A SECOND LETTER

TO THE

REV. HENRY HART MILMAN, M.A.

REPUTED AUTHOR OF THE

HISTORY OF THE JEWS,

IN THE

FAMILY LIBRARY:

Controverting a Statement in the Appendix to the Second Edition of his "History," with respect to the "Family Bible of the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge."

BY

"ONE WHO IS ALSO AN ELDER,"

BEING ONE OF THE EDITORS OF THE FAMILY BIBLE.

OXFORD,

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FOR J. PARKER; AND C. J. G. AND F. RIVINGTON, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH YARD, AND WATERLOO PLACE, LONDON.

1830.
A FEW WEEKS AGO, WHEN UNDER THE GENETINATION
of "ONE WHO IS ALSO AN EDITOR," I TOOK THE LIBERTY
of voluntarily addressing to you a Letter from an
Esteem Greene of Speaking Opinion between Presidents
and Ministers of our common Religion of Preaching
it from Infamy and of advancing its well-being; I
little thought that I should shortly be placed in a
situation of immediate personal interest, which
would make it applicable upon the diagram to address
you, and to advocate which in connexion with a
writer named my former colleague, and with a most
respectable Society of Members of the National
Congress, some of whom similar to those, the subscription
1844979
SECOND LETTER,

Rev. Sir,

A FEW weeks ago, when under the denomination of "One who is also an Elder," I took the liberty of voluntarily addressing to you a Letter, from an earnest desire of abating offence between professors and ministers of our common religion, of preserving it from injury, and of advancing its well-being; I little thought that I should shortly be placed in a situation of immediate personal interest, which would make it obligatory upon me again to address you, and to vindicate myself, in connexion with a valued friend and former colleague, and with a most respected Society of members of the national Church, from a charge similar to that, the allegation
of which against your "History of the Jews" had led the way to my former Letter. But the very unexpected and, permit me to add, most extraordinary course, which you have recently adopted with reference to that allegation, lays me under the necessity of making the following appeal against the comparison which you have thought proper to institute in your defence.

In the "Times" Newspaper, of Thursday the 3d instant, I observed the following paragraph, prominently placed in a conspicuous part of one of its most attractive columns: "Our readers are no doubt well aware, that a cry has been raised against Professor Milman's History of the Jews contained in the Family Library, as if the ingenious and learned author, by endeavouring to account for some of the miracles of the Old Testament by natural means, did in effect disparage the divine origin of that revelation, or dispute the truth of the miraculous interposition. Mr. Milman in an Appendix to the second edition of his work (we dare say the criticisms of his adversaries will never see second editions) replies to the cavillers. He cites a happy and appropriate passage from Pally on the subject:
but what is more to the purpose, with reference to such theologians as those with whom he condescends to reason, he shews, by contrast and juxtaposition, that his explanation of the miracles in question is essentially the same as that given by the Editors of the *Family Bible*, published under the auspices of the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge."

This statement, Rev. Sir, was perused by me with considerable interest on two special accounts. First, I felt that as one of the Editors of the "Family Bible" I had become subject to a heavy responsibility, by being thus put forward, in company with my learned colleague in that work, to participate in sustaining the attack, which had been directed against your "History of the Jews." Secondly, I felt that I was exposed to more peculiar responsibility: for, having not long before expressed to you my concurrence with some of the censures which had been directed against your work, I could not be blind to the consequence, that, if the position, which asserted "your explanation of the miracles in question to be essentially the same as that given by the Editors of the Family
Bible," could be satisfactorily maintained; the censures, with which I had signified my concurrence, must be understood as pronouncing my own sentence of condemnation upon myself.

But notwithstanding this twofold cause of anxiety, to which I may well add a third arising from the interest, which I have for many years cherished, in the character and proceedings of the "Society for promoting Christian Knowledge," of which I had been, on the occasion of preparing "their Family Bible," one of the highly honoured agents; notwithstanding, I say, these causes of anxiety, I felt myself perfectly at ease as to the result of the impending ordeal. For my mind was assured, that whatever explanations of the miracles recorded in the Old Testament had been introduced into the "Family Bible," with reference to natural means, care had been constantly taken by the Editors, in pursuance of their own firm conviction and belief, (I venture, Rev. Sir, to speak in the name, though without the knowledge, of my learned friend and late colleague, Dr. D'Oyly; and I repeat, that, in pursuance of our own firm conviction and belief, care had been constantly taken by us,)
to ascribe the use and direction of the natural means employed to supernatural and divine power, so that the reader might rise from the perusal of these notes on Holy Scripture with his mind continually impressed with the same sentiments, as the perusal of Holy Scripture itself is calculated to impart; namely, with a persuasion, that the works, however wrought, were of divine origin, and performed by special delegates of the Almighty: whereas on the contrary the censures, which had been directed against this particular in the "History of the Jews," were founded, as I conceive, upon the following supposed fact; namely, not that explanations had been given of miraculous occurrences by reference to natural means, but that care had not been taken at the same time by the Author to refer the miracles to the great primary supernatural Cause of all, whose superintendence and direction had been thrown into obscurity, whilst prominence was given to the operation of natural means. Thus, Rev. Sir, I was satisfied, that the explanations of the miracles in question, given by your Publication and by that for the character of which I was so deeply interested, could not be found "essentially the same."
I was sensible, indeed, that a partial view might possibly be exhibited of some of the notes of the "Family Bible," which might at first sight, in the eyes of an uninformed reader, be made to give an appearance of "sameness of explanation," and thus afford colour to the defence of the "History of the Jews:" but I knew that no such result could be produced by a full and fair exhibition of them; for that they were calculated, as they were designed, to leave the mind of the reader deeply impressed with an assurance of the miraculous and supernatural character of the operations, and of the continually directing and controlling energy of the Almighty.

