
A DISSERTATION ON THE APOCRYPHAL WRITINGS

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Introduction

It is frequently said by the Jews¹, that after the death of the latter prophets, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, the Holy Ghost departed from Israel, or prophecy ceased; and that this is one of the five things wanting in the second temple, the Holy Ghost, that is, prophecy²; and that there was no prophet under that temple³; meaning, after the building of it was finished, for they suppose it continued whilst the three above prophets lived; and they all agree that Malachi was the last of the prophets; and whom Aben Ezra⁴ calls סוף נביאים, the end of the prophets, at whose death prophecy ceased: and if there were no spirit of prophecy, nor any prophet after those times, until prophecy began to dawn in John the Baptist, Malachi prophesies of, then there could be no books written by the inspiration of the Spirit of God within that period. The ceremonial books of the Old Testament, with the Jews⁵, are these, the five books of Moses, which we call Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy; the Prophets in this order, Joshua and Judges, Samuel and Kings, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, Isaiah and the twelve (whom we call the lesser prophets); the Hagiographa in this order, Ruth, Psalms, Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, the Song of Songs, Lamentations, Daniel, Esther, Ezra (which includes Nehemiah), and Chronicles. And with this account agrees Josephus⁶ who says the Jews have only

¹ T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 11. 1.

² Baal Aruch in voce כּבֵּר fol. 75. 3.

³ Vid Nizzachon Vet. p. 52. Ed. Wagenseil

⁴ Comment. in Mal. i. 1.

⁵ T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 14. 2.

⁶ Contr. Apion. 1. 1. sect. 8.

twenty-two books; five of which are the books of Moses; thirteen wrote by the prophets; and by making Judges and Ruth one book; I. and II. Samuel another; I. and II. Kings one book; and also reckoning Jeremiah and Lamentations but one; and the twelve minor prophets but one, as they are in Acts vii. 42. Ezra and Nehemiah one, and I. and II. Chronicles one, they come to just that number; and the other four, he says, contain hymns to God, and precepts relating to the life of men, which are Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Songs. The catalogue of the books of the Old Testament, which Melito⁷ brought from the east in the second century, contains the same books, excepting Nehemiah included in Ezra, and Esther, which are not mentioned, and no other, or more. Agreeably to all which Origen⁸ relates, that the books of the Old Testament, according to the Hebrew, are twenty-two; twenty-one of which he reckons and accounts for in the manner as above, making no mention of the twelve lesser prophets, which make one book. The same number of books is observed by Epiphanius⁹ in the fourth century, and reckoned canonical, and others not; and yet, notwithstanding this, there are several books written, between the times of Malachi the last of the prophets, and the times of the New Testament, which are not only accounted canonical by the Papists, but are translated and bound up in many Bibles set forth by Protestants, and even in our own; though much complained of by many great

⁷ Apud Euseb. Eccles. Hist, l. 4. c.

⁸ Apud ib. l. 6. c. 25.

⁹ De Mens & Ponderibus, vid. ib, contr. Hæres. l. 1. tom. 1. hæres. 8.

and good men, as having a tendency to lead the common people, especially, to look upon them as of equal authority with the inspired writings; particularly by that very learned countryman of ours, Mr Hugh Broughton, who observes, that

Placing the trifling Apocraphy betwixt both Testaments is an infinite injury to the high and holy Bible; and Jews think that our New Testament should be no better than the fables which we join to it, seeing commonly men join like to like; also they think we have no more judgment for the Old Testament than for the fables that go upon it.¹⁰

Very remarkable are the words of the very judicious and learned Dr. Lightfoot,

Tertullian (he says) calls the Prophet Malachi the bound or skirt of Judaism and Christianity, a stake that tells, that their promising ends, and performing begins; that prophesying concludes, and fulfilling takes place; there is not a span between these two plots of holy ground, the Old and New Testament, for they touch each other. What do the Papists then, when they put and chop in the Apocrypha for canonical Scripture, between Malachi and Matthew, law and Gospel? What do they but make a wall between the seraphim, that they cannot hear each other's cry? What do they but make a stop between the cherubim, that they cannot touch each other's wing? What do they but make a ditch between those grounds, that they cannot reach each other's coasts? What do they but remove the land mark of the Scriptures? and so are guilty of, cursed be he that removes his neighbour's mark, Deut. xxvii. 17. marriage of the Testaments? and so are guilty of the breach of, that which God hath joined together, let no man put asunder.¹¹

The books referred to, and which, as they stand in some copies of our Bibles, are, the 1st and 2nd of Esdras, Tobit, Judith, additions to the book of Esther, the Wisdom of Solomon, Ecclesiasticus, Baruch, and the Epistle of Jeremy¹²; the Song

¹⁰ Works, p. 657.

