

ESSAY

ON THE

USEFULNESS

OF

ORIENTAL LEARNING

Πολλὴ μὲν ἡ Ἑλλάς, ἐν ᾗ ἔνεισί περ ἀγαθοὶ
 ἄνδρες· πολλὰ δὲ καὶ τὰ τῶν βαρβάρων γῆ,
 ὅς τις πάντας καὶ διερυνᾷς, ζῆλῳ τοιῶτον
 ἐπιδόν, μήτε χρημάτων φειδομένης, μήτε
 πόνων· ὥς ὅτι ἔστιν εἰς ὅ, τι ἂν εὐκαιρότερον
 ἀναλίσκοιτε χρήματα. Socrates, ap. Platon.
 Phædon. p. 78. edit. Steph.



L O N D O N,
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To the REVEREND the
RECTOR and FELLOWS
OF
LINCOLN COLLEGE
IN THE
University of OXFORD

Reverend Sirs!

AMONG other Pleasures,
which attend the study of
the *Eastern* Languages, it
cannot be the least to an ingenu-
ous Mind to observe, that Grati-
tude was held in so just an esteem
by the Inhabitants of the East as

DEDICATION

to become in a manner proverbial
among them,

لَا يَذْهَبُ الْعَرَفُ بَيْنَ اللَّهِ وَالنَّاسِ

*Non perit Beneficium inter Deum & Ho-
mines*

is a pious as well as generous
sentiment, and loudly calls upon
the Person obliged to be mindful
of the Favours conferr'd upon him
and to make all possible Returns
to his Benefactor. Upon this Prin-
ciple I humbly presume to address
myself to You, and gratefully to
acknowledge, not only those As-
sistances by which I was enabled
in any measure to pursue my Stu-
dies, but likewise, those singular
Advantages of Education which
I enjoy'd in a Society remarkable
for producing Men of great Piety
and

DEDICATION.

and Erudition, and under Tutors adorn'd with useful and polite Literature, strict Vigilance, and such an agreeable Temper as demanded the Love as well as Regard of the happy Pupil; in a Society, in which Regularity and Discipline, Virtue and Learning, are observed cultivated and encouraged, and in which Good-Nature and Good Manners eminently concur. — *Hæc olim meminisse juvabit.*

A Veneration for the Memory of Dr. *Marshall*, the Deference due to his uncommon Acquisitions in Oriental Learning, the Provision he made for the Improvement of others by the valuable Treasure of *Eastern* Manuscripts and Books bequeath'd by him to the *Bodlejan* and *Lincoln* College Libraries, will,
in

DEDICATION.

in some measure, justify this Address to a Society, which may justly boast of so great an Ornament to it, of so excellent an Example of Religion Loyalty and Learning.

Permit me, Gentlemen, to pay this humble Tribute to true Merit, and to intreat You to receive, with your usual Candour and Condescension, this mean attempt of recommending a most useful Branch of Learning. The Design, I am persuaded, You will approve; my best, tho' poor, Endeavours I beg leave to introduce in the Words of the admired *Theocritus*,

Οἱ αὐταὶ (Μῦσαι) παρέχουσι, ἢ ὥς
ἐμὸς οἶκος ὑπάρχει,
Τόια φέρω.

Whatever

DEDICATION

Whatever Censure these may deserve, I have, at least, this Satisfaction, that they afford me an Opportunity of expressing my grateful Resentment of your Favours, and of professing that sincere Deference, with which I am,

GENTLEMEN,

Your most obliged and

most humble Servant,

PHILOGLOTTUS.

E R R A T A.

*Page 13. l. 18. for ii. r. xi. — p. 19. l. 20.
r. fc. — p. 22. l. 21. r. Antiquities. —
p. 29. l. 18. r. رخصة — p. 36. l. 25.
r. صغر. — p. 39. l. 20, and 21. for رني
r. ربي*

A N

ESSAY

On the USEFULNESS of

ORIENTAL LEARNING.

KNOWLEDGE in general is an object which the Mind of Man so eagerly pursues¹, that, I am persuaded, the candid Reader will favourably receive my endeavours to represent to him the Usefulness of that Learning from whence all valuable Knowledge has been originally derived, and to direct his views to those once famous parts of the world to which some of the most eminent Philosophers owed their greatest Attainments. It is among the ancient Easterns, that we must expect to find, at

¹ *Tantus est innatus in nobis cognitionis amor & scientiæ, &c. Cicero de Finibus, l. v. p. 393. ed. Davis.*

least, that Traditional Knowledge², which descended to Mankind, more pure and extensive than among others.

If thus much be allow'd, it will be easily granted, that the Searcher after Truth must find it purest at the Fountain-head, and that it must shine clearest in the East. That I am far from being singular in this sentiment, is evident from the general resort of the wisest among the ancient Sages thither, purely for the Improvement of their Minds³. *Thales* was the first of the *Sophi*, or Wise Men, famous in *Greece*, and is said to have learn'd his Astronomy, Geometry,

² The learned Mr. *Shuckford* has observed, that the Philosophy of the Ancients was not Disputative, but Traditional; that the Principles they went upon to teach or to learn by, were, not to search into the Nature of Things, or to consider what they could find by Philosophical Examinations, but, *Ask and it shall be told you; search the Records of Antiquity and you shall find what you enquire after*. See this Author at large on this head in *Pref.* to his *Connection*, vol. i. p. 47. & seq.

³ *Diodorus Siculus*, lib. i. *Biblioth. Procop. Gazæus* in *Reg. lib. iii. c. 2. p. 185. ed. Meurs.* *Huetii Demonstr. Evang. prop. 4. c. 8. § 19.* *Temple's Essay on Ancient and Mod. Learning*, 8^{vo} Edit. of *Miscellan. part, 2. p. 12, 22, 25.* *Lamy de Tabernac. l. ii. § 5.* *Wilkins, Dissertat. de Ling. Coptica*, p. 80.

Astrology, Theology in his Travels from his Country *Miletus*, to *Egypt*, *Phœnicia*, &c.⁴ *Pythagoras* was the Father of Philosophers and of the Virtues, and seems to have gone the farthest in search of Learning and Knowledge, and to have brought home the greatest Treasures. He went first to *Egypt*, where he spent twenty two Years in Study, Conversation, &c. in order to gain admittance and instruction in the Learning and Sciences, that were there in their highest Ascendant. Twelve Years he spent in *Babylon*, and in the Studies and Learning of the Priests or *Magi* of the *Chaldæans*. Besides these long abodes in those two regions, celebrated for ancient Learning, and where one Author, according to their calculations, says, he gain'd the Observations of innumerable Ages; he travelled likewise upon the same account into *Æthiopia*, *Arabia*, *India*, &c.⁵ *Plato* not

⁴ *Temple*, *ubi supra*, p. 11.

⁵ *Id. ibid.* p. 11, 12, 13. *Vid. Shuckford*, *Pref. to Connection*, vol. i. p. 51, &c. *Huetii Demonstr. Evangel. Prop. iv. c. 2. § 7.*

only travell'd over *Egypt* to this end ⁶, but even acknowledges, that the *Greeks* received their most valuable Learning, at least in a great measure, from the *Phœnicians* and *Syrians*, *i. e.* *Hebrews* ⁷; from whom ⁸, in particular from *Mōses*, he has borrow'd so largely, that *Numenius* the *Pythagorean* did not scruple to style him Πλάτων Μωσῆς ἀτρίκίζων ⁹. From these *Easterns* the *Greeks* learned the use of Letters ¹⁰ by means of *Cadmus* ¹¹. And indeed the etymology of this Name, which is plainly derived from the *Hebrew* קדמ, clearly discovers to us the obligations the *Greeks* are under to the

⁶ *Cicero*, l. v. de *Finibus*. *Lamy de Tabernac.* l. ii § 5.

⁷ *Plato* in *Cratylō*, p. 426. *Bochart. Phœlog.* l. iv. c. 24. *Shuckford*, *ubi supra*, p. 54. *Temple*, *ubi supra*, p. 8, 9, 12.

⁸ Ο ἐξ Εβραίων φιλοσοφῶν Πλάτων. *Clemens Alexandr. Stromat.* l. i. p. 321. ed. *Potter. cujus not. in loc. vid.* The curious Reader is desired to peruse this first Book of the *Stromat.* where he will find the subject under consideration treated at large by this most learned Father.

⁹ See this point fully handled by the learned *Ægid. Menagius*, *Observat. in Diog. Laert.* l. iii. *Seç. 6.*

¹⁰ See this point very learnedly and curiously treated by *Mr. Shuckford*, *Connection*, vol. i. p. 254, &c.

¹¹ Κάδμος ἀπ' ἧ γομφίας Εβραῖς ἔχθ' ἑλιδας. *Callimach. Herodot. in Terpsich.* *Lamy de Tabernac.* l. ii. c. 5. § 5.