With these sentiments and anticipations I have waited the appearance of your promised or threatened Appendix, which was put into my hands yesterday. I have read it, and the extracts which it contains. I have referred to the "Family Bible," to which from particular circumstances, irrelevant and unimportant to the present question, I had not previously referred. I have compared your extracts with the notes in the "Family Bible," and I find my sentiments and anticipations fully confirmed. I find that the Editors of the Family Bible, in adducing
natural means in explanation of the miracles performed by Moses, have carefully guarded them from mistake or misrepresentation, by constantly insisting on their having been employed as the instruments of supernatural and divine Power. I find that in the Appendix to the History of the Jews, whilst these explanations are cited and placed in parallel columns with extracts from the "History," in order to give apparent countenance to the latter, the observations, by which the explanations are guarded and the mind is rightly directed in its application of them, if introduced into the extracts, have most commonly not their counterpart in the extracts from the "History," and in many instances are omitted altogether. Accordingly I find that the "explanations of the miracles in question, as given in the two works before us, are not essentially the same;" and that the impressions conveyed to the mind of the reader by the two, are different, most widely different, from each other.

These assertions, Rev. Sir, relate to plain matters of fact, which it is now my purpose to lay before you, and through you before the publick. For reasons already assigned, I cannot suffer myself to
be silent under the present circumstances; and I am fain to seize the earliest moment for an exposure of the fallacy, which you appear to have put forward in your defence. The course, which I mean to follow, is the plainest and, I think, the fairest, which can possibly be imagined. You have endeavoured to make good your cause. Revive, Sir, by means of parallel columns, in one of which you have placed extracts from your "History of the Jews" forming part of the "Family Library"; and in the other what you esteem corresponding and justificatory extracts from the "Family Bible." The parallel is introduced by you with these observations: "But however, in these respects," alluding to previous remarks with which I do not consider myself immediately concerned, "if however, in these respects, our work may have departed from the usual view of the Jewish annals, the point which seems to have made the strongest impression, and has been urged with the greatest vehemence against the "History of the Jews," regards the manner in which the miracles are related. Will it be credited that, after all the clamour, proceeding in some instances, from quarters where such igno-
rance: is almost incredible, the interpretations in this work, with two or three exceptions, are the same with those which have been long current in the most popular books; in Calmet, in Natural Histories of the Bible, in Commentaries of all classes, and even in the Family Bible of the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge? The Author ventures to request the reader's attention to the following Parallel. And then, having adverted to an incidental topick, you proceed, "the Author, however, has no intention of summoning to his aid these foreign and suspected auxiliaries— he will go no further than that Family Bible to which he alluded above. The Author would add, that whereas he differs from it on these points, it is often because some of the circumstances which he has introduced have come to light subsequent to the publication of that useful work.

Now, the course, to which I have alluded, as being the plainest, and the fairest, and therefore that which I propose to follow, is to copy these parallel extracts, and to exhibit them precisely as they are set forth by you. But to each pair of extracts, I shall annex here and there, as I may..."
see occasion, a brief remark, and I shall then subjoin those accompanying notes on the subject in the "Family Bible," which you, Rev. Sir, have omitted; but which appear to me indispensably necessary, for giving to the extracts cited by you from that work their proper character; for completing the explanations that they furnish of the miracles in question; for shewing whether your explanations of the miracles are, or are not, "essentially the same" as those given by the Editors of the "Family Bible;" and whether you have, or have not, effectually "summoned to your aid that auxiliary," as one whose interpretations are in harmony with the spirit of your "History of the Jews."

DESTRUCTION OF SODOM AND GOMORRAH.

"Family Bible.

