of NOAH'S deluge is vouched by no other authority than that of MOSES: for those nations, which preserved the memory of so many particular deluges, knew nothing of this universal deluge; and yet it is impossible to conceive that the memory of such a catastrophe should have been known only by one people, and that not the most antient neither; or being known to all, should have been preserved only in one corner of the earth. If this tradition then is liable to suspicion, for want of a sufficient number of testimonies, that of the commencement of the world is liable to no suspicion; because it has as many testimonies as can be expected on the supposition of it's truth. Let us proceed now to consider the veracity and probity of witnesses, and the difference between history and tradition on this head. History to be authentic must give us not only the means of knowing the number, but of knowing the characters, of the witnesses who vouch for it. Tradition in general gives us the means of knowing neither; and the particular tradition we speak of here, which is that of nations, not of men, does not stand in need of the latter.

THIS condition of historical probability is even more important than the number of witnesses; and it is by this that we are most liable to be deceived. There are certain follies which prevail sometimes like epidemical maladies, and infect whole nations with their delirium. Such there were, of one sort, among the Egyptians; such there were, of another sort, among the Jews; and the predestination to universal empire may pass for another, among the Romans. But whatever various effects different deliriums may produce in different countries, there is one which they produce alike in all, the spirit of inventing

venting, believing, and propagating lies. These lies come soon to have education and authority on their side. It becomes the interest of particular men, or of particular societies, to profit of the public credulity, and when they have once done so, their lies produce such effects, under the management of bold and artful men, as sober truth never could. Thus MAHOMET, to go no higher, instituted a new religion in the seventh century of ours, and founded a great empire. MAHOMET had intrepidity as well as address, and if a miserable Jew of Asia minor, seventy or eighty years ago, had not wanted the former, we might have seen, very possibly, at this hour, a new spiritual and temporal empire established by the adorers of a new Messiah. But the courage of SABATAI SEVI, to whom the Jews resorted from all parts, in a firm persuasion that he was their true Messiah, failed him, and he passes for an impostor, merely because he durst not stand an impalement. Thus not only lies, but whole systems of lies, get into history; pass for religious truths; and serve to support, by appeals to them in after-times, the original fraud. MAHOMET was obliged to fly from Mecca to Medina by the unbelieving Arabs. But the Arabs now, and all those who have been converted to mahometism, (for it would be false to say, tho we hear it continually said, that this religion has been propagated by force alone and not by persuasion) go very devoutly in pilgrimage to the place from which he was driven, and the time of his flight is become their sacred aera.

I DWELL the longer on this point, because it is that which justifies historical pyrrhonism the most. The antient manner of recording events, made it easy to practice all these frauds. The priests in Egypt, in Judaea, and elsewhere, were intrusted to make and to keep these records; and they were under a double obligation, if I may say so, for such they thought it no

doubt, to keep them with greater regard to the system of religion, whose ministers they were, than to the truth of things. They were to keep up the credit of antient lies, and to invent as many new ones, as were necessary to propagate the same fraud. By these means, and on these motives, the whole of history was corrupted in those nations, as we shall easily believe that it could not fail to be, when we consider the connexion between civil and ecclesiastical affairs, and their mutual influence on one another. JOSEPHUS, writing against APPION, praises this manner of preserving the memory of things, in order to bespeak approbation to the practice, which was that of his own country. He boasts much of the sincerity, and even of the inspiration, if I mistake not, of the Jewish scribes. But good sense, founded in experience, will answer that they who record matters, concerning which they are strongly biased by their affections, their passions, and their prejudices, and wherein they have, directly, or indirectly, an immediate and great private interest to serve by inventing falsehoods, or by disguising truth, are never to be received as good witnesses, unless their testimony be confirmed by collateral and disinterested evidence. That they are not to be received as such, on any other terms, we need go no further than the Jews themselves for examples. Some of their heroes and heroines may be thought justly, when we consider the anachronisms and the blunders they commit, as fictitious as AMADIS of Gaul, and their traditions no more authentic than those of archbishop TURPIN.

THE uncertainty of history arises principally from the causes here laid down. We are less liable to be deceived by the concurrence of authors, more independent and more indifferent than these, tho they may not be all of equal credit: because when their motives and designs are not the same, when

they had no common principle, and when they cannot be suspected to have had any concert together, nothing but the notoriety of facts can make their relations coincide. In such cases a nice examination of the veracity and probity of historians, when we can make it, is as little necessary as it is in matters of tradition, where we cannot make it. We may subscribe, at least as reasonably, to the united testimony of a great number of traditions, whose authors are unknown to us, as we may to facts reported by a great number of historians, tho' the authority of some of these would be otherwise very precarious.