¹¹ Miscellanies, c. 32. in vol. 1. of his works, p. 1014.

¹² That is, the Letter of Jeremiah

of the Three Children, the History of Susanna, and of Bel and the Dragon; the Prayer of Manasseh, and I. and II. of the Maccabees. These books did not obtain, for the most part, much until the 9th and 10th centuries, and were in the 16th century established by the council of Trent. They are called Apocrypha, from the Greek word ἀπόκρυφος, to hide, because they were not received into the canon of the Scriptures, and were not allowed to be publicly read in the churches, but lay hid in the chests, closets, and libraries of men, where they were privately read; and where indeed they should have been kept, and not exposed to public view, at least not in the manner they are, that is, bound up with our Bibles; but should be separate, and read as other human writings are, with care and caution. So the Jews, when they would pronounce a book not canonical, or condemn it as apocryphal, use much the same language: it is said¹³, that once they had some doubt about Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, because some things at first sight seemed contradictory, and they had a mind לִגְנוֹז, to hide, treasure up, and keep them out of sight, or to make them apocryphal; but better considering the passages, and being satisfied with the sense of them, they did not hide or lay them up. I shall make some few remarks upon the above books, as they are placed in our Bibles.

¹³ T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 30. 2. Maimon Moreh Nevochim, par. 2. c. 28.1

1 and 2 Esdras

The first in order are the 1st and 2nd of Esdras, or, as sometimes called, the 3rd and 4th, the true Ezra and Nehemiah being accounted the 1st and 2nd; these are both reckoned by Jerome¹⁴ among the apocryphal writings, and not to be found among the Jews, and only to be regarded by such as delight in dreams; nor was there ever any Hebrew copy of either of them. Of the first of these, Badwell, a commentator of the apocryphal books, says, that neither a Hebrew nor a Greek copy of it were ever seen; but though there is not any reason to believe it ever was wrote in Hebrew, yet Greek copies of it have been: Junius translated it out of Greek; and it is both in Greek and Syriac, in Walton's Polyglott Bible. It begins with Josiah's keeping the passover in the eighteenth year of his reign, and reaches to the seventh of Artaxerxes; from whom Esdras had a commission to go up to Jerusalem, and look after the affairs of it. Excepting the idle story of the opinion of the three young men, one of which is said to be Zorobabel, concerning what was strongest, wine, woman, a king, or truth, which seems to be taken by the author out of Josephus¹⁵, the whole is a collection and extracts out of the books of Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah, and in which the writer does not always agree with them; and makes many mistakes, as when he makes Zorobabel to be a young man in the times of Darius, and Joachim to be the son of Zorobabel, ch. v. 5. whereas he was the son of

¹⁴ Præfat in Esdram, & c. tom. 3. fol. 7. G.

¹⁵ Antiqu. 1. 11. c. 3. sect. 2, & c. Vid Joseph. Ben Gorion, Heb. Hist. 1. i. c. 16, 17, 18, 19.

Jeshua, Neh. xii. 10. and calls Darius king of Assyria, whereas that monarchy was then at an end, and Darius was king of the Persians; and makes some things to be done in the times of Darius, which were done in the times of Cyrus¹⁶; see ch. iv. 48, 57, 58. compared with Ezra i. 32. and iii. 1. As for the second of Esdras, sometimes called the 4th, it never appeared in Hebrew or Greek, only in Latin, and is full of fables, dreams, and visions; and is so bad, that it was opposed in the council of Trent, and could not be carried for authentic there; though some things are borrowed out of it by the Latin church, and used in its office. Mr. Gregory¹⁷ makes mention of an Arabic manuscript of it, which he says gives it better credit and reputation. The writer of it seems to have been a Jewish Rabbi, by his making mention of Uriel the archangel, or Jeremiel, as in some copies, ch. v. 36. one of the four angels, which, according to the Jews¹⁸, stand round the throne of the divine majesty; and by the fable of Enoch, in some copies Behemoth, and Leviathan, the one ordained for a part of the world wherein are a thousand hills, and the other for another seventh part of it moist, ch. vi. 49, 52. and in like manner the Jews speak of Behemoth lying on a thousand hills, on which it feeds¹⁹; and of the Leviathan and his mate, created at the beginning; and of the latter being killed and salted, and reserved for the feast of the righteous in the days of the Messiah²⁰: and by his

¹⁶ Vid. Rainold. cens. Apocryph. prælect. 30, 31.

¹⁷ Preface to Notes and Observations, & c.

¹⁸ Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 2