"The plain where these cities stood, which had been pleasant and fruitful, like an earthly paradise, was first inflamed by lightning, which set fire to the bitumen with which it was replete; and it was afterwards overflowed in a deep and uninterrupted..."
by the waters of the Jordan, which diffused itself there, and formed the Dead Sea, or Lake of Sodom, called also the Lake Asphaltites, because of the asphaltus or bitumen with which it abounded; and the Salt Sea, because the Hebrews call nitre and bitumen, salt; &c. &c. — Calmet. — Bes. Patrick and Pococke. — Maundrell,

channel down a regular descent, and discharged itself into the eastern gulf of the Red Sea. The cities stood on a soil broken and undermined with veins of bitumen and sulphur. These inflammable substances, set on fire by lightning, caused a tremendous convulsion; the water-courses, both the river and the canals, by which the land was extensively irrigated, burst their banks; the cities, the walls of which were, perhaps, built from the combustible materials of the soil, were entirely swallowed up by the fiery inundation; and the whole valley, which had been compared to Paradise and to the well-watered corn-fields of the Nile, became a dead and fetid lake.

Additional notes on this subject from the Family Bible.

"Chap. xix. Extraordinary interpositions of Providence demand extraordinary attention. If God speaks, it is but
reasonable that man should hear. And when He executed
the vengeance recorded in this chapter, He certainly spake
in an audible voice to the hopes and fears of all the dwellers
upon earth. By the deliverance vouchsafed to his righ-
teous servant, He encouraged the hopes of such, as like
him, preserved their integrity in the midst of a crooked
and perverse generation: while by the unparalleled de-
struction of the cities of the plain, He alarmed the fears of
those who resembled them in impiety and iniquity.” And
then follows more to the same effect, concluding with St.
Peter’s argument on the subject, “If God, turning the
cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them
with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those,
that after shall live ungodly, &c.”—Dr. Horne.

“24. Then the Lord rained—from the Lord.] In the
account of the overthrow of Sodom, there is a distinction
of Persons in the Godhead: ‘Then the Lord rained upon
Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the
Lord out of heaven.’ . . . Tertullian says, ‘It is the Son,
who has executed judgment from the beginning; over-
throwing the proud tower of Babel, and confounding men’s
languages; punishing the whole world by the violence of
waters; raining upon Sodom and Gomorrah fire and brim-
stone, the Lord from the Lord.’—Dr. Hales.”

Then follows the note extracted from the
“Family Bible,” as above, and stating the natural
means by which it is supposed the overthrow was
effected; adding withal other circumstances import-
ing the supernatural character of the desolation, with which however the previous notes will, I trust, have sufficiently impressed the mind of the reader, and on account of which they have been here added.

**TRANSFORMATION OF LOT'S WIFE.**

"Family Bible."  "Family Library."

"It is probable that some of the dreadful shower which destroyed the cities of the sulphurous vapours, and plan, overtook her, and, falling upon her, wrapped her body in a sheet of nitro-sulphureous matter, which congealed like a crust, as hard as a stone, and made her appear like a pillar of salt, her body being, as it were, corroded with it." Josephus says that the pillar was remaining in his time.—Brs. Patrick and Wilson.

The foregoing extract is preceded by the annexed note from the Family Bible."

"26. But his wife looked back, &c. There are in Lot's story two very notable memorials of God's judgment.
The lake of Sodom, and Lot's wife's pillar. The one, the punishment of resolute sin; the other, of faint virtue, &c. Br. Andrews.

Thus by whatever natural means it is probable that the cities were overthrown, and Lot's wife transformed, the effect is represented as a judicial infliction of God's supernatural power.

SWEETENING OF THE WATERS OF MARAH.

"Family Bible."

"It is a question, whether those bitter waters were sweetened by the miraculous power of God, or by the natural property of the tree to which God directed Moses. Most probably, it is to be attributed to the former.-(Stackhouse.) Niebuhr, when upon the spot where this miracle was performed, inquired after wood capable of producing such an effect, but could gain no information of any. The water of these parts continues so bad to this day, and is so much in want of improvement, that, had the discovery of a
The difference of terms, in which the question here is stated, is remarkable. In the former extract, introduced by the text, “and the Lord shewed him a tree,” the question is, between “the miraculous power of God,” and a special “direction” given by “God” to Moses. In the latter, the divine agency is not admitted into consideration. In the former extract, again, the effect, however produced, is distinctly termed “this miracle.” I can perceive no corresponding expression in the latter. I add the following additional note from the

*Family Bible:*

“'The hand of faith never knocked at heaven in vain: no sooner hath Moses shewed his grievance, than God
shows him the remedy; yet an unlikely one, that it might be miraculous. He that made the waters could have given them any savour; the same hand that created them might have immediately changed them. But Almighty Power still works by means: and the glory of Omnipotence is manifested by the improbability of the means which he employs. Elisha with salt, Moses with wood, shall sweeten the bitter waters. Let no man despise the means, when he knows the Author. BP. HALL.

THE QUAILS.