EXPERIENCE shews sufficiently, that there is no falshood too gross to be imposed on any people civilised or barbarous, learned or ignorant, but we shall never conceive that the same lie could be imposed on all people: because it is impossible that the same lie should flatter them all alike, or be equally well proportioned to the interest and designs of a prevalent society in every nation. What immediate or necessary relation has the beginning of the world to the predominant folly of the Egyptians, for instance, or the Chinese, or to the interest of the priests, among the former, and any of the several sects, among the latter? Since they believed the world to have had a beginning; it was very conformable to the folly of these two people to insist that they descended from the first men, and were the most antient nations of the world; but what need had they to assume the commencement of it? Would they not have flattered their vanity more to say, that it was eternal, and that their race was coeternal with it? — Once more. What necessary relation had the beginning of the world to the favorite principle of the Jews, who believed themselves a people chosen by God, out of all the people of the earth? Could the eternity of the world make it less likely that they



descended from SEM, or the vocation of ABRAHAM more improbable, or destroy the credibility of any fact that flattered their vanity? I confess, I think not. If it be said, that this nation had nobler ideas of the supreme Being than any other; and that it was more conformable to these ideas to believe that the world was made by God, than that it is eternal as well as he; I might deny the first proposition, and shew that no nation had such mean ideas of the Divinity in many respects as this. But if I admitted it, for argument sake, I might ask how this philosophical opinion could be passed for a matter of fact on the Egyptians, who boasted so much of their own antiquity, by a people, who had grown up among them, and who had been so long their slaves? If this tradition of the beginning of the world had prevailed among the Jews first, who were known to few people, and despised by those that knew them, how came it to spread far and wide to the utmost extremities of the east and west?—Since I have named the west, let me mention the Peruvians, and ask how the beginning of the world can be said to have flattered the general folly of this people, or the particular interest of their incas? They thought their incas the children of the sun. To what purpose was it to make them believe that PACHA CAMAC was a being superior to the sun, and that he created the world? Would it not have been more agreeable to the prejudices of the Peruvians, and to the interests of the incas, to have supposed the world eternal, and themselves the offspring of an eternal father?

LIES, that are produced by the predominant passions of people, and by the policy of those who lead them, carry for the most part on their fronts, if I may say so, the marks of their original: and this observation will hold in a multitude of instances that may be brought from history and tradition, both from facts circumstantially related, and from those that are  
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naked, or almost naked of circumstances. But the tradition that affirms the beginning of the world is not in this case. It is relative no more to the particular character of one people than of another. It favors no more one general principle of religion or policy than another. In a word, force your imagination as much as you please, you will find insurmountable difficulties in your way, if you suppose the fact invented: but all these difficulties vanish when you suppose it true. The universal consent of mankind follows naturally and necessarily the truth of the fact. The antiquity of the tradition is a consequence of the antiquity of the world, and the great variety of fables, which have been invented about it, is a circumstance that accompanies every event that has descended long in oral tradition, and that has not been ascertained by cotemporary history, nay, even some that seem to have been so ascertained.

THERE remains, to be spoken of, another condition of historical probability, which it may be supposed that tradition cannot have, and which we have seen, in the case of numbers, and veracity or probity of witnesses, that history itself does not always furnish, and for want of which we are often imposed upon by it. This condition is so essential, that neither the numbers nor characters of witnesses will constitute probability without it. The condition I mean is this: that the original authors were not only cotemporary but competent witnesses. The examination whether they were such or no may be reckoned for another advantage, which history has, or must have, to be deemed authentic, over tradition, by what passes every day, under our eyes, when we see almost every public fact related, and even transmitted to posterity, not according to truth, but according to the wrong judgments which are made by prejudice or by passion. What happens now, happened formerly, and no stronger proof of it can be required than that which we find in ARRIAN. He had

had before him the memorials of ARISTOBULUS and of PTOLEMY, two principal captains that accompanied ALEXANDER in all his expeditions; and yet the historian was puzzled, sometimes, by the inconsistency of their relations.

ON this head, the competency of original witnesses, it may be said, that if history wants it sometimes, tradition must want it always, and that tradition, especially, which I defend. I may be told, and I was told, that if every thing else, which I have advanced, was admitted, the objection, arising from the incompetency of witnesses, would be sufficient to refute me. It was urged, that whoever were the first to say there had been a monarchy of the Assyrians, might know the truth of what they said, but that they, who were the first to affirm the beginning of the world, could not know the truth of what they said, not even on the supposition that they were the first of men. This tradition, therefore, is that of an opinion, not of fact. The existence of God is a tradition too; and theists, very often, appeal to the universality of this tradition to prove the truth of an opinion, just as you appeal to the same universality to prove a fact. Had you proved the fact, you might have drawn from it all the arguments that can be drawn to establish, in belief, the existence of a supreme Being. But you have amused yourself with nothing better than proving, the truth of one opinion, by the tradition of another, which is a proceeding that cannot be justified; because we are as able, and probably more able judges of the opinion, than any of the antient nations could be witnesses of the fact. As different nations have their different follies, there are some common to all mankind. As there are fictions which favor the interests and promote the designs of those who govern in all the countries of the world, the existence of one supreme Being has been acknowledged in all ages, and if you please  
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to say so, by all people. Superstition took hold, and policy profited of this opinion, under one form or other. Superstition abounds wherever there are men, and some kind of policy wherever there are societies. Metaphysical reasonings on the nature and attributes of a supreme Being, may persuade philosophers that this Being, whom they assume to exist by the necessity of his nature, created the world, which does not seem so to exist. Naturalists, in particular, may have adopted easily an opinion which saves them much pains and useless research. A first cause of infinite wisdom and power, cuts all the gordian knots that embarrass them, and a single supposition furnishes the solution of a thousand difficulties.—All this was urged with much vehemence, by DAMON, and he concluded, by putting this dilemma. If the opinion of the commencement of the world is conformable to the knowledge we have of things, and proportioned to the human understanding, as you assert, there results from thence no proof that the fact is true, but great reason to believe that men might assume it, without knowing any thing of the matter. On the other side, if this be not true, your universal tradition wants the first and principal foundation of probability which you have laid down.