Easterns for the first Elements of Knowledge¹²; and more especially perhaps to the *Hebrews* and *Chaldees*, so remarkably characterized by the Oracle,

Μῆνοι Χαλδαῖοι Σοφίῳ λάχον, ἣδ' ἄρ' Ε-
βραῖοι.

The Observatory on the Tower of *Babel* was probably the first; and we know the *Chaldæans* were very eminent Preceptors in Astronomy¹³. The *Egyptians*, the Parents of Arts and all Philosophical Science¹⁴, were the first who attempted to scrutinize and measure the Heavens, and, favour'd by the Serenity and Clearness of their Atmosphere¹⁵, introduced many useful Improvements in Astronomy¹⁶. From the *Easterns* *Solon* copied some perhaps of his most excellent Laws¹⁷; and, while the Names of *Mi-*

¹² *Lamy, ibid.* ¹³ *V. Marsham. Can. Chron. Sec.*
xvi. p. 504. ed. Franeq.

¹⁴ *Macrob. Saturn. l. i. c. 15. Somn. Scip. l. i. c. 19.*

¹⁵ *Alpini Hist. Ægypti Nat. l. i. c. 1. p. 4.*

¹⁶ *Macrob. Somn. Scip. l. i. c. 21. Alpini. ubi supra,*
l. i. c. 1. p. 2,

¹⁷ See *Biblioth. Biblica, Occaj. Annotat. N. 3. on Deu-*
teronomy. Huetii Demonstrat. Evang. Prop. iv. c. 2. § 6.
c. 11. § 3.

*tbridates*¹⁸ and *Avicenna* last, the *East-erns* must be acknowledged Adepts in Medicine. We are indebted to the *East-erns* almost for the Preservation of the several branches of Philosophy; which, by translating the *Greek* Writers, particularly into the *Arabick* Language, they rescued from the fatal Ignorance, that overspread the western hemisphere about the eleventh and twelfth centuries.

'Tis worth observing, that the *Arabick* Tongue is admirably adapted to the conveyance of Philosophical Knowledge; insomuch, that some particulars, which cannot be express'd without Barbarity in the *Latin* Idiom, are not only deliver'd with Accuracy, but even flow with Elegance, in the *Arabick*.

With these advantages, when the *Moors* were in possession of *Spain*, *Aristotle* in the *Arabian* dress travell'd thither; and when, upon his being translated out of *Arabick* into *Latin*, he became known to the Western World, he was so universally admired, that, after some years,

¹⁸ *Vid. Le Clerc. Hist. de la Medicine, Part. i. l. iii. c. 3. p. 390, 391.*

it was provided by publick Authority, that, No one should contradict *Aristotle*¹⁹.

The Orator cannot want inducements to declare in favour of Oriental Learning; if he observes the Sublimity of Thought, the Expressiveness and Clearness of Style, the entertaining method of alluring the Mind to Morality by beautiful Metaphors and pertinent Fables, which run through the Writings of the *Easterns*, he must acknowledge them Beauties worthy to be copied, at least, so far as the cooler fancies and imaginations of the *Westerns* will permit.

That an acquaintance with the *Eastern* Languages is necessary to compleat the Critick, even in his disquisitions on Profane Learning, may appear from the difficulties and obscurities which an ignorance of these has betray'd Men into. While some Criticks on that passage of *Virgil*,

durumque cubile
Inarime Jovis imperiis imposta Typhæo.
ÆN. IX. v. 715.

¹⁹ Vid. *Præfat. in Aldrich Logicam*, § 9.

have concluded *Inarime*, therein mention'd, to be the Island *Ifchia* or *Ænaria*, on the coast of *Naples*, south of *Prochyta*, and others have made it a Mountain of *Cilicia*, and others again have placed it in *Lydia*, our learned Countryman *Dickinson*²⁰ seems to have clear'd up the point, and to have corrected what we may presume to call an error in *Virgil*, by observing, that he has render'd by one Word, *Inarime*, what *Homer*, from whom he borrow'd this passage, expresses in two, ἐν Ἀράμοις, in *Aram*, or *Syria*, which is frequently call'd אֲרָם²¹, and that *Homer* alludes to the Account of the remarkably large Bed of King *Og* (whom he proves to be the same with *Typho*) transmitted to us by *Moses*²². This will appear probable from a view of the whole passage, which *Dickinson* reads thus,

²⁰ *Delphi Phœnicizantes*, c. 2. op. Crenii Fascic. 1.

²¹ The Inhabitants of *Syria* were known also among the *Greeks* by the Name of *Arimæans* or *Aramæans*, τῶς Σύρου Ἀράμοις δέχοντες, ἐς αὐτὸν Ἀράμοις λέγουσιν. *Vid. Strabo*, l. xiii. & l. xvi

²² *Deut.* iii. 11.

Γαῖα δ' ὑπεσονάχιζε Διὶ ὡς τερπικεραῶνῳ
 Χωομδύῳ, ὅτε τ' ἀμφὶ Τυφώϊ γαῖαν ἱμάσῃ
 Ἐν Αἰίοις, ὅθι φασὶ Τυφῶέῃ ἐμμεναι
 Δανάς.

Il. ii. l. 781, &c.

A knowledge of the *Hebrew* may likewise supply us with a more plausible account of the original of the Exclamation ΕΛΕΛΩ Ιδ' Ιδ', in the celebration of the *Oschophoria*, than that assign'd by *Plutarch*²³. The Biographer makes it only an Exclamation of Grief, occasion'd by the death of *Ægeus*, and, consequently, a mere sound expressive of a Sorrow inconsistent with the celebration of a Festival; whereas, if we suppose it to be a transcript from that glorious and joyful Ejaculation יהללו in use among the *Hebrews*, it appears an Address worthy the Deity, and very well adapted to the Festivity of the Solemnity²⁴. To mention one instance more to our present purpose; we have (says the learned

²³ In *Theser*.

²⁴ Vid. *Dickinson. Delphi Phœniciz. c. 6.*

*Shuckford*²⁵) *Sanchoniathon's* account of [the Creation] in *Eusebius*, and, if we throw aside the Mythology and false Philosophy, which those that lived after him added to his Writings, we may pick up a few very ancient and remarkable truths; namely, that there was a *dark*, and *confused Chaos*, and a *Blast of Wind or Air* to put it in a ferment or agitation; this Wind he calls ἀνέμῳ & Κολπία, not the Wind *Colpia*, as *Eusebius* seems to take it, but ἀνέμῳ & Col-Pi-ḥab קוֹל-פִּי-יָהּ, *i. e.* *The Wind or Breath of the Voice of the Mouth of the Lord*²⁶. These hints may in some measure shew how necessary the Eastern Learning and Languages are to a right understanding the Mythology and even Etymologies of the ancient Heathens, without which our

²⁵ *Preface to vol. i. of his Connection*, p. 42. See likewise *Tribbeckovii Verit. Creat. Mundi*, apud *Crenii Fascic. 1.* p. 289, 290.

²⁶ In this expression we have evident footsteps of the doctrine of a Trinity of Persons in that Divine Essence which created the Universe. The words in the original are ἐν τῇ Κολπίᾳ ἀνέμῳ, which may be most emphatically and truly explain'd and render'd by those words of the Psalmist, **בְּדִבְרֵי יְהוָה שָׁמַיִם נִעְשׂוּ וּבְרוּחַ פִּי**, **כָּל צְבָאִם** PSAL. xxxiii. 6.

Critical Knowledge must be very superficial.

Considerable improvements in our Civil and Canon Law might be drawn from those Memoirs of the first Empires of the World, and from those Canons and Constitutions of the Primitive Church, which are extant among the *Easterns*, but, which we are too much unacquainted with. We are likewise unhappily strangers to the Laws of the *Assyrian, Chaldean, Median, and Persian* Governments, which, from the Greatness and Duration of those Empires, we may assure ourselves, were very excellently contrived. *Selden* and *Bodinus*, who are justly esteem'd very eminent men in the Profession, have afforded us, in the use they have made of the *Eastern* Learning in this particular, sufficient specimens of the Advantages which may from thence arise to these most important branches of the Law ²⁷.

But, above all, when we consider, that Religion, which Man is most nearly concern'd to receive from the first and pu-

²⁷ *Castelli Orat de Ling. Arab.* p. 15.

rest spring, was in the East continued most uncorrupted in the succession of the Patriarchs, 'was in the East reveal'd to *Moses*, was in the East deliver'd to mankind by the Son of God himself, the Religious man and the Scholar must conclude, that the East has been the Reservoir of Religious as well as Natural Knowledge²⁸, and that therefore it must highly tend to promote both, to use all possible endeavours to renew an acquaintance with the ancient *Easterns*, and to retrieve the remains of that valuable Knowledge which once prevail'd amongst them.

The more clearly to evince the usefulness of the Oriental Learning, it may be proper to enter into a more particular detail of the excellencies of the *Eastern* Languages, and of those claims by which they severally challenge our esteem and attention.