"Family Bible."
"God gave quails to his people twice: once on this occasion, a short time after they had passed the Red Sea; and a second time, at the encampment called Kibroth-hattaavah, or "the graves of lust."—Numb. xi. 31—34. Ps. cv. 40. Both of these happened in the spring, when the quails pass from Asia into Europe. Then they are found in great quantities on the coasts of the Red Sea and the Mediterranean. God, by a wind, drove them"
within and about the camp of Israel; and in this the miracle consisted, that they were brought so seasonably to this place, and in so great numbers, as to suffice two or three millions of persons longer than a month. Some persons think locusts to have been here intended; but the other sense is that of the oriental interpreters in general, of the Greek translators, and of Josephus. (Calmet.) The quail of the desert, according to Hasselquist, very much resembles the red partridge, but is not larger than the turtle-dove. The Arabs bring many thousands of them to sell at Jerusalem about Whit-suntide. Dr. Hales.

The foregoing extract from the "Family Bible" recognises the divine agency: "God sent quails to his people twice;" and again, "God, by a wind, drove them within and about the camp of Israel." The extract from the "Family Library" recognises
no agency but that of Moses: "without hesitation Moses promised an immediate and plentiful supply:" and so "a cloud of these birds were suddenly wafted over the camp of the Israelites," &c. The extract from the "Family Bible" moreover speaks of the coming of the quails expressly as a "miracle;" and particularly specifies, "wherein this miracle consisted," namely, in the supernatural adaptation of natural means to an extraordinary purpose. It may be not irrelevant to add, that the preceding note to that extracted in your Appendix also speaks of the quails as immediately "granted" and "sent by God."

**THE MANNA.**

"Family Bible.

"The meaning of this word (Manna) is uncertain. A great number of ancient and modern expositors understand the Hebrew word to signify 'what is this?'—to which the following words, 'they wist not what it was,' seem to refer the meaning. Others think it may be better expanded, 'It is..."
a gift or portion, as being sent from God. Others maintain that the Hebrews well knew what Manna was, and said one to another, 'This is Manna.'

Br. Patrick.—Calmet.

"The manna was truly miraculous on the following accounts:—1. It fell but six days in the week. 2. It fell in such a prodigious quantity that it sustained almost three millions of souls. 3. There fell a double quantity every sixth day, to serve them for the Sabbath. 4. What was gathered in the first five days, stunk and had worms if kept above one day; but what was gathered on the sixth day remained sweet for two days. Lastly, it continued falling while the Israelites abode in the wilderness; but ceased as soon as they left it, and could procure corn to eat, in the land of Canaan.—Stackhouse.

by the Arabs before sunrise, when it is coagulated; but it dissolves as soon as the sun shines upon it. Its taste is agreeable, somewhat aromatic, and as sweet as honey. It may be kept for a year, and is found only after a wet season. It is still called by the Bedouins, 'Mann.' The quantity now collected (for it is only found in a few valleys) is very small; the preter-natural part of the Mosaic narrative consists in the immense and continual supply, and the circumstances under which it was gathered, particularly its being preserved pure and sweet only for the Sabbath-day. The regulation, that enough, and only enough, for the consumption of the day should be collected at a time, seems a prudent precaution, lest the more covetous or active should secure an unfair proportion, and leave the rest to starve.
To the foregoing I have only to subjoin the following note from the Family Bible.

"At this day manna falls in several places: in Arabia, in Poland, in Calabria, in Mount Libanus, and elsewhere. The most common and the most famous is that of Arabia, which is a kind of condensed honey, found in the summer time on the leaves of trees, on herbs, on the rocks, or the sand of Arabia Petraea. It is of the same figure as Moses describes. Several modern writers think, that the manna of the Israelites was like that now found in Arabia; and that the miracle did not consist in producing a new substance, but in the exact and constant manner in which it
was dispensed by Providence, and in the quantity of it that fell daily, for so long a time. It certainly had miraculous qualities not found in common manna, and which probably subsisted only while the Israelites were fed with it. Calmet.”

THE DEFEAT OF THE AMALEKITES.

“Family Bible.

“Not as a standard-bearer, so much as a suppliant, doth Moses lift up his hands, &c. Bp. Hall.

“Family Library.

“He himself, with his brother Aaron and others, takes his station on an eminence; there, in the sight of the whole army, he raises his hands in earnest supplication to heaven. The Israelites, encouraged by their trust in Divine Providence, fight manfully; still the attack is fierce, long, and obstinate. The strength of Moses fails, and the Israelites behold with alarm and trepidation his arms hanging languidly down, and their courage, too, begins to give way. His companions, observing this, place him on a stone, and support his hands on each side. The valour of the people revives, and they gain a complete victory.”
Upon the above extract you observe, "This is inserted to show that the Author is not singular in supposing that Moses stood rather as a 'suppliant than a standard-bearer.' The above interpretation seems most simple; for if there was any interference, strictly speaking miraculous, as the success and failure of the Israelites followed the raising or sinking of their leader's arm, the miraculous agency of God would thus be made dependent on the physical strength of Moses."

What may be the simplicity of the above interpretation, and what may be the soundness of the reasoning on which it is founded, are questions with which I am not at present concerned. But "the sameness of the explanations in the two works" before us being our subject of inquiry, I will beg leave to complete the extract from the "Family Bible" which you have abruptly broken off; and the reader will, I think, find in it expository sentiments, with which those in the parallel column from your "History of the Jews" certainly do not correspond.