I HAVE put these objections, such as were made, and such as might have been made to me, in their full force. They seem plausible; let us see if they are unanswerable. They will not appear so, if I can shew first, that the atheist begs the question when he assumes that, supposing the world to have had a beginning, even the first of men could not be competent witnesses, because they could not be competent judges, of the truth of the fact; secondly, if I can state so clearly, the distinction to be made between the tradition of an opinion, and the tradition of a fact, in our judgments about them, as to reduce to an absurdity the supposition, that the

the tradition we speak of, is of the first sort; and thirdly, if I can prove, by reasons drawn from the human nature and from general experience, that unless the world had really had a beginning, the opinion of it's eternity would have been the opinion of all antiquity, and the commencement of it would not have been established in tradition.

THE atheist begs the question, and by begging it he advances a foolish and arrogant proposition: since to be sure that the first men could not be witnesses of the beginning of the world, he must assume that he knows, very exactly, how the world we inhabit was framed, if it was framed at all. Such inconveniencies happen frequently to those who combat truth. They call temerity to their aid; and they affirm, boldly, on precarious conjectures; and when they have heated their own imagination, they hope, and not always in vain, to seduce those of other men. In the defence of the truth, we shall never be reduced to any such extremity. Tho the atheist must pretend to know how the material world was made, and in what manner the human race began, in order to deny that the first men were competent judges and witnesses of both. We pretend to no such knowledge: but nothing less than such knowledge can justify his denial; whereas the universality of the tradition justifies abundantly our affirmation. We may affirm, on the faith of all mankind, that the world began, much better than it can be affirmed, on the faith of a few precarious partial and inconsistent traditions, that there was an empire of the Assyrians.

To build a world is not so easy a thing as many a speculative architect has imagined. The author of the book of Genesis begins his history by it; and tho we do not set to his account the use which has been made of passages in his nar-

ration, yet is it impossible to excuse all the puerile, romantic, and absurd circumstances, which nothing could produce but the habit of dealing in trifling traditions, and a most profound ignorance. It is impossible to read, what he writ on this subject, without feeling contempt for him, as a philosopher, and horror as a divine; for he is to be considered under both these characters.

NATURAL philosophy made little progress among the Greeks and the Romans, and a system of the universe was very little known by them. The eastern nations knew it better; but among these we must not reckon that of the Jews. It has been said, that PYTHAGORAS was a disciple of the prophet EZEKIEL, or had some other Jewish masters. If this idle conjecture were true in fact, it would not be true, however, that he took from them his mundane system. PHILOLAUS, who published his doctrines, had very different notions of it from those of the Jews, and from those of the other Greeks. One would think too, that some modern astronomer had dictated the hypothesis which PLUTARCH and DIOGENES LAERTIUS attribute to CLEANTHES, the Samian. This true system, which accords so little with that of MOSES, after having been long lost, was renewed in the sixteenth century by COPERNICUS, confirmed and improved by GALILEI and KEPLER, and since demonstrated by NEWTON. How magnificent a scene of the universe have these new discoveries opened! how much more worthy of the wisdom, the power, and the immensity of God, than all the paltry confined systems of ancient philosophers, and of MOSES among the rest!

THO we know much more than they did of the works of God, yet we know as little as they did concerning the production of them. Antiquity had other makers of worlds be-

fides MOSES. PLATO was one of those ; and if his hypothesis be no more probable than that of the jewish legislator, it is, at least, a little more reverential to the supreme Being. The same presumptuous confidence has been seen in these ages, wherein philosophers, having greater knowledge, should have had more modesty, and have been more sensible how ignorant we remain, after all the improvements we are capable of making. DES CARTES, for instance, who had much of this presumption, and employed a great deal of artifice to make his hypotheses pass for real discoveries, acknowledged a little more need of a God than STRATO avowed. He wanted a God to create matter and to impress motion on it. But when he had assumed thus much, he thought himself able to proceed without this help, and to shew, how the world was formed; or how an universe might be formed, by the laws of matter and motion. I told DAMON, that I thought this philosopher's ill success would hinder him from any enterprise of the same kind ; that I should, therefore, have still a right to conclude, that he begged the question, when he asserted that it implied contradiction to suppose the first men capable of knowing that the world began ; and I desired him further to consider with me, whether laying this presumption aside, we may not assume, without any, that there might have been certain marks, by which the first men must necessarily know that they were the first men, and that the system of the world began. If we find such marks, and find them probable, by their analogy to what we know, it will follow, I think, that the beginning of the world has some proof "à posteriori ;" whereas the eternity of it can have none of this kind, any more than "à priori."

HOWEVER this planet of ours was formed, the first men could not possibly be spectators of the formation of it. Both men and all other animals required an earth to walk on, food  
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to nourish them, and an atmosphere to breathe in, and the light of the sun to conduct them. The prior existence of the sun might be necessary too, on another account, antecedently to their creation. This great luminary might be necessary to the formation, as we know that it is to the preservation, of our planet, whether that of the moon were so or not, and whether the Arcadians were in the right or not, when they said, that they were older than this secondary planet.