(To begin therefore with some of those advantages which justly recommend the *Hebrew*. The Antiquity of this Language is such, that it has been reasonably sup-

²⁸ *Vid. Castell. ibid. p. 6.*

posed to be, not only the most ancient²⁹, but also, the original from which all other languages have been derived³⁰. The names of a vast number of People, who are descended from the *Hebrews*, do shew the Antiquity of both the Nation and Language;) the *Assyrians* derive their name from *Asbur*, the *Elamites* from *Elam*, *Jupiter*, or rather *Jovis Pater*, among the *Latins*, and *Ιάω* and *Εὐκ* a name of *Bacchus* among the *Greeks*³¹, are derived from *Jehovah*³², *Ceres* from *Gheres* which signifies *Grain*³³, &c. *Ηφαιστος*, or, ac-

²⁹ Vid. Targum. Jonathan. & Hierosol. ad Gen. xi. 1. Feuard. Not. 4. in Irenæi l. ii. c. 41. adv. Hæres. p. 164. ed. Grab. Strauchii Dub. Historic. & Chronolog. Pos. 4. ap. Crenii Fasc. 2. Exercit. Philolog. Historic. p. 113. Rollin, Hist. Ancienne, tom. ii. part. 2. p. 602. Shuckford's Connæct. vol. i. p. 112, &c. Th. Hayne Dissert. de Ling. Cognat. ap. Crenii Analecta, p. 23, 36, 37. Nicholson. Dissert. Philolog. de Univ. Orbis Linguis, p. 3. ap. Dissert. ex Occas. Sylloges Orat. Domin. script. ad Chamberlayn.

³⁰ Schickard. Horol. Ebræum, p. 141. Stackhouse, Appar. to Hist. of the Bible, p. xlv, xlv. Thoughts concerning Religion Natural and Revealed, p. 15. Lamy's Introd. to Holy Script. as translated by Bundy, b. ii. c. 5. Nicholson, ubi supra, p. 9.

³¹ V. Fulleri Miscell. Sacr. l. ii. c. 6. l. iv. c. 14.

³² Thoughts concerning Religion, p. 84. Fulleri Miscell. Sacr. l. ii. c. 6.

³³ Lamy, ubi supra.

cording to the *Doric* dialect, Ἀφαισῶ, a name of *Vulcan*, from אֵשׁ אֵב, or, according to the *Chaldee* dialect, אֵשׁ אֵב; *the Father or Inventor, of Fire*³⁴; and it is remark'd by several learned men, that there is no language in which some remains of the *Hebrew* are not to be found³⁵.

The knowledge of the *Hebrew* appears in some measure necessary, even, to our forming just apprehensions of the Laws of the ancient *Grecian* Sages. For, as the best Laws in *Greece* were but copies of the *Mosaic* Law (as some learned men in the last century have very fully shewn, and of which any impartial person may be easily convinced, if he will compare those Laws in their original languages, and consider how nearly the *Greek* approaches to an elegant translation of the *Hebrew*³⁶) it must be allowed, that the concisest and most certain method of gaining a right

³⁴ See the learned Dr. *Hutchinson's* note on *Xenophon de Cyri Institut.* l. vii. p. 526. of his excellent edition of that work, *Oxon.* 1727. and *Bochart. Geograph. Sacr. pars poster.* l. i. c. 12.

³⁵ *Lamy, ubi supra.*

³⁶ See *Universal History*, vol. iii. p. 331.

understanding of the drift, import, and excellency of those Laws must be a previous application to that original Code from which they were borrowed.

(*Aristotle*, we are assured, esteemed an acquaintance with the *Hebrew* learning so expedient to his disquisitions, that he made himself a master of that branch of literature, and was well versed therein ³⁷.)

(If we enquire into those excellencies which usually recommend the learned languages, we shall find the *Hebrew* to be an original and essential language, that borrows of none, but lends to all.) Some of the sharpest Pagan Writers, inveterate enemies to the religion and learning of both *Jews* and *Christians*, have allowed the *Hebrew* tongue to have a noble Emphasis and a close and beautiful Brevity ³⁸. The *Hebrew* is a language, for uniformity and simplicity, of all others the most easy, and yet, at the same time, so full of excellent wisdom and skill in the

³⁷ *Univ. Hist. ibid.* p. 330. *Tribbechorvii Verit. Creat. Mundi*, p. 255.

³⁸ Εχὶς ὃ καὶ τὰ βιβλίων ὀνόματα πολλὰ μὲν ἔμφασι πολλὰ δὲ συντομίαν. *Jamblich. de Myster.* § 7. c. 5.

contrivance of it, as, considering it merely as a language, will afford exercise for the acutest parts, and give pleasure to the most curious³⁹. The Old Testament is the rich treasury of all the sublimity of thought, moving tenderness of passion, and vigorous strength of expression, which are to be found in all the languages by which mortals declare their minds⁴⁰. One word is often a good description, and gives you a satisfactory account of the chief or distinguishing property or quality of the thing or person named. It would be no difficult matter for a man of diligence and good taste, competently skill'd in the *Hebrew* and *Classical Learning*, to prove, that the *Hebrew Bible* has every beauty and excellence that can be found in all the *Greek* and *Roman Authors*, and a great many more and stronger than any in all the most admired *Classics*⁴¹. If it be objected, that this representation seems to affect the Holy Bible rather than barely the *Hebrew lan-*

³⁹ *Preface* to Dr. Grey's *Hebrew Grammar*, p. 3.

⁴⁰ *Blackwall's Sacred Classics Def. &c.* p i. c. i.

⁴¹ *Id. ibid.*

guage, and that the world is stored with variety of excellent Translations; it may be answer'd, that this variety is an argument in favour of the study of the Original. For, amidst a diversity of Interpretations, how shall we be ascertain'd of the true one without resorting to the Original? and, in short, after we have puzzled and perplex'd ourselves with turning over and comparing the best Translations, we can only know, that the authors of such Translations have acquainted us with the particulars we read in them, but cannot assure ourselves, that the Holy Spirit has dictated such accounts in the Sacred Text ⁴². Add to this, that every Language has its idioms and peculiar beauties, which it is not possible to express or preserve in their native energy when translated into any other Language ⁴³. This

⁴² *Vid. Beveridge de Ling. Orient. Præstant.* p. 10.

⁴³ ΑΛΛ' ἔτι τινὰ καὶ καθ' ἕκαστον ἔθνος ἰδιόματι, ἀδιώχιστα εἰς ἄλλο ἔθνος. Διὰ φωνῆς ἑρμηνεύει· ἔπειτα καὶ εἰ οἶόν τε αὐτὰ μεθερμηνεύειν, ἀλλὰ τὴν γε διώκουν ἡκέτι φιλάτῃ τὴν αὐτῷ. *Jamblich. de Myster.* § vii. c. 5. *Il est remarquable que Dieu a donné à chaque langue un caractère, un génie particulier.* *Rollin Hist. Anc.* tom. xi. part. 2. p. 602. *Ockleii Introd. ad Ling. Orient.* p. 14.

is more especially observable of the *Hebrew*, which is a Language of a peculiar cast both in the contexture of its words and the cadence of its periods, and contains certain expressions, whose emphasis can no more be translated into another Language, than the water of a Diamond can be painted, without detracting from the Original ⁴⁴.

The awful idea with which the Great and Tremendous Name of God יהוה אלהים must fill every pious breast, the glorious intimation it gives us of a Trinity of Persons in One Divine Essence, the Majestick Representation therein of God as *Existence* in the abstract, and the many other most sublime and exalted notions implied therein, which no other Language affords words to express ⁴⁵, and in comparison of which the Sacred Name in other Languages appears almost low and insignificant: I say, this consideration can be no small inducement to the pious

⁴⁴ *Stackhouse's Appar. to Hist. of the Bible*, p. 32. *Beveridge ubi supra*. p. 18.

⁴⁵ The learned Reader is desired to peruse what *Fuller* has wrote on this subject, *Miscell. Sacra*. l. ii. c. 6. p. 202, 203. l. iv. c. 13. ed. *Lond.*

Scholar to make himself acquainted with this Language.

The last argument I shall mention in favour of the study of the *Hebrew* shall be drawn from the evident necessity there is, that those young Gentlemen, who apply themselves to the study of Divinity with a design to qualify themselves for the Ministerial Function, should be early acquainted with the Holy Scriptures in the Original Languages; for these must be our *dernier* resort in all doubtful cases and on all controverted points⁴⁶, and the Originals must at last determine us. These, we know, are the immediate Inspirations of God himself, and consequently Infalible, whereas Translations, as such, as

⁴⁶ *Latina quidem Lingua homines — duabus aliis ad Scripturarum Divinarum cognitionem opus habent, Hebraea scilicet & Graeca, ut ad exemplaria praecedentia recurratur, siquam dubitationem attulerit Latinorum interpretum infinita varietas. S. Aug. de Doctr. Christi l. ii. c. 11. n. 16. Ut Veterum Librorum fides de Hebraeis voluminibus examinanda est, ita & Novorum Graeci sermonis normam desiderat. S. Hieron. Epist. 28. ad Lucin. Biticum. Du Pin Hist. of the Canon of the O. and N. Testament, b. i. c. 10. § 5. where this learned writer has shewn the sentiments of the ancients with regard to the necessity there is of a knowledge of the Original Languages to make a good Interpreter of the Holy Scripture.*

well as Translators, must be subject to Mistakes.