"Not as a standard-bearer, so much as a suppliant, doth Moses lift up his hand: the gesture of the body should
both express and further the piety of the soul. And that
the Israelites might see the hand of Moses had more
efficacy in the fight than all theirs, their success rises and
falls with it. Wonderful is the power of “the prayer of
faith!” All heavenly favours are derived to us through
this channel of grace: to it are we beholden for our peace,
preservation, and all the rich mercies of God which we

THE FIRE AT TABERAH.

“Family Bible.”

“That is, a fire which the
Lord sent among them.”

Bp. Kidder. This fire came
either immediately from hea-
ven like lightning, or from
the pillar of the cloud which
went before the tabernacle.
Or it might be a hot burn-
ing wind, in these places
not unusual, and often very
pestilential; and on this oc-
casion preternaturally raised
in the rear of the army to
punish the stragglers, and
such as loitered behind out
of pretence of weariness.

Stackhouse.

“Family Library.”

“At Taberah a fire broke
out which raged with great
fury among the dry and com-
bustible materials of which
their tents were made. It
was ascribed to the anger of
the Lord, and ceased at the
prayer of Moses.”
The "Family Bible" here expressly states this fire to have been "sent by the Lord," and whatever the natural cause may have been, supposes the coming of it on this occasion to have been pretended natural. By your "History of the Jews" it is represented to have been "ascribed to the anger of the Lord:" a phrase, at best equivocal, and surely not equivalent to those employed in the parallel interpretation, which you assume to be "the same" as your own.

SECOND MIRACLE OF QUAILS.

"Family Bible."

"The Family Bible is here silent,"

"Quails again fell in great abundance around the camp; but immediately on this change of diet, or before, if we are to receive the account to the strict letter, a dreadful pestilence broke out. It has been suggested that quails feed on hellebore, and other poisonous plants, and may thus become most pernicious and deadly food."
As to the **miracle** of the quails **being sent**, the "Family Bible" is certainly silent in this place; an acknowledgment of the divine power, which sent them, had been anticipated in the note on Exodus xvi. 13, where it is said, "God gave quails to his people twice: once, on this occasion, a short time after they had passed the Red Sea; and a second time, at the encampment called Kibroth-hattaavah, or the graves of lust, Numb. xi. 31—34." As to the **miracle** however, which attended the eating of the quails by the people, the "Family Bible" is not silent. For the purpose therefore of carrying on our comparison between the explanations given in that work, and those in the "History of the Jews," of which you have furnished us above with a specimen in the Israelites" "change of diet," and the perniciousness of quails that "feed on hellebore," I will take leave to add on the subject the note from the

*Family Bible.*

"—the wrath of the Lord was kindled.] He had formerly pardoned the murmurings, for which he now punished them. The same sin repeated is death, whose first act found remission; relapses are dangerous, where
the sickness itself is not. It is a mortal thing to abuse the lenity of God: it is presumptuous madness to hope that God will quietly suffer us to provoke him how we will. It is more mercy than we are intitled to, if he forbear us once: it is his justice to punish the second time: it is our own fault, if we will not profit by former warnings.

Bp. Hall.”

THE MANNER IN WHICH THE ISRAELITES’ WANTS OF CLOTHING WERE SUPPLIED IN THE DESERT

“Family Bible.

“Thy raiment waxed not old upon thee.”] Some interpreters, and particularly the Jewish Rabbins, understand by these words, that the raiment of the Israelites, during their abode in the wilderness for forty years, never decayed by using, and never was torn by accident; and that the very clothes which they had when they were children, grew like their skin along with their bodies, and fitted them when they were men. Others explain it thus: ‘The good providence of God took...
care that the Israelites in the wilderness never wanted apparel. They were supplied partly by the flocks and the materials which they brought out of Egypt, and partly by the Arabs, Ishmaelites, and neighbouring people: so that they had change of apparel, when they stood in need of it, and were not obliged to go barefoot, ragged, and half naked for want of clothes. God so ordered the course of things, that they obtained whatsoever was needful by natural means, or, if they failed, by a miraculous interposition. Dr. Jortin.

In an observation annexed to this extract from the "Family Bible," it is said, "Jortin seems, like the author, to have followed Le Clerc." If however Jortin, and the author of the "History of the Jews," have followed the same leader, they have certainly followed him to a very different end. Of the very strong expressions in the text Jortin men-
tions two interpretations; one involving a perpetual miracle, the other resting on the constant "care" of the "good providence of God." His own opinion seems to be conveyed in the concluding sentence, "God so ordered the course of things, that the Israelites obtained whatsoever was needful by natural means, or, if they failed, by miraculous interposition." Of all this I trace nothing in the parallel column: nothing of miracle, or of providence; nothing of "the course of things being ordered by God;" nothing in short but bare natural means, the ordinary produce of the surrounding district, and of their own labours and traffick, for the supply of their wants.

THE PLAGUE OF SERPENTS.