BUT now, tho there could be no human witnesses of the world arising out of a chaos, and growing into that form and order wherein we see it, yet the first men might know, very certainly, that this system of things began to exist. As it would be ridiculous to assert, like the thufcan author, whom SUIDAS mentions but does not name, that God employed twelve thousand years in creating the universe; so is there no necessity of believing that the solar system, or even this one planet was the work of six days. Such precipitation seems not less repugnant to that general order of nature, which God established and which he observes in her productions, than the day of rest, which MOSES supposes God to have taken, or which the Jews invented to make one of their institutions more respectable, is repugnant to all the ideas we are able to frame of the Divinity. Tho it be conformable to our notions of wisdom, that every thing necessary to man was created, when he began to exist; yet is there nothing which obliges us to believe, that mankind began to exist in all the parts of the world at once.

WE need put our imagination to no great efforts, to believe that all this might be: and if it might be, we may suppose that it was. We do not, like reasoners "à priori," imagine what may have been according to our abstract reasonings, and so conclude from possibility to actuality. We proceed much more



reasonably from actuality to possibility, in a method so often, and so absurdly reversed by philosophers. A more able naturalist would succeed better in finding those marks by which the first men might know the commencement of this system. I will mention three or four, which are obvious enough, and may serve to explain a matter that seemed paradoxical and is not, perhaps, absolutely essential to my argument.

THE general opinion of all those who have reasoned about the creation or formation of the world, and that which MOSES himself follows, assumes that there was originally a chaos or confused mass of matter wherein all the elements or first principles of things, which exist in the material system, were contained. Whether this mass was created or no, they thought it so necessary to be supposed, that they could not go on one step, in building a world, without it. As soon as it is supposed, "instant ardentes Tyrii," they all go to work. Every one separates and disposes these materials in his own way; the laws of mechanism are employed, according to the different plans of these architects, and a world is soon made.—In one of these philosophical romances, published at the end of the last century, the ingenious author assumes that our planet was, till the deluge, in a direct situation to the sun; that is to say, that its axis was parallel to the axis of the ecliptic, or, in other words, that the ecliptic was confounded with the equator. Among several advantages which he pretends to draw from this hypothesis, the great facility of peopling the world with inhabitants is one. He thinks that animals could not have been brought forth, nor have grown up, if there had been any variety in the seasons by the obliquity of the ecliptic, and if these children of the earth, hatched, as we may say, by the sun, had been exposed, at first, to the injuries of the air, and to the cold of a winter.—Had this author been opposed by his own  
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tribe alone, and in a theological way, he might have escaped pretty well; but the natural philosophers and the mathematicians rose up against him, and battered down his hypothesis. I enter not into particulars. The conclusion drawn from all their arguments was this, that the present situation being more advantageous to the earth, in general, than any other, we ought to be persuaded that it is now the same wherein God placed it originally. But I doubt very much whether this conclusion be undeniable. The supreme Being proportions always his means to his ends, and may therefore employ different means when different ends are to be attained. Let it be that the present obliquity of the ecliptic, which is of twenty-three degrees and twenty-nine minutes, may be in the present state of the world the most advantageous. Nothing hinders us from assuming, that another obliquity, or no obliquity at all, might be more advantageous when the present system of things began. If that of the chevalier de LOUVILLE be true, this obliquity was of about forty-five degrees one hundred and thirty thousand years ago. On the comparison of which two obliquities, I shall leave philosophers and mathematicians to dispute as long as they please.

WHAT it is to my purpose to observe is, that no proof will arise, from all they can say, to convince us that the present was the original situation of the world to the sun. Infinite wisdom does not change the means, as divines would sometimes make us believe that he does, at least, in the oeconomy of the moral system, when the ends are the same. Nay, the same means serve often to accomplish different ends. But when the ends are so different, that the means of accomplishing one imply contradiction with the means of accomplishing another, we may say, very assuredly, that infinite wisdom changes the means; and, therefore, if the means of preserving the material  
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and animal world are different from those which were necessary to the beginning of both, the present position of the earth may very well be thought not to have been the first. If alternate corruptions and generations are become necessary, and if the former produce the latter, it could not be so from the first. The first was certainly very different from those which we observe. Corruption could not then be necessary to generation. If a greater degree of heat was so for some productions, that greater degree is to be found in BURNET's hypothesis. If less, and very different degrees were necessary, these different degrees are to be found in the same hypothesis gradually lessening from the equator, and this gradation, by which different climates are formed, might be necessary for different productions to a certain distance from that climate where the sun was always in the zenith. As there were no variations in these different climates, but each enjoyed a particular and uniform season, the animals and plants, of each, were nourished and carried to the perfection of their growth, by the same principle by which they had been produced, and in a manner suitable to their nature, and to that of their climate.

WHILST it fared thus with one part of the world, the other parts were in a very different state according to this hypothesis. But far from finding any thing here, that may seem repugnant to the wisdom of the architect, this wisdom seems more fully displayed than in the hypothesis of MOSES or of PLATO, and this order to have much more analogy with the order of nature which we see established. These different climates appear like so many different matrices or wombs, impregnated with the original seeds of things, and wherein the first productions were formed by the inconceivable energy of divine power. In other climates, more distant from the equator, where the influence of the sun, the first of second causes employed in these generations, was gradually

dually less felt, the great work of the creation might advance more slowly. In climates still more distant, this influence might become too weak to produce any considerable effects, and the great work might proceed still more slowly, or not at all. Then, perhaps, the obliquity of the ecliptic might begin, by slow degrees, without causing any disorder in the climates already inhabited. The first situation of the world to the sun having had its effect, another situation might become necessary for two purposes, to render those climates, where the sun was always in the zenith, more temperate; to carry the generations of animals and of the fruits of the earth forward on both sides to the north and to the south; to give a greater degree of heat, where a greater was still wanted, and to give some, where there was none at all.