Having thus endeavour'd to shew some of those advantages which attend a knowledge of the Biblical *Hebrew*, it may be proper, in the next place, to take a view of some of those which arise from an acquaintance with the *Rabbinical* and *Talmudical*.

It has been acknowledged by the Learned, and by a late great Critic⁴⁷ urged, as an 'ornament to the Sacred Page, that the New Testament abounds with *Hebraisms* and those modes of speech which were familiar to the *Jews* of the age in which that Divine Code was compiled; and, consequently, it must be a pursuit and labour worthy a Divine to trace out the proper sense and acceptation of such Modes of Speech in those ancient volumes of the *Hebrews* which were composed about the time of the commencement of the *Christian Æra*⁴⁸. The admirable use the learned *Lightfoot* has made of these

⁴⁷ Mr. Blackwall, *Sacred Classics*, part i. p. 1.

⁴⁸ *Vid. Relandi Prolegom. in Analecta Rabbin. p. 14. Helvici Tract. de Chald. Paraphras. p. 20.*

assurances sufficiently justifies this remark. The Writers of the New Testament frequently allude to the Manners, Rites, and Ceremonies prevalent in the age in which they lived, and of these the *Gemara* gives us the fullest representation. With how much greater a lustre must the apposite-ness, weight, majesty, and wisdom of those glorious Discourses, which flow'd from the mouths and pens of our Saviour and his Apostles, appear to one acquainted with these particulars, than to one a novice therein! Among our modern Commentators on the Old Testament, few, if any, have succeeded in their explanations of the Sacred Text, who have not consulted the *Rabbinical* Commentaries, made use of the aids which those afforded, and taken the true and proper signification of many words from them; which justifies *Munster's* remark, *Inepte illos agere, qui, contemptis Hebræis scriptoribus, libros V. Instrumenti interpretantur* ⁴⁹. That we may not seem to assert this without foundation, it may be

⁴⁹ *Vid. Relandi Prolegom. in Aiale&a Rabbin.*

proper to mention one instance to our present purpose. The relation of *Jephthab's Vow*, and the Execution of it, (JUDG. xi.) have much perplex'd Commentators, who have too generally read these words with a Copulative thus — *shall surely be the Lord's, AND I will offer it up for a burnt-offering*, and concluded, that *Jephthab* Sacrificed his Daughter⁵⁰; whereas, *Kimchi*, by duly attending to the Original, and observing that the *Vau* may be render'd by *or* instead of *and* (as it is EXOD. xxi. 15.) clears up the difficulty, and gives us this plain and easy Interpretation — *shall be the Lord's, or Holy to the Lord* (if it be not fit for a Sacrifice to God) *or* (if it be fit) *I will offer it up for a burnt-offering*¹.

The *Talmud* will be likewise useful to *Christians*², since it contains many things which not only illustrate the Antiquities of the New Testament, the Sacred Cho-

⁵⁰ V. *Josephi Antiq. Jud.* l. v. c. 7. § 10. ed. Hudson. *Marsham's Can. Chron. Sec.* ix. p. 170.

¹ V. *Ockleii Introd. ad Ling. Orient.* c. vii. p. 82. *Marsham. ubi supra*, p. 170.

² V. *Hayne Præfat. ad Dissertat. de Ling. Cognat. apud Crenii Analecæa*, p. 14, &c.

rography, and the Parables and Proverbs alledged and cited by our Blessed Saviour, but also affords considerable light to the Prophecies which relate to the *Messiah* ³.

Not to multiply divisions, we may, under this head, proceed to some arguments in favour of the *Chaldee*.

As every the least part of Scripture must be held inestimable by the *Christian* and Scholar, so, if the argument made use of above in recommendation of the *Hebrew*, viz. that the Books of the Old Testament are penn'd almost wholly in that Language, be of force, it will be likewise conclusive with regard to the *Chaldee*, the greatest part of the Books of *Daniel* and *Ezra* being wrote in that Language.

* The excellent use which may be made of the *Targums* must be likewise an encouragement to the study of this Language. As the *Jews* esteem them of equal authority with the *Hebrew* Scriptures ⁴ themselves, all arguments drawn from them in behalf of *Christianity* are

³ *Præfat. in Callarii Rabbiniſm.*

⁴ *V. Helvic. Tract. de Chald. Bibl. Paraphr. c. 4.*

of force against the *Jews* ⁵. Nor is this partial use the only one that is to be made of them; there are certainly many articles in them which favour and illustrate the *Christian* cause, and which, though they want the evident characteristicks of a Divine Original, yet, were certainly received from the Ancients, and convey'd down by the Schools of the Prophets ⁶. St. *John* very emphatically styles the Son of God the Λόγος or *Word*, agreeably to the Old Testament, as PSAL. xxxiii. 6. *By the Word of the Lord were the Heavens made*, &c. and, lest any one should imagine, that this style imported no more than the Decree or Will of God, the *Chaldee* Paraphrase acquaints us, that the Ancients understood it, in a much higher sense, of a Divine Person, ἰδιοῦς αἶον, which has a proper Hypostasis or Subsistence Personally distinct from the Father ⁷; which remarkably confirms the significance and propriety of this appellation made use of by St. *John*, who seems to have

⁵ See *Kidder's Demonstrat. of the Messias*, Part ii. p. 33. Part iii. p. 194, & seq. 2^d Edit.

⁶ *Helvic. ubi supra.* ⁷ *Id. ibid. & c. 5.*

intended

intended to give the *Jews* a full, distinct, and proper Idea of a Phrase become familiar to them, and so frequently occurring in the Paraphrases, and to have design'd to signify to them, that That *Word* of *Jekovah*, which, from the ancient traditions of the Prophets, they believed to have Created the World, &c. was the Person he now preached to them, that That *Word* is the Son of God, the Promised *Messiah*, &c. The same sentiments arise likewise from other similar passages; as, when the Evangelist styles the *Logos* *Μονογενής* or *Only begotten*, it appears from the *Jerusalem Targum* (in which the *Word* of *Jekovah* calls himself יְהוָה⁸) that the *Jews* were not unacquainted with this Epithet as applied to such a Person.

The Illustrations which the *Targums* afford us of the Sacred Writings in many instances represent to us the Sense of the Original elegantly and perspicuously. Perhaps, for some reasons, the *Chaldee* Paraphrases may be allow'd a precedence even to the *Greek* Versions; since not only their

⁸ *Id. ibid.*

Authority in the esteem of the *Jews* (as has been observed) renders the Arguments, drawn from them in defence of *Christianity*, more conclusive with regard to those Opposers of it; but, they likewise supply us with truly pious and orthodox Interpretations of many Passages relating to the *Messiah*⁹, vindicate them from the perverse constructions and misapplications of some *Rabbins* and others who have follow'd them, and expressly assert the Divinity of the *Messiah*¹⁰. They afford us also numerous and very remarkable notices of and attestations to the Doctrine of the ever-blessed Trinity¹¹; These are advantages not so apparent in the *Greek* Versions. These Paraphrases (especially as some of them were wrote before the time of our Blessed Saviour¹², when, 'tis generally acknowledged, the *Hebrew* Text was free from the suspicion of being corrupted) may be farther of use to us in

⁹ *Id. ibid.* c. 7, 9.

¹⁰ *Id. ibid.* c. 6.

¹¹ *Id. ibid.* c. 5.

¹² *Onkelos* (whose Paraphrase on the Pentateuch) and *Jenathan Ben Uziel* (whose Paraphrase on the Prophets are still extant) flourish'd about forty years before *Christ*. *Beveridge. de Ling. Orient. Præf.* p. 20.

confirming

confirming the genuine reading and purity of the *Hebrew* Text; not that we are absolutely to judge of and determine the Reading of the Original from these or any other Versions, but, we may esteem them as very material evidences in attesting the true and genuine Reading of the Text, and thereby vindicating it from the mistaken glosses of other Translations and Interpreters ¹³. I shall mention but one more particular in which these Paraphrases may be highly serviceable to us; and that is, the Insight they give us into the Meaning of some passages of Scripture, which a peculiar construction or form of expression, or some words which occur perhaps but once or rarely, have rendered obscure ¹⁴.

The Conciseness, and withal, Perspicuity of Style, which are peculiar to the *Arabick* Language, and enable the *Arabian* to express that in few words, which, in other Languages, requires tedious Periphrases; those Beauties in this Language

¹³ The Reader will find many instances to our present purpose in the treatise of *Helvicus* before cited, c. 8.