"Family Bible."

"As Moses represents these serpents to have caused a great mortality, so the heathen writers concur in testifying, that the deserts wherein the Israelites journeyed, produced serpents of so venomous a kind, that

Marching along the valley, due south, the Israelites arrived at a district dreadfully infested by serpents. An adjacent region, visited by Burckhardt, is still dangerous on this account. Moses caused a serpent of
their biting was deadly beyond the power of any art then known to cure it. The ancients observed, in general, that the most barren and sandy deserts had the greatest number and most venomous of serpents: Diodorus remarks this particularly of the sands in Africa; but it was equally true of the wilderness in which the Israelites journeyed. Serpents and scorpions were here, according to Moses, as natural as drought or want of water. Deut. viii. 15.—Shuckford.

To the foregoing extract from Shuckford is annexed the following remark: "The author, in the note, goes on to make some religious reflections on the subject." Why these reflections were omitted, containing, as they do, the true explanation of this marvellous transaction, is not easy to be accounted for. My object however being to enable the reader to make a fair and full comparison between the
"explanations" for which "sameness" is claimed in the two works under consideration, I shall take the liberty of transcribing the remainder of Shuckford's note, that the interpretation in the "History of the Jews" may stand in juxtaposition with the interpretation in the

Family Bible.

"Strabo's observation agrees with Moses: and both Strabo and Diodorus concur, that the serpents, which were so numerous here, were of the most deadly kind, and that there was no cure for their biting. Hence we see reason to consider both the calamity inflicted upon the Israelites, and the miraculous cure of it, in the proper light. The Israelites were unmindful of the obedience they owed God, unwilling to march where God directed them. Hereupon they were punished to bring them to a better mind; and their punishment was in a little time removed in a miraculous manner. They were commanded to come and look up to a brazen serpent, a thing evidently of itself of no importance, but by God's power and good pleasure made so effectual to their recovery, as abundantly to remind them, that whatever God should think fit to command them, was importantly necessary for them to perform. Shuckford."

For further explanations of this supernatural and wonderful series of events, I would beg leave to
refer the reader to the notes in the "Family Bible" upon the eighth and ninth verses of this chapter, Numbers xxxii., from Bp. Kidder, Stackhouse, and Bp. Wilson. They are too long for insertion in this place. But I cannot refrain from introducing the note from Dr. Berriman on the sixth verse, because it contains the key, not only to this occurrence, but to many others in the Israelitish annals; and lays down a principle, necessary to be borne in mind by all those, who would rightly set forth, interpret, or understand the history of this singular people. "The divers casualties, which befell the Israelites in the wilderness, happened unto them for types or ensamples, and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come," 1 Cor. x. 6—11; that end of all the divine counsels towards man, which relate to his recovery by the promised Redeemer. Thus their murmurings were punished by the biting of fiery serpents, to remind them of the deceit of the old serpent, which brought sin into the world. And when the malady was healed by looking up to that brasen serpent, which was erected on a pole, this fitly represented our looking by faith to that
Redeemer, who was lifted up on the cross, to draw all men unto him."

**DESTRUCTION OF SENNACHERIB'S ARMY.**

"**Family Bible.**

"The destruction of the army was probably effected by bringing on them the hot wind, which is frequent in those parts, and which often, when it falls on a multitude, destroys vast numbers in a moment, as frequently occurs to those great caravans of Mahometans who go on annual pilgrimages to Mecca. The words of Isaiah, ver. 7, which threatened Sennacherib with a blast, to be sent upon his army by God, seems to denote that this was the method of their destruction. **Dean Prideaux.**

"**Extracts from Bruce and Dr. Hales follow to the same purpose: 'It is remarkable that the blast which destroyed the Assyrians happened at night;"**
whereas the Simoom usually blows in the day time, and mostly about noon, being raised by the intense heat of the sun.

The above extract from the "Family Bible" is introduced with the remark, that "among other interpretations is this." The previous portion of the note should not have been omitted, the purport of which is to shew, that whatever natural means were employed, concerning which doubts existed, no doubt could exist concerning the supernatural and divine agency, by which those means were directed. The note stands thus in the

*Family Bible*

"—the angel of the Lord went out, and smote] How speedy an execution was this, and how miraculous! No human arm shall have the glory of this victory. It was God that was defied by this presumptuous Assyrian; it is God that shall right his own wrongs. Bp. Hall. Since it is no where expressed in Scripture in what manner this Assyrian army was destroyed, some have thought it was done by a plague, others by thunder and lightning, others by fire from heaven, others by a scorching wind, others by encountering each other in the obscurity of the night: but, by whatsoever means the defeat was effected, we have the authority of Scripture for saying, that it was done by the
agency of a destroying angel. Calmet." Then follows, "The destruction of the army and so on," as in the preceding extract. I would just observe in addition, that in a sentence, which introduces the note from Bruce and Dr. Hales, the natural phenomenon is called "the instrument of vengeance:" and that although the extract notices it to have been "remarkable that the blast which destroyed the Assyrians happened at night, whereas the Simoom usually blows in the day time," it does not presume, after the manner of the parallel extract, to limit the extent or the power of the supernatural agency, by pronouncing the taking place of the catastrophe at night to be "the miraculous part of the transaction;" or by intimating that "the forces of Sennacherib," had they been "acquainted" with the desert, might have had "means of avoiding this unusual enemy."