WE may believe, that this obliquity of the ecliptic arose much faster than the chevalier DE LOUVILLE assumed it to decrease. A minute in one hundred years is too little. Let us suppose, on the prerogative of hypotheses, a degree, and even more, if you think fit. In this manner, those parts of the world, which were excessively heated, cooled; and those which were frozen by cold, heated gradually. Thus a system of final causes became, it may be, complete, and the earth having passed thro the positions which were, of all possible positions, the most proper to create, might stop at that which is said to be, of all others, the most proper to preserve.

IF the learned master of the charter-house, and the able scotch mathematician, who writ against him, were still alive, I should expect that they would think themselves under some obligation to me for having endeavoured to compromise matters between them, and to unite, in one scheme, their contrary opinions. But since I cannot have this advantage, I must

must content myself with the inward satisfaction I feel, in contemplating this plausible notion, which I have advanced on grounds as good as many of those, that are not deemed paradoxical either by divines or philosophers, have been established. They are possible, no doubt; and, I presume, they will never be demonstrated false, nor any other ways of accounting for the same things, true. It is not however quite necessary to my purpose; for whatever circle our planet described, when her course round the sun began, we must be persuaded that the surface of it was warmed and cherished enough by the rays of the central sun to promote generation and vegetation, for which it was already prepared.—If the present obliquity of the ecliptic prevailed then, the torrid, the temperate, and the frozen zones, as we call them, might be capable of the various productions proper to them; or we may assume, very consistently, that countries more distant received, from those that were nearer the sun, such animals and such plants as their climates were fit to preserve, tho not fit to generate.—In short, we need not apprehend the want of heat, even on the received hypothesis. The sun, much older probably than our world, and who has, certainly, grown older ever since, may have lost much of the force and efficacy which he had in those primaeval days. Nay more; astronomers and natural philosophers agree, I think, about that perpetual expence, which all the suns of the universe are at, to enlighten, to warm, and nourish their several systems; of which expence, we must believe, that our sun has his share. They assume indeed, that the atmospheres of these suns compress so strongly the exhalations that rise from them, and drive them back with so much force and so much oeconomy, not suffering any more than are absolutely necessary to pass, that these springs of light and heat cannot be exhausted, nor suffer any great diminution in thousands of years. But thousands of years, and God alone knows how many,

many, are elapsed since our sun was first lighted up, and he may have therefore suffered some diminution.

THESE hypothetical reasonings, and others to the same purpose, may be, I think, maintained, whether we suppose this obliquity of the ecliptic to have been decreasing or increasing: for the decrease of some minutes in a century, during a space of time, even as long as that which the Egyptians imagined, will not be found inconsistent with our hypothesis. Our hypothesis wants to assume little more than this, that nature, who acts with much simplicity and uniformity, acted much in the same manner after her first productions, in those of animals for instance; and if this be granted, it will follow, evidently, that the first men were competent witnesses of the first propagations of the animal kind; which would be of itself a sufficient proof that they were such of the beginning of the world.

NATURE has every where fixed certain seasons, at which all, or the greatest part of them, propagate their several species, whilst man enjoys the noble prerogative of doing the same all the year round, "*Homini maxime coitus temporibus omnibus opportunus est.*" It is ARISTOTLE who says this. But then this prerogative extends no further: and a term is fixed to man, as it is to the species of all other animals for the bearing their fruit. The philosopher, I have cited, descends into a particular account of these different terms, in the fifth book of his history of animals, and as we know that men are nine months in their mothers bellies, he assures us that the camel is twelve. These animals, then, and all those who require a longer term than that of nine months, appeared later even than the second generation of human creatures, in the ordinary manner that it has been carried on from the first genera-

tion downwards. Men were by consequence witnesses of the first propagations of animals. The same proposition will hold, if we suppose them generated faster and sooner in the course of these generations, or even primaevally; for, if man, for example, was but three days, or three hours, in forming out of the earth, and in receiving the breath of life, it will follow, by a very fair analogy, that the same operations took up four days or four hours for the formation of a camel, and eight for that of an elephant.

I MIGHT expect to hear, upon this occasion, many commonplace notions advanced, to shew more time required, in the process of nature, to form this animal after the image of God, than all the others, so vastly inferior to him in figure and composition. But these persons ought to reflect, that how distant soever animal may be from animal, relatively to our notion of perfection and imperfection, there can be no difference in the distance between any of them and God, who ordered this process of nature for reasons that we do not know, but certainly without regard to that dignity of nature which we imagine. The creation of a man or of an angel, in the works of God, is not more considerable than the creation of the meanest insect, nor requires that the divine energy should be exerted in a longer and more operose process of nature.