¹⁴ *Vid. Helvic. ibid.* c. 10.

which cannot be preserved in a Translation; the Elegance with which the Words are ranged, and the Sweetness with which they flow and reflect the Sense undisturbed and clear; even the accurate and significative Proportion of their Letters to each other, by which they heighten or lower the Thought; the great care *Arabick* authors have taken to exclude whatever may seem unharmonious to a delicate ear, cannot but recommend this Language to the Orator¹⁵. (If we admire the *Italian* Language for its Frequency of Vowels, we ought surely to pay the same regard to the *Arabick*, which, in words genuinely *Arabick*, never suffers two Consonants to concur, but always interposes a Vowel, or, at least, softens that harshness of sound, which the concurrence of two Consonants often occasions, by such means as the Language is capable of without obscuring the Sense.)

¹⁵ See the learned Dr. *Pococke's* Oration in praise of the *Arabick*, from which many of these observations relating to that Language are borrow'd.

The Copiousness of this Language is another recommendation of it ¹⁶; for, though what is now left us be only *قليل من كثير* *a little out of a great deal*, yet even these venerable ruins surprize the Reader with the greatest Variety of Synonymous Words, insomuch, that one of their Lexicographers has enumerated above Twelve Millions of Words obsolete and in use. But, that we may not imagine, that this *Copia* renders the Language Verbose, it may be proper to observe, that the *Arabick* is well supply'd with Words so full and comprehensive as, singly, to express entire Sentences. Thus *قاصرة* signifies a Woman so very fond of her Husband as to look on or speak to no one besides him; *ريسة*, imports the Period of Time, within which, if the Husband does not return, the Wife is at liberty to marry another ¹⁷.

(Among other studies, the *Arabians* applied themselves to Genealogies and History; they were likewise eminent in Me-

¹⁶ V. Castelli Orat. de Ling. Arab. p. 11.

¹⁷ Castell. *ibid.* p. 11, 12. where the Reader will find many instances to this purpose.

dicine, but they directed their studies principally to the Knowledge and Purity of their own Language.) The better to cultivate this, they labour'd to excel in Poems and Dissertations. The former were their *Encyclopædiæ* and Pandeets of Wisdom, and to their Poets they were careful to pay very singular and distinguishing Honours. Their Acquisitions in all the branches of Philosophy were truly valuable. For, after they were somewhat recover'd from that general devastation which *Mohammed's* Conquests brought upon them, encouraged by the Honours which *Almamon* (the seventh Chalif of the family of the *Abbasidæ*) paid to Learning¹⁸, the Arts and Sciences flourish'd so quickly and generally among them, that those Regions, which before were condemn'd and slighted as rude and barbarous, now became the Mart of Literary Commerce, and an Acquaintance with that Language, which had been in use only among the Natives, now became a part of Politeness necessary to distinguish

¹⁸ *V. Le Gallois, Trait. des Bibliothèques, p. 145.*

such as would appear above the Vulgar. Whatever *Greece* afforded, worthy to adorn their Soil and Climate, they transplanted, and improved by such Discoveries as the Industry of Men, not inferior to the *Greeks* themselves in Genius and Assiduity, could make. We cannot therefore but believe, that, were the Remains of these indefatigable Writers suffer'd to appear, they would lay open many noble treasures of useful Knowledge, and (as some have dared to promise the world) would recover several valuable Fragments to the works of the most eminent Writers of *Greece* and *Rome*¹⁹.

It has been observed by the great *Saville* (in his commendations of the industry of the *Easterns* in promoting the study of Medicine and the Mathematicks)

¹⁹ The learned Dr. *Cassell* assures us, that the *Arabians* and *Syrians* are possess'd of some Works of *Plato*, *Aristotle*, *Livy*, *Galen*, &c. and even of some Writings of the *Christian* Fathers, which the *Europeans* are utterly strangers to, *ubi supra*, p. 14. and we learn from the *Sieur Le Gallois*, that there are in a Library at *Fez* all the Books of *Livy*, with those of *Pappus* of *Alexandria*, a great Mathematician, those of *Hippocrates*, *Galen*, and many other celebrated Authors, whose Writings never came compleat to us. *Trait. des Biblioth.* p. 146.

that

that the Praxis of the *Arabians* is allow'd by all infinitely to exceed that of the ancient *Greeks*; and it is the opinion of the very learned *Bainbridge*, that there is scarce the least particular in the Systems of the Astronomers of his time which did not appear before in the observations made by the Learned in the East. In short, to the *Easterns* we owe some of the most noble discoveries in Philosophy, and much greater advantages might we reap from their labours, did not our ignorance deprive us of them. We despise the *Arabian* Philosopher, because not better known to us, and because speaking to us by Interpreters. We charge the most elegant Authors with the Barbarisms of their Translators, and, having puddled only in some dirty channels, superciliously conclude the Fountain to be almost choak'd with mud and filth, and by this means perhaps deprive Learning of its more pure and limpid streams. Happy would it be, could we read *Alfarabius*, *Avicenna* and *Avenpace* in the Language in which they wrote; we might then be deem'd not incompetent

competent Judges of the Learning of the *Arabians*.

I particularize these, from among many others, because perhaps something more known to us than others. *Alfarabius* was esteem'd scarce inferior to *Aristotle* himself, and was justly admired for that beauty and perspicuity of style with which he lays open the *Arcana* of Philosophy. Of this we have a remarkable testimony in an experiment made by *Avicenna*, who, after he had read over *Aristotle's* *Metaphysics* forty times, and had despair'd of fathoming the genuine sense of them, upon first looking into *Alfarabius's* explication, gain'd a full and distinct comprehension of Truths and Principles so involved and refined, and express'd his exultation on that occasion (as it were by another *Pythagorean* hecatomb) by making largesses to the poor.

The masterly skill and knowledge of the *Arabians* in the art of Healing ²⁰ may, in some measure, appear from hence; that they introduced Chymistry into Phy-

²⁰ *V. Le Clerc Hist. de la Medicine, p. 771, & seq.*

sick²¹, and several simple Medicines which the *Greeks* do not mention, such, among others, are several Cathartics, as *Manna*, *Senna*, *Cassia*, &c. which are more agreeable than those made use of by the *Greeks*²²; that they treat of the Small-Pox and other Distempers which the *Greeks* are silent about²³; that some of the most eminent Physicians have borrow'd their Prescriptions from *Arabick* Writers; and I²⁴ have been assured by men of experience and veracity, that our best Medicines Antidotes Plaisters and the like are almost the very same with those we meet with in *Avicenna*, a Physician whose Reputation and Authority among the *Africans* and *Asiatics* infinitely exceed those of *Galen* and *Hippocrates* among the *Greeks* or any other *Europeans*²⁵.

²¹ *Milward's Trallian. Revivisc.* p. 121. *V. Le Clerc, ubi supra*, p. 774.

²² It would take up too much room to mention here several other excellent Medicines for which we are indebted to the *Arabians*. See *Le Clerc, ubi supra*, p. 771, 772.

²³ *Le Clerc, ibid.* p. 776, 777.

²⁴ *Castell, ubi supra*, p. 16.

²⁵ *Id. ibid.* p. 16. *Vid. Le Clerc, ubi supra*, p. 779, & seq.

The admired excellencies of this Author will, I hope, excuse my enlarging a little on his Character. He was, not only an elegant Poet and an accurate Grammarian, but also, (as characterized by the learned *Tho. Greaves*) scarce inferior to the *Stagyrite* in Philosophy, equal to the greatest Masters of Oratory in Eloquence, and unfortunate only in undergoing the common fate of the best Authors and suffering from his Interpreters²⁶

Avenpace, to whose signal attainments in Philosophical Knowledge *Maimonides* has endeavour'd to do justice, was as excellent a Poet as a Philosopher.

Averroes, tho' regarded sometimes in the Schools as a second *Aristotle*, I pass over, because his reputation was not equal to that of the Triumvirate above-mention'd (*Alfarabius Avicenna* and *Avenpace*.)

(To the *Arabians* we owe the invention of *Algebra*, the expeditious method we

²⁶ *Vid. Ockleii Introd. ad Ling. Orient.* c. 12. The very learned Dr. *Castell* has enter'd into a detail of several errors and obscurities, which some, who have taken upon them to explain *Avicenna*, have run into; *ubi supra*, p. 16, & *seq.* See also *Le Clerc*, *ubi supra*, p. 778.

now use in our Calculations, and, not only that admirable perfection to which *Arithmetick* is brought, but, even the use and discovery of Figures²⁷, which they received from the *Indians*²⁸.

(The *Arabian Annals* and *Histories*, which are very numerous, are wrote with singular Art, their remarkable Occurrences Laws and Customs are described in an elegant Style, and their military Achievements related almost with the same Spirit and Energy with which they were perform'd. Were we conversant in their *Histories*, we should no longer dream of *Mohammed's* pendulous Tomb, or expose ourselves to the ridicule of his Followers by charging them with imaginary Errors instead of refuting real ones. As to Theological Points, if it be incumbent on Christian Divines to know and confute the impious Doctrines of *Mohammed*, it is no less necessary for them to be acquainted with his Language, without

²⁷ The Word *Cipher* is a proof of this, it being plainly derived from the *Arabick* *ḥisr*.