We have now gone, Rev. Sir, step by step over those miracles of the Old Testament, of which you have exhibited your parallel columns of explanations. "The two important remaining miracles," you then proceed to observe, "the two important remaining miracles, concerning the relation of which strong objection has been made, are the passage of the Red Sea, and the stopping of the sun at the command of Joshua. In the first, the whole tenour of the argument goes to
confirm the interference of Divine Providence. One single expression has been fixed upon, in which the writer, to every candid mind, would appear to be making an hypothetical concession, in order that his conclusion might be more fairly drawn."

It is not my wish to be deficient in candour, or to press upon your expressions any sense which they do not naturally bear. But in order to arrive more perfectly at a right judgment concerning "the sameness of the interpretations of the Old Testament miracles," as supplied by the two works before us, I hope I shall be pardoned for continuing the parallel, from which in the present instance you have forborne. The observations, to which you have just alluded, I suppose to be those which run thus in the

**Family Library.**

"Still, wherever the passage (of the Red Sea) was effected, the Mosaick account can scarcely be made consistent with the exclusion of preternatural agency. Not to urge the literal meaning of the waters being a wall on the right hand and on the left, as if they had stood up sheer and abrupt, and then fallen back again; the Israelites passed through the sea with deep water on both sides."
Not a syllable shall be said by me to enforce the palpable contrast between this extract and the following; for which, although of considerable length, I anticipate indulgence by reason of its value and importance, as cited from Dr. Hales among the notes in the

*Family Bible.*

"It has been asked, whether there are not some ridges or rocks, where the water was shallow, so that an army at particular times may pass over? and, whether the Etesian winds, which blow strongly all summer from the north-west, could not blow so violently against the sea, as to keep it back on a heap; so that the Israelites might have passed without a miracle? Bruce's observations on these queries are excellent: 'These doubts do not merit any attention to solve them. This passage is told us by Scripture to be a miraculous one; and, if so, we have nothing to do with natural causes. If we do not believe Moses, we need not believe the transaction at all, seeing that it is from his authority we derive it. If we believe in God, that he made the sea, we must believe that he could divide it, when he sees proper reason; and of that he must be the only judge. It is no greater miracle to divide the Red Sea than to divide the river Jordan.'"
or to the south, of fifty feet high; still the difficulty would remain of building the wall on the left hand, or to the north. Besides, water standing in that position for a day must have lost the nature of fluid. Whence came that cohesion of particles, which hindered that wall to escape at the sides? This is as great a miracle as that of Moses. If the Etesian winds had done this, they must have repeated it many a time before and since, from the same causes.

Were all these difficulties surmounted, what could we do with the pillar of fire? The answer is, we should not believe it. Why then believe the passage at all? We have no authority for the one, but what is for the other: it is altogether contrary to the ordinary nature of things: and if not a miracle, it must be a fable.

Still such queries have their use: they lead to a stricter investigation of facts, and tend thereby strongly to confirm the truth of the history. Thus it appears from the accurate observations of Niebuhr and Bruce, that there is no ledge of rocks running across the gulph anywhere, to afford a shallow passage. And the second query, about the Etesian or northerly wind, is refuted by the express mention of a strong easterly wind, blowing across, and scooping out a deep passage: not that it was necessary for Omnipotence to employ it there as an instrument, any more than at Jordan; but it seems to be introduced in the sacred history by way of anticipation, to exclude the natural agency that might in after times be employed for solving the miracle: and it is remarkable that the monsoon in the Red Sea blows
the summer half of the year from the north, and the winter half from the south, neither of which could produce the miracle in question."