BUT if it is probable that the first men might see the commencement of those species of animals, whose formation require longer time than their own, it is not impossible, neither, that they might see the commencement of those species, whose formation required a less time. We may very easily imagine, that the creation had two sorts of progression, as the world has two sorts of motion. Nature might follow such an order, as we have mentioned, in every climate; but she might follow

Follow a certain general order likewise, in all climates alike. As more time was necessary for the production of one animal than another, in the same climate, so more time might be necessary to bring the same animal up to the perfection of his nature in one climate than in another. As the hare might begin to run and the sheep to feed before either man, or camel, or elephant was sufficiently formed to answer the ends of its creation; so the creation, in general, might be far advanced, or even completed, in some climates, before it was so in others. The seeds, or first principles of animal life, might have more or less force and vigor, according to the different influences of the sun, tho they were scattered every where alike. The first men, therefore, who might see no more than the last acts, if I may say so, of this great drama in the countries where they themselves arose, might see the very first acts, wherein animals were brought on the stage, in other countries. They might be spectators at twice, and in a reversed order, of the whole piece.

CREATION finished, propagation began, and the same instinct urged the two sexes to the same act. Instinct urged them to it first; a sense of pleasure recalled them to it afterwards; and the multiplication of their species was not a motive, probably, to these conjunctions. The revolution of some months shewed them the consequences of it; and the revolution of some years shewed them, that they and their offspring were born to die. Let us put ourselves, for a moment, in the place of the first men. Could they doubt that they were such? Could they doubt that all the other animals they saw, were the first of their kinds likewise? Could they fail to transmit to their posterity this tradition, "the world had a beginning?" He who has a great mind to cavil, may say, that they did not know, by these marks, that the material



world began, they only knew, that the animal inhabitants of it began then to exist. But if the first men could not be witnesses of their own creation, they might be such of the creation of other animals, as much as of the propagation of their own, and of every other species: so that, if they knew certainly, that the animal world began, I do not see what the atheist will gain by assuming that they were ignorant of the beginning of the material world. A God was necessary for one as much as for the other, and if tradition affirmed nothing more than the first, it would serve equally well to refute the atheist, who denies the existence of any such Being. Was it necessary to discover this great truth that they should reason logically, and transmit to posterity an opinion only? But in all cases they might know, by other marks sufficient to awaken the attention of a Samojede, or to inform an Hottentot, that the whole system then began. The lives of these men were, probably, much longer than ours; and if you compare what they must have seen in their youth, with what they must have observed in their old age, you will find that the experience of their whole lives, was one continued proof to them, that they lived in the first age of the material world. Observe it in one instance. The earth, out of which they had been created, furnished what was necessary for their subsistence.

“ per se dabat omnia tellus ;

“ Contentique cibus nullo cogente creatis,

“ Arbuteos foetus, montanaque fraga, legebant, &c.”

These were the spontaneous gifts of nature, and men had no share, at first, in the production or improvement of them. They learned, in time, to do both, to sow corn, and to make bread. Trees grew up, and as they grew, they furnished a  
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better retreat to birds, and a better shade to men. An old oak became at length, to them, a new phaenomenon.

IF it was not time to finish this article, I might easily shew, in a multitude of other instances, that the first men must necessarily know that they were cotemporaries with the material world, and saw the beginning of a new order of things. But after wandering, in complaisance to the atheist, in the spaces of imagination, and to shew him that, altho neither the first nor the last of men were able to discover how the world was made, yet the first might know by sufficient experience, and the last by sufficient testimony, that it had a beginning, let us return into the closer precincts of reason and finish this article, as Mr. HUYGENS finishes his conjectures about the planetary world. After speaking of the absurdities contained in the physics of DES CARTES, he adds, “ mihi magnum quid con-  
 “ secuti videbimur si, quemadmodum sese habeant res quae  
 “ in naturâ existunt, intellexerimus, à quo longissimè etiam  
 “ nunc absumus. Quomodo autem quaeque effectae fuerint,  
 “ quodque sint esse coeperint, id nequaquam humano ingenio  
 “ excogitari, aut conjecturis attingi, posse;” this philosopher asserts with great reason. Experimental philosophy has made great progress already, in discovering to us the things and the order of nature. Where it continues to be cultivated it will continue, doubtless, to discover more, and after all, human knowledge will stop far short of human curiosity; for this goes beyond our means of knowledge, nay, even beyond the boldest conjectures we can make.

BUT now, having shewn the atheist, “ ex abundantia,” how the first men might have certainty of knowledge concerning the beginning of the world, and were, therefore, authentic witnesses of the truth of this fact and authentic authors of  
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the tradition, it is time to shew that, without entering into such considerations, we must allow this tradition to be a tradition of fact, and not of opinion. This is the second of those articles that we proposed to examine in answer to the atheist's objections.—There must be some certain principles and some certain rule to distinguish between these two sorts of tradition, as the atheist seems to allow, when he distinguishes one from the other. Now these principles are not, I think, hard to find, and the rule that results from them, is simple and plain.