²⁸ *Vid. Not. in Anonym. Persam de Siglis Arab. & Pers. Astronom. a Gravio edit. p. 2.*

which

which their endeavours towards those ends will be ineffectual.

(The *Arabick* Language is very ancient, and, we are assured by *Aben Ezra Maimonides Kimchi* and other of the most eminent Rabbins, that, the knowledge of it is very expedient in order to our becoming acquainted with the *Hebrew*²⁹. From hence we may deduce the Etymology of several Names which occur in the Holy Scriptures, in deriving of which, some, thro' their ignorance of the *Arabick*, have render'd themselves obnoxious to the just censure of the Critick. And, as the *Hebrew* and *Arabick* have many Roots in common betwixt them, we must often have recourse to the *Arabick* for the better explaining of those *Hebrew* Words, whose signification is doubtful³⁰ and become obscure thro' the mistakes of Translators.) Thus, that passage HAB. iii. 17. (according to our Version and many others) *Altho' the Fig-Tree shall not blos-*

²⁹ *Nicholson. Dissertat. Philolog. p. 10.*

³⁰ *V. Cl. Hayne Præfat. in Dissertat. de Ling. Cognat. ap. Crenii Analecæta, p. 10. Ockley's Introd. ad Ling. Orient. c. 10.*

form — (which contradicts the observations of the Naturalists in *Palestine* and all *Asia*, who assure us, that the Fig-Tree does not bloussom) is more truly express'd in the *Arabick*, *Altho' the Fig-Tree shall not produce fruit*. Thus again, It is foretold of the *Messiah*, Num. xxiv. 17. (according to several Versions) that he should *destroy all the children of Seth*, that is, *all Mankind*, a Character inconsistent with the gracious ends of that Divine Person who *came, not to destroy men's lives, but, to save them*; but the *Arabick*, after the *Chaldee* and *Syriack*, will clear up this difficulty by rendering the Word וְקִרְקַר *And He shall reign over*, instead of *He shall destroy*, agreeably to the Universality of that Government over the Sons of Men, so clearly ascribed by the Prophets to the *Messiah* ³¹.

There are likewise many useful observations, and some Ceremonies mention'd in the Bible ³², which may be best ex-

³¹ The curious Reader may see more instances to this purpose in the learned *Castell's* Oration before-cited, p. 25, &c.

³² That Text of the Prophet *Ezekiel*, (xxi. 21.) *The*
plain'd

plain'd by the *Arabick Books* ³³.

Another advantage flowing from a knowledge of this Language is, that it admits us to a more intimate acquaintance with some of the 'best Rabbins, who wrote in this Language ³⁴. *Maimonides* penn'd all his compositions (except his *יד חזקה* in *Arabick*. The Author of *Cozri*, *Abu Zachariah*, *R. Joseph*, a Disciple of *Maimonides*, *Aubhado' zzaman* *Abu'l Baracat*, *R. Tanchum*, *R. Abra-*

king of Babylon flood at the parting of the way — to use divination: he made his Arrows bright, &c. affords an instance to our present purpose; for, in order to explain the superstitious Rite here mention'd, we may learn from the great *Pococke* (*Not. in Specim. Hist. Arab. p. 327, 328, 329.*) That the *Arabians*, when they had any very momentous business to deliberate on and transact, consulted certain Arrows; three of which were shut up in a vessel, one inscribed *امرني ربي* *My Lord hath commanded me*, another with *نهاني ربي* *My Lord hath forbidden me*, and the third was without any Inscription. Upon drawing these, if the Arrow which bore the Commanding Inscription came out, interpreting this as a Divine Direction so to do, they Proceeded; if that with the Prohibiting Inscription, they Desisted; and, if the blank Arrow appear'd, they put it in again, and drew 'till one of the others came out. *Vid. Beveridg. de Ling. Orient. Præst. p. 32, 33.*

³³ *Du Pin, Can. of O. and N. Test. B. i. c. 8. § 3.*

³⁴ *V. Pocock. Orat. de Ling. Arab. p. 17.*

ham Ben Dior, and many others, who, for the most part, were men of greater Learning than the Western Rabbins, convey'd their labours to the world in this Language ³⁵.

The Translations, which both *Jews* and *Christians* have made of the Holy Scriptures into this Language, are by no means to be overlook'd. The Version of the Pentateuch, printed by *Erpenius* at *Leyden* in 1622, demands our notice, as the author of it has exactly follow'd the *Hebrew* Text ³⁶, word for word; except, that in some passages he has alter'd the Phrase, when the Scripture attributes certain things to God, which, literally taken, belong only to Creatures; in lieu of which, he makes use of such expressions as he judges more suitable to the Divine Majesty: As for instance, whereas he should have translated this passage, *Exod. xxix. 45, 46. I will dwell among the children of Israel*; he says thus, *I will make*

³⁵ *Ockleii Introd. ad Ling. Orient. c. 10.*

³⁶ *Erpen. Dedicat. p. 6, 7. Præfat. p. 1. huic edit. præfix. Du Pin, ubi supra. Dissert. Critique sur נודעת' Exod. vi. 3. par Souciet, p. 444.*

my Glory to dwell among the children of Israel ³⁷.

The *Arabisms*, with which the Book of *Job* abounds, cannot but recommend this Language to the study of those who would enter into the sublime and affecting strains of that Divine Composition ³⁸.

(The usefulness of the *Persian*, as well as *Arabian* Language may, in some measure, appear from the knowledge both *Persians* and *Arabians* had of Astronomy, History, Chronology, and Geography. The *Epochæ* of that learned Prince *Ulug Beig* are of great importance for correcting a vast number of errors in our books of Chronology ³⁹), especially in the manner those *Epochæ* are publish'd ⁴⁰ by that indefatigable Scholar Mr. *Greaves*, who has reduced them to the *Julian* Period and the vulgar *Dionysian Æra* of *Christ*, and added a *Praxis* of the Tables.

³⁷ *Du Pin, ubi supra.*

³⁸ The excellent use which the learned *Schultens* has made of the *Arabick*, in his Commentary on the Book of *Job*, sufficiently confirms this argument.

³⁹ *Birch's Life of Greaves, p. 35.*

⁴⁰ In *Quarto, Lond. 1650.*

As a specimen of their Geographical Learning, I beg leave to refer the Reader to the Tables of *Abulfeda*⁴¹; which, if the encomiums of *Ramusius*, the use made of them by *Castaldus*, and the regard with which *Ortelius* speaks of them, may have any weight, justly merit that Esteem which they have possess'd among the Learned. The excellent *Erpenius* lamented, that the world was so long deprived of them, and intended to have publish'd them, but, prevented by death, left the execution of this design to the great *Schickard*; who, in his *Tarick Persicus*, has enrich'd the Republick of Letters with many noble Discoveries, unknown even to the *European Literati*, and for which he was wholly indebted to the Geographical Tables of *Abulfeda*⁴².

⁴¹ *Vid. Ockleii Introd. ad Ling. Orient.* c. 10.

⁴² The completion of this Work seems to have been reserved for the peculiar Accuracy Industry and Learning of Mr. *Gagnier*, who has, not only prepared the Geography of *Abu'l Feda* for the Press, but, made some progress in the Printing thereof; and 'tis much to be wish'd, that he was encouraged and enabled to proceed in an Undertaking so laborious and expensive, and which, in all probability, would be of very great Service to the Publick.

This

This *Canon*, or *Rectificatio Terrarum*, of *Abulfeda* was finish'd about the year 1321, and appears to be compiled from the principal *Arabian* Writers, particularly *Al Birunius*, whom *Greaves* represents as a very great Master of the Mathematics⁴³. Nor did the *Arabians* want other excellent Geographers; the works of *Ebn Haukal*, *Al Edrisi*, *Ebn Chordadabah*, *Yacutus al Hamawæus*, not to recite a multitude of other Authors, are standing monuments of their great knowledge in this delightful branch of Learning. And here I beg leave again to mention that eminent Prince *Ulug Beig*, whose Geographical Table, as publish'd by the excellent *Greaves*, discovers that Prince's knowledge of Geography, as his Astronomical Tables do his great accuracy in Astronomy.