It only remains that we notice "the stopping of the sun at the command of Joshua." On this, your Appendix observes, "the Author has given no judgment. He has stated with candour the different opinions;—he has said that 'many learned writers, whom to suspect of hostility to revealed religion would be the worst uncharitableness, have either doubted the reality or the extent of this miracle.' Among the authors to whom he alluded was Grotius; the others were the Jesuit Pereirius and Le Clerc, as well as more modern writers. It must be remembered that this miracle stands in some degree alone: it is related on the authority of a book not now extant. This book is twice quoted in the Old Testament; both of the passages (the present included) are not merely poetical, but strictly metrical. Still, the author has placed the more prevailing opinion last, and has stated, with sufficient strength and fairness, the most striking argument by which it is supported."
We will take this, if you please, as a sufficient statement of the interpretation given of the occurrence in question in your "History of the Jews." For the purpose of further exemplifying and completing our comparison, the observations in the "Family Bible" upon the same occurrence should now be cited. But as the citation would extend to an inconvenient length, it may suffice if I state compendiously, that the principle, which pervades those observations, is the reality and greatness of the miracle, wrought by the God of Israel, the Lord of heaven and earth; that in the course of the notes upon it Dr. Hales explains its effect to have been an extension of thirteen hours of day light; that Bp. Tomline remarks on "this signal miracle," as "seeming to have been particularly directed against the prevailing worship of "the host of heaven;"" that Bp. Hall reasons upon the conclusion to be drawn from it, forasmuch as "the sun and the moon were the ordinary gods of the heathen world;" that Dr. Derham maintains "a miraculous perversion of the course of nature, such as this," to be "a great argument of the almighty power of God;" that Stackhouse contends, "it
can never be affirmed that the miracle here recorded of the sun standing still is impossible or incredible, since it is certain and self-evident that the great Author of nature, who gave being and motion to the sun and stars, may stop that motion when and as long as he pleases;" that Shuckford observes, "how remarkably pertinent this miracle was to the circumstances of the persons concerned in it;", and lastly, that it is the remark of Bishop Watson, that "a confused tradition concerning this miracle of the sun standing still, and a similar one in the time of Ahaz, when the sun went back ten degrees, had been preserved amongst one of the most ancient nations, the Egyptians, as we are informed by one of the most ancient historians, Herodotus . . . . . I think it idle," he adds, "if not impious, to undertake to explain how the miracle was performed: but one, who is not able to explain the mode of doing a thing, argues ill if he thence infers that the thing was not done. The machine of the universe is in the hand of God. He can stop the motion of any part or of the whole, with less trouble, and less danger of injuring it, than any of us can stop a watch."
I have thus, Rev. Sir, in pursuance of what I have felt to be my duty, acquitted myself of the painful and humble, but, I think, not the needless, and, I trust, not the unprofitable, task, which I undertook to perform. I have repeated your extracts on the one hand from the "Family Bible, published under the direction of the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge;" and on the other from your "History of the Jews," forming part of the publication called the "Family Library." I have thrown in occasionally an expository remark, for the purpose of bringing the extracts more readily into comparison on the most momentous point: and I have added to your extracts from the "Family Bible" others which appear to me indispensable, for enabling the reader to form a correct judgment on the proposed comparison. And I now repeat your question, "Will it be credited, that the interpretations of the miracles given in the 'History of the Jews,' with two or three exceptions, are the same with those which have been long current in the most popular books; . . . . . even in the Family Bible of the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge?"
To this question I temperately but confidently answer, no: it will not be credited by those who are acquainted with the true condition of the case: "the interpretation of the miracles" in the two works under consideration are not "the same:" they frequently concur indeed so far, as to indicate the same natural secondary means, by which the miracles were wrought; but in the prominence, and conspicuousness, and indispensable importance, and ever-present, controlling, and directing energy, which should be ascribed to the supernatural divine Employer of those means, they are essentially different. To give to that Great Being the honour due unto his name, was, I trust I am speaking in no presumptuous spirit, the object of those, who were engaged in providing for the publick "the Family Bible of the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge." To throw Him, as it were, into the background, I will not say was the object of the Historian of the Jews, but has been the consequence of the principle which he took for the platform of his "History;" the principle, namely, of describing the Jews as he would have described any common nation, instead of treating of them as
the chosen and peculiar people of God: and the very insufficient and defective explanations of the miraculous occurrences of the History appear to have resulted from the same erroneous principle.

I say this, Rev. Sir, "more in sorrow than in anger." Believe me that no unkind feeling is entertained towards you by the writer of this Letter; and he would fain hope that he has not been seduced from his better mind into any unkind expression. He could have wished indeed that you had refrained from your assertion concerning the "Family Bible," because he is persuaded that the assertion is unfounded and unjust; and because in meeting and repelling it, he has had occasion to speak with a plainness, which may wear the semblance of a severity, that it was not his purpose to adopt. For any failure of this kind he craves your indulgence: meanwhile he submits his observations to your consideration and to that of the publick: relying upon the verdict of the latter in his favour; and not without a hope, that your opinion on the subject of this Letter may undergo an alteration, and that you may be induced to relinquish your assertion concerning "the sameness
of the interpretations in the two works before us," which it has been the aim of this Letter to disprove.

I remain, 
Rev. Sir, 
With due respect, 
Your very faithful Servant, 
ONE OF THE EDITORS OF THE FAMILY BIBLE.

June 10, 1830.

P. S. The foregoing Letter is confined to an examination of the Parallel Extracts in the Appendix to your second edition of the "History of the Jews." On turning over the "Family Bible" since the writing of my Letter, in the notes on the books of Exodus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, from the divine mission of Moses to his death, I have marked about forty additional passages, more or less in connexion with miraculous occurrences, as examples of that principle of interpretation, which I have here attributed to the "Society's Family Bible," but of which I fear that very faint, if indeed, generally speaking, any traces would be found in the corresponding passages of your "History."