COMMON sense requires that every thing proposed to the understanding, should be accompanied with such proofs as the nature of it can furnish. He who requires more, is guilty of absurdity. He who requires less, of rashness. As the nature of the proposition decides, what proofs are exigible and what not, so the kind of proof determines the class into which the proposition is to be ranged. He, for instance, who affirms, that there is a God, advances a proposition which is an object of demonstrative knowledge alone, and a demonstration is required from him. If he makes the demonstration, we are obliged to own that we know there is a God, and the proposition becomes a judgment of nature, not merely an opinion, according to the distinction made somewhere in TULLY; tho demonstrations are sometimes called opinions, as opinions are often called demonstrations. If, by his fault or by ours, we have not a clear perception of the ideas or of the connection of them which form this demonstration, or if, without troubling ourselves to follow it, we receive the proposition for true on the authority of others, it is, indeed, opinion, not knowledge in us. But whether we receive it, or whether we reject it, we can neither require nor employ, with propriety, any other proofs than those which are conformable to the nature

ture of the proposition. Tradition is not one of them. It may prove that men have generally believed a God, but it cannot prove that such a Being exists. Nothing can be more trifling, therefore, than to insist, as theists are apt to do, on this proof, as if the opinion proved the fact; as if all men had been alike capable of the demonstration; or, as if the demonstration was not necessary to establish the truth of the opinion. Demonstration, indeed, is not necessary on the hypothesis, that all men have an innate idea of God. But this hypothesis has been, I think, long exploded. I do not remember, at least, to have heard it maintained by more than one archbishop, two or three ignorant monks, and as many devout ladies.

As much as I am convinced of the existence of a supreme, all-perfect Being, as seriously as I adore his majesty, bless his goodness, and resign myself cheerfully to his providence, I should be sorry to rest my conviction on the authority of any man, or of all mankind: since authority cannot be, and demonstration is, the sole proper proof in this case. Should I quote to the atheist, a SUPHIS, an AMENOPHIS, an ORUS, or any of those pretended contemplators of divinity, he would laugh at me with reason; tho he might allow, at the same time, that these seers, who acknowledged inferior beings, beings little raised above humanity, were infinitely less absurd than those who had the front to assert, that they saw the invisible God, and conversed familiarly with him. The demonstration of his existence arises from sensitive knowledge; since it is "à posteriori" only that we can prove the first cause to be an intelligent cause: but he is not for that an object of sensitive knowledge. This proposition, therefore, "there is a God," which becomes a judgment of nature, an object of demonstrative knowledge to every one who can make the demonstration,

monstration, or understand it when it is made, comes down as an opinion only, in tradition, and can pass for nothing better on that authority.

Is this now the case of that proposition which affirms the beginning of the world? Reason alone can authorise the first, and when I subscribe to the truth of it, I do this without any regard to tradition. All that tradition tells me, is that men made the same judgment four or five thousand years ago. If it told me, that they made a contrary judgment, and believed the world eternal, I should make still the same on a subject concerning which, we of this age, are as competent judges as the men who lived at any time before us.—This proposition, “the world had a beginning,” affirms a fact long ago past, and which can, therefore, be received for true on no other authority than that of men who lived long ago, and at, or near the time when this event happened. I consult my reason, indeed, to examine whether the fact implies contradiction, no more, and when I find that it does not, I receive it for true, on the faith of human testimony, which is the proper proof, to me, of every fact whereof I have not been, myself, a witness, and without any regard to the supposed conformity of it to the general ideas of mankind. This supposed conformity, if it be real, will add nothing to the probability of the fact, as a non-conformity will take none away. Nothing, therefore, can be more trifling than the cavil made by the atheist, when he objects that the more probable this tradition is, the more reason we have to take it for an universal tradition of opinion, not of fact. The cavil is not only trifling, but to the last degree absurd; for on this principle it will follow, that the more probable a fact is, the less reason we have to receive it, as a true fact, on historical or traditional authority. I consult my reason and my experience to discover whether the fact, I am told, may

may have happened possibly, and then I consult history and tradition to discover whether it has happened actually. But, according to DAMON'S logic, the more my reason and my experience shew me the first, the more reason I have to believe that history and tradition record, in every such case, an antient opinion, not an antient fact.

BUT it is time that I should hasten to a conclusion, by shewing, in the last place, that if the world had not really had a beginning, the opinion of it's eternity would have been the general opinion of antiquity, and the commencement of it would not have been transmitted by tradition, either as a fact, or, perhaps, as an opinion. Tho men might, in all ages, demonstrate the existence of God, they could not demonstrate alike, in any age, the commencement of the world: and, accordingly, we see that some philosophers, who believed there was a first principle, a first intelligent cause, a supreme Being, held, at the same time, that the world was eternal, far from being induced by their theism, to believe it had a commencement. Others were, I doubt not, confirmed in the opinion that there was a God, or even led to believe it, and to seek the demonstration of it, by the proofs they had of this fact, the world had a beginning in time. It is much more probable, that the received fact gave occasion to or fortified the opinion, than that the opinion determined them to assume the fact.

THE atheist, who looks on both to be nothing more than traditional opinions, will be very indifferent which of them passes for the first. He blends them together, and attributes that of God's existence, to the superstition of mankind, and to the policy of legislators. It might seem hard to attribute that of the beginning of the world to the same principles, since it

seems to have little or no relation to them. He contents himself therefore, at least DAMON did so with me, to insist that philosophers might easily fall into an opinion, which saved them much trouble in accounting for the original of things, by the supposition of an eternal Being, infinitely wise and powerful. But the atheist would do well to consider, that this seeming solution of a difficulty implies a very real absurdity, for it implies that there were philosophers as soon as there were men. He would do well to consider, further, that when there were philosophers, those, who admitted the existence of such a Being, were not the less curious in their researches of the mechanical causes of all the phaenomena. In short, he would do well to consider, that these philosophers would have cut the gordian knots of all their difficulties, by assuming the eternity of the world, much more easily than they could untie them, by assuming that a Being infinitely wise and powerful had made it. They might have said, in this case, once for all, things have been eternally as they are. To what purpose should we seek the original and essential causes of that which never began?

BUT further, if we pass over the absurdity of supposing that there were philosophers, as soon as there were men, or the improbability of this supposition, that the commencement of the world was not believed till philosophers taught it; I would still ask, and the atheist would be puzzled to tell me, how the belief of the commencement of the world could be established, not only where philosophy and science flourished; but even universally, among nations who had no communication with these, and who were, themselves, the least civilised and the most ignorant? If it be said that, uncivilised and ignorant as they were, this opinion might arise and spread among them, because it was agreeable to their general notions, and analogous

to what daily experience shewed them, in innumerable instances, as well as to what they themselves were able to do; I must assert, on the contrary, this opinion was repugnant to the natural character of the human mind; to what we may feel in ourselves, and observe in all other men. All men are, in one respect, disciples of PROTAGORAS. Uninstructed nature teaches them, like him, that man is the measure of all things; that our sensations communicate certain knowledge; that every thing is what it appears to us to be; and that the things, which do not appear to us, are not. He who sees no inequality between two objects, affirms that they are equal, and we judge naturally of the reality of all objects by the perceptions we have of them. Antient astronomers believed the stars to be immovably fixed in a solid firmament, and never suspected them to incline to the pole, or to decline from it. The sea was thought to have no bounds, because the bounds of it were unknown, and the celestial bodies to be incorruptible, because no changes were discerned in them. Philosophers reason often, and the vulgar always, like the roses in FONTENELLE. A comparison taken from those insects, who live one day only, would have been more to his purpose; but roses were more worthy than insects to be offered to the marquis, and such a philosopher as FONTENELLE, might dispense with some want of precision in favor of his gallantry. Such as I have described it, is the natural character of the human mind. It infects all our judgments, moral as well as physical, till we learn to correct it by experience and a long course of reflection. This the uncivilised ignorant people, we speak of, could not do, and it was, therefore, agreeable to the general disposition of their minds, to believe that things had been always, such as they saw them to be.



THIS must have been universally the case, I think, in countries where the natural, unimproved character of the human mind prevailed alone. In those, which philosophy began to enlighten, some might doubt of this eternity; but some other philosophers, and the people in general, would continue to believe it. From whence can we imagine that they should derive a contrary opinion? Their experience shewed them, indeed, generation and corruption; that particular things began, and then ceased to be; but they saw, on the whole, an uniform series of the same revolutions of things; their ideas were conformable to the experience which framed them, and the eternity of the world was conformable to these ideas. Such considerations may serve to shew, what I have advanced, that the eternity of the world might have been the universal tradition, but that the commencement of it could not have been so, if it had not commenced, and men had not known that it had. On this hypothesis, all the consequences of it follow naturally. One consequence is, that, since the world and mankind began in time, the tradition of this beginning should be a little more or a little less obscurely, but universally known, and this consequence has followed. Another consequence is, that men, who believed the world to have been created, in the strict sense of the word, or that the confused matter of a chaos was reduced into a mundane system, must have believed, that this stupendous system was produced by some principle unknown to them, and superior to itself; for they could not fail to perceive, on the first notices of sense, and the first essays of reason, that the idea of an effect included necessarily, in it, the idea of a cause. This consequence followed likewise. Once more, altho the first men could doubt no more that some cause of the world, than that the world itself, existed, yet another consequence of this great event, and of

the surprife, inexperience, and ignorance of mankind muft have been much doubt and uncertainty concerning the firft caufe; and this likewise followed. CUDWORTH has endeavoured to prove, many have thought, and I incline to think, that the unity of a firft intelligent caufe was the original belief of mankind. But if it was fo, a belief foon fucceeded that gods, coadjutors to the firft, in making and governing the world, as well as inferior gods, and men, and the whole material world, proceeded from this eternal fource of all exiftence. I need not enumerate any of thofe various hypothefes, that arofe from fuch abfurd notions. Many of them have continued, to this day, and are held even by chriftians, whom revelation as well as reafon enlightens. The tradition of the fact, that the world began, and that of the opinion, that God is, have come down to us, tho not entirely without oppofition, from the moft early ages. But the manner of God's being, and of his working in the creation, and government of the world, have been matters of difpute in all ages, ever fince presumptuous mortals affected to defcend into particulars, to know any thing at all of one, or any thing more of the other, than that he is felf-exiftent and all-perfect, and that his will, relatively to his human creatures, is revealed to them in the conftitution of their fyftem.

To conclude. I am far from refting the proof of God's exiftence on the authority of this tradition, that the world began. I know that we are able to demonftrate this fundamental truth of all religion, whether it began or no. But fince we cannot reject this tradition without renouncing almoft all we know, and fince it leads men to acknowledge a fupreme Being, by a proof levelled to the meanefft underftanding, I think we ought to infift upon it. I am the more confirmed in thinking fo, by the effect it had in the difpute  
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of which I have given you some account. DAMON was embarrassed by it so much, that he had recourse at last to the wild hypothesis of DEMOCRITUS and EPICURUS, if we really know what that of the former was. This hypothesis is an abyss of absurdity. In that I left him, pitying from the bottom of my heart, for I love the man, his blindness and his obstinacy; the blindness of one who sees so clearly, and the obstinacy of one who shews so much candor, on other occasions.