The singular diligence and exactness, with which *Nassir Eddin* cultivated and promoted the study of Geometry and Astronomy, have placed him upon a level with, or, perhaps, render'd him superior

⁴³ See *Greaves's* Preface to *Chorasmia & Marwarahnab-ræ Descriptio ex Tabuli: Abulfeda, &c.* Lond. 1650.

to, the most celebrated Mathematicians of Antiquity. We are inform'd by *Abul Pharajius*, that he was conversant in, and a great master of, all the Sciences; that he invited to him many of the best Mathematicians, in order to their joining in making Observations on the Heavenly Bodies; and that the Colleges in the territories of the Mogul were put under his direction; that he wrote many Treatises in Logick, Natural Philosophy, Metaphysics, upon the Theory of the Planets, in Geometry and Astronomy, and that he was author of a Treatise in the *Persian* Tongue, highly commended, upon Moral Philosophy ⁴⁴. The *Tabulæ Illechnicæ*, which were compiled under his direction, are a proof of the great perfection to which Astronomy was brought in the East. The lights which this Author has afforded also to Geography render him truly valuable; the very obscure accounts, which *Strabo*, *Ptolemy*, and other Geographers of first note both among the *Greeks* and *Latins*, have given us of the

⁴⁴ Vid. *Abul Pharajii Hist. Dynast.* p. 548, 549. ed. Pocock.

more remote parts of *Asia*, have been much clear'd by and received great improvements from this Author; and, in fine, 'tis to his indefatigable industry, either in Travelling himself over, or in Extracting with the utmost care and exactness from the Writings of the *Indians* and *Arabians* accounts of, those Tracts of Land, which were, in a manner, if not absolutely, *Terra incognita* to the Ancients, that we are highly indebted for our knowledge of them.

The acquaintance the *Arabians* had with Astronomy appears from those Astronomical Terms which the *Westerns* have borrow'd from them, as *Zenith*, *Nadir*, &c. but much more conspicuously from the valuable labours of *Shah Cholgi*, *Albattani*, *Alfergan*, *Costa Ebn Luka*, *Nassir Eddin* and *Kushgi* (who, by the way, was the Author of a Treatise of the Elements of Arithmetick as well as Astronomy.) The great *Alphonfus* was chiefly indebted to the *Jews*, *Moors*, and *Arabians* for those excellent Tables which bear his name⁴⁵. Mr. *Greaves* assures us,

⁴⁵ Vid. *Gravii Praefat. in Astronom. quædam ex Shah Cholgi*, p. 4.

that

that the Commentaries of *Makmud Shah Cholgi* alone are sufficient to correct many Errors in Astronomy, to refute many Assertions in Chronology too easily received upon the authority of *Joseph Scaliger*, and to explain and illustrate a variety of things in the *Arabian* writers, especially the Mathematicians⁴⁶. I can't conclude this head without endeavouring to do justice to the Character of *Al Mamon*, which deserves a place among those of the greatest Princes. His Learning and Munificence to learned Men merit applause. It was this Prince who invited Men of Letters from all parts, and who, having search'd out and discover'd some of the most valuable books in the *Greek* Libraries, and causing them to be translated into *Arabick*, in a short time brought Learning and useful knowledge to the highest pitch among the *Arabians*; and 'tis to his Patronage we owe the Preservation, among the *Arabians*, of many remains of the ancient *Grecian* Sages, which the *Greeks* themselves confess and lament the want of.

⁴⁶ *Vid. Grav. ibid. p. 6.*

It must be own'd, that the loss of those many valuable Records, which, before the rise of *Mohammed*, were in the possession of the *Christian Arabs*, is much to be regretted by the *Christian Scholar*; but, lest we should imagine, that the ravages of the *Saracens* and *Turks* have altogether destroy'd these Treasures of Learning, we are told by *Erpenius*, upon the relation of very credible eye-witnesses, that there is at *Fez* one Library which contains above thirty two thousand Volumes⁴⁷; we are assured by Mr. *Thomas Greaves*, that the *Arabians* are still furnish'd with many Libraries so plentifully stored with Books, as to satiate (if I may be allow'd to borrow *Tully's* Phrase) the most greedy *Helluo Librorum*, and to illustrate the secrets of Philosophy and every branch of Learning⁴⁸.

⁴⁷ *Le Gallois Trait. des Biblioth.* p. 146.

⁴⁸ *Vid. Th. Greaves, Orat. de Ling. Arab. utilitate, &c.* p. 14. I beg leave also here to address the Reader in the words of Dr. *Pococke* to the like effect, *Sunt Arabibus, in omni Literarum genere, gazæ nondum reclusæ, quibus erudendis manum admoveere, quo minus infra studiorum tuorum gravitatem existimes, habes, ubique fere gentium, nobilissimos viros & consilio & exemplo præeuntes. Præfat. Specim. Hist. Arab.* p. 9. *Vid. Le Clerc, Hist. de la Médecine*, p. 771.

In fine, whatever parts of the system of Learning our genius leads us to, whether Divine or Human Literature engages our attention and study, we shall find the *Arabick* Language highly conducive to our acquisitions therein.

To those, who make the Holy Scriptures their study, it will be a sufficient recommendation of the *Syriack* Language to urge the Antiquity of the *Syriack* Version of the Old and New Testament; which is generally agreed to have been made in the time of *Thaddæus* the Apostle, and bears evident characteristicks of Antiquity. The Version of the New Testament is as ancient as the first Age of the *Christian* Church, and is assign'd to the Apostles themselves, or, at least, to Apostolical Men their Disciples. The Style of it is truly elegant, and it is observable, that in the ancient and genuine Edition of it, publish'd by *Widmanstadius*, the second Epistle of *St. Peter*, the second and third Epistles of *St. John*, the Epistle of *St. Jude*, the *Apocalypse*, and the Accusation of the Adultress, (which last particular is omitted likewise by
S. Chry-

S. Chryſoſtom, Theophylaſt, and Nonnus, are wanting. Theſe parts of the Sacred Writings not having been, at the time when this Tranſlation was made, admitted by the publick conſent of the Church into the Canon of Scripture. However, when thoſe Portions of Holy Writ were ſo admitted, they alſo were tranſlated into the *Syriack* Language. To this argument we may add, that the *Syriack* was the Language in which our Bleſſed Saviour converſed; that the *Syriaciſms* and even *Syriack* Words, which occur in the New Teſtament, ſeem to make the knowledge of this Language neceſſary to thoſe that would clearly underſtand the true import of ſuch Words and Phraſes ⁴⁹.

The expediency of an acquaintance with the *Syriack*, in order to the attaining a perfect knowledge of the *Hebrew*, is no ſmall inducement to our applying ourſelves to the ſtudy of it. And ſo remarkable is the Connection and Affinity between theſe two Languages, or rather Dialects, that thoſe great and excellent

⁴⁹ *Vid. Beveridge, de Ling. Orient. Præſtant.*

Interpreters of the Holy Scripture, the *LXX. Symmachus, Theodotion, and Aquila*, made the Idiom of the *Syriack*, as it were, their compass to steer by in their Translations of ambiguous and difficult passages in the *Hebrew* ⁵⁰.

The argument used in favour of the *Syriack* Language, *viz.* the Antiquity of the *Syriack* Version of the Old Testament, will hold *a fortiori* with regard to the *Samaritan*. For the *Chaldee-Samaritan* Version of this part of Scripture (according to the learned *Walton*) was made before the Commencement of the *Christian Æra*. As to the *Samaritan Pentateuch*, there are very plausible reasons to shew, that it is not later than that of *Esdra*s; namely, the improbability, that the *Samaritans* should make profession of the Law of *Moses* so long without having the *Pentateuch*; that the *Cutheans* (who came from *Persia* and *Affyria*, where they rather made use of the *Chaldee* Characters) should have taken the *Canaanitish* Characters, if they had not had the

⁵⁰ *Fulleri Miscell. Sacr.* 1. iii. c. 20.

Law written in those Characters. Had they received the Sacred Books after the time of *Esdra*s, in the time of *Manassés*, they would not only have had the Pentateuch, but also all the rest comprized in the Canon of the Sacred Books written by *Esdra*s; but the ancient *Samaritans* neither had nor acknowledged any other to be Sacred but the Pentateuch. It seems then probable, that the *Samaritans* had their Pentateuch before *Esdra*s made up his Canon; and, that the *Samaritan* Pentateuch which we have is the same with that which the *Samaritans* had formerly, seems sufficiently evident from many passages of the Ancients¹.

In short, these ancient Versions are of the greatest use, both to preserve and corroborate the original Text. They were publish'd before Heresy and Impiety were grown so barefaced in the Church of God, before so many various Readings had crept into the Sacred Text, and before the Idiom and Propriety of the *He-*

See this point largely discuss'd by the learned *Monf. Du Pin*, in his *History of the Canon of the Old and New Testament*, B. i. c. 5. § 2, 3.

brew Tongue were become strange and uncouth to the Translators²

The *Æthiopick* Language will be of use to us in interpreting Scripture, as it affords us the Etymologies and proper Significations of several *Hebrew* and *Arabick* words, which we should be otherwise at a loss to discover. It bears a very near affinity to the *Arabick*, is confined to almost the same rules of Grammar, and, in particular, the formation of the Conjugations in both Languages is in a manner the same. The *Æthiopick* is useful, not only in leading us to a knowledge of the Writings and History of the *Habessinians*, but also, in illustrating the other *Eastern* Languages; thus the word ملاك (*Angelus*) is not derived from the *Arabick* ملك (*Possedit, Dominatus est*) but from the *Æthiopick* ለእን (*Misit, Legavit.*) So likewise an *Apostle*, or *Person commission'd* or *sent*, is in the *Alcoran* term'd حواري the root of which word is not to be met with in the *Arabick* Lexicons, but is derived from the *Æthiopick* ሰወረ (*Ivit,*

² Vid. *Beveridg. de Ling. Orient. præf.* p. 21, &c.

Incessit)

Incessit) he went, which is the proper business of an Apostle or Person sent, and implies the execution of his commission³. So likewise as to the *Hebrew*, while some Authors have derived the name of *Adam* from the *Hebrew* אָדָם which signifies to *redden*, and have contented themselves with that insipid *Etymon*, on a supposition that the first Man was form'd out of Red Earth, the *Æthiopick* አዲስ (which signifies *beautiful*) supplies us with a reason for assigning this name to that noble Creature who came so perfect and beautiful out of the hands of his Omnipotent and Allwise Creator⁴.

It has been already observed, that the Wisdom of the *Egyptians* was such and so generally admired, as to draw the most eminent Philosophers of Antiquity into *Egypt* for Improvement and Instruction, and their reputation in this respect was so great in the time of *Herodotus*, as to in-

³ Ocklei's *Introd. ad Ling. Orient.* c. 13. *Ludolf. Comment. in Hist. Æthiop.* p. 207. The Reader is referr'd for some further specimens to this purpose to the learned *Ludolfus, Comm. in Hist. Æthiop.* p. 202. & seq.

⁴ *Vid. Ludolf. Hist. Æthiop.* i. i. c. 15. & *Comment.* 207.

duce him to style them *Σοφώτατοι ἀνθρώπων*⁵. The *Coptic* being the most ancient Language except the *Hebrew*⁶, we may reasonably expect to find some remains, at least, of these Treasures of Wisdom, by pursuing them in their proper channel, the *Egyptian* or *Coptick* Language; for, as a great part of the Mythology and Theology of the *Greeks* was derived from the *Egyptians*, so, it was convey'd in the terms and expressions of the *Egyptians*.

The *Λείψανα* of the ancient *Egyptian* Language (which the learned *Reland* has collected and Dr. *Wilkins* has expatiated on and explain'd with singular Accuracy and Learning⁷) are a sufficient specimen of the useful illustrations, which may be drawn from this Language, to the explaining and confirming the more obscure and mysterious passages of *Plutarch*, *Macrobis*, and other *Greek* and *Latin* Writers; and 'tis to be wish'd, that this indefatigable Philologer (Dr. *Wilkins*) would gratify the World with his *Treatise of the Λείψανα*

⁵ *Wilkins*, *Dissert. de Ling. Copt.* p. 80.

⁶ *Id. ibid.* p. 78. ⁷ *Ibid.* p. 94, & seq.

of the ancient Egyptian Language as explaining the Greek Antiquities, which would doubtlessly farther evidence the advantages of a knowledge of the *Coptic* on this account ⁸.

Lastly, the lights, which this Language affords to the *Hebrew* Letters and Antiquities ⁹, and the Age of the *Coptic* Version of the New Testament, (which, in this point, takes places of all the Versions but the *Syriack* ¹⁰) ought to be still greater recommendations of it to us.

As to the *Armenian* Language, it may, in some degree, recommend it to us of this Nation to observe, with the learned *Bernard*, that our 'Mother-Tongue flows, in a great measure, from it ¹¹.

The antiquity of it is very considerable ¹², and the Language is render'd more valuable by the Historical Remains preserved in it, thro' the care and labour of

⁸ *V. La Croze, Dissert. Philol. de var. Ling.* p. 135, 136.

⁹ *V. Bonjour, § xix. & seq. Exercit. in Monumenta Copt. seu Ægypt. Biblioth. Vaticanæ. La Croze, ubi supra.*

¹⁰ *Wilkins, Prolegom. in Nov. Test. Copt.* p. 2. *vide etiam* p. 5.

¹¹ *Ockleii Introd. ad Ling. Orient.* c. 13.

¹² *V. Schroderi Dissertat. de Antiq. &c. Ling. Armen.* c. i. § 1, &c.

Moyſes Chorenenſis, a Writer of the fourth Century. This author made conſiderable collections from the *Chaldæan* and *Græcian* Archives¹³, but form'd his Hiſtory principally out of the Memoirs of *Maribas Catina*, who was contemporary with *Arſaces*¹⁴, and, by his permiſſion, had acceſs to the Royal Archives of his Empire. By means of this advantage, he diſcover'd a Volume of Hiſtory, beginning very early, and tranſlated out of *Chaldee* into *Greek* by the command of *Alexander*. From this he extracted a Hiſtory of the *Armenian* Nation, which his Prince, *Walarſaces*, preſerved as a moſt valuable treasure, and order'd ſome parts of it to be engraven on Pillars. I am the more particular in tracing up the Antiquity and Authority of this Hiſtory on account of a remarkable Teſtimony it affords us to the truth of the *Moſaic* account of the Confuſion of Languages. The paſſage is preſerved entire by *Moyſes Chorenenſis* in the words of *Maribas*, and informs¹ us, that there was a race of Giants, who conceived

¹³ *Id. ibid.* • ¹⁴ This Prince lived about two hundred and fifty years before CHRIST.

and attempted an impious and arrogant design of building a Tower, and that, while they were employ'd in this undertaking, a terrible Wind, sent by the anger of the Gods, dissipated the superb Edifice; and convey'd to the several Builders a new and unheard of Speech, from whence the design ended in Tumult and Confusion ¹⁵.

The *Armenian* Language, tho' somewhat harsh in the Pronunciation, is not without its Elegancies, venerable for the antiquity of their phraseology, and to be esteem'd for their energy of diction. It is enrich'd with simple words epithets and synonymous terms as well as derivatives and compounds. The copiousness of it renders Translations from other languages into it easy; but it seems peculiarly adapted, in this respect, to the *Greek* by the singular analogy which appears between the two Languages ¹⁶.

As the *Haican* or *Armenian* nation embraced the Christian Faith very early, their Version of the Holy Scriptures is an-

¹⁵ *Vid. Schröder. ubi supra, § 9, 11.*

¹⁶ *Id. ibid. c. iii. § 9. c. iv. § 7.*

cient¹⁷, and their History of the Church, (especially of the *Eastern* division of it) of Councils, Canons, and Heresies, justly to be regarded.

Their Civil History sufficiently represents to us the most remarkable occurrences in their State, and the Government and Polity of it¹⁸; and their insight into Philosophy, Geography¹⁹, Astronomy and Natural History, will furnish us with a great deal of useful instruction in these branches of knowledge²⁰.

Lastly, the *Armenian* Language is farther serviceable in discovering to us the true original and import of some Scripture words²¹, and giving us a clear and just notion of several terms which occur in *Greek* and *Latin* Authors²².

It is observed by the very learned *Beveridge*, that 'tis impossible to arrive at a perfect knowledge of the *Hebrew* without being, in some measure, acquainted with the other *Eastern* Languages²³. But, that

¹⁷ *Id. ibid.* c. iv. § 2, 5, 7.

¹⁸ *Id. ibid.* § 2.

¹⁹ *Id. ibid.* § 10. *Dissert. de Rebus Armen.* p. 145, & seq.

²⁰ *Id. de Antiq. &c. Ling. Armen.* c. iv. § 2.

²¹ *Id. ibid.* § 3.

²² *Id. ibid.* § 4.

²³ *De Ling. Orient. Præst.* p. 18, 29.

we may not be discouraged by a prospect in appearance so extensive, and imagine we are entering on a boundless field of speculation and study, the same great writer assures us, That these Languages are surprizingly easy, that, after we have made ourselves masters of the *Hebrew*, which is the easiest of all, a little industry and application will render the others familiar to us; and confirms this observation by his own experience²⁴.

Nor indeed have we any room to doubt of this, when we consider, that the most ancient Languages of the *Eastern People*, *Hebrews*, *Chaldeans*, *Arabs*, *Syrians* and *Phœnicians* or *Canaanites*, are nothing almost but the Dialects of the same Language²⁵, and, consequently mutually facilitate and illustrate each other.

I have already mentioned the treasure of Learning which is still preserved in the Libraries of the East, and which cannot but incite the Curiosity of the Scholar; but, least the distance of these repo-

²⁴ *Ibid.* p. 34. ²⁵ *D^r Pin's Hist. of the Canon of the Old and New Test.* b. i. c. 4. § 1. *Fulleri Miscell. Sacr.* 1. iii. c. 20. *Ludolf. Comment. in Hist. Æthiop.* p. 203.

stories should discourage our pursuits, it may be proper to intimate, that our own Country is well stored with *Eastern* Manuscripts; and I cannot without concern observe, that the excellent Collection of them, which is one chief Ornament of the *Bodleian* Library, has laid too long neglected and too much buried to the learned World. I confess, the retrieving these Volumes from mould'ring into oblivion has been no small inducement to the attempting this Essay, and, if it succeeds so far as to incline any Member of that venerable Seat of Learning, which enjoys this most valuable Library, to employ his Thoughts to this end, I shall have the vanity to think I have done some Service to the Republick of Letters.

F I N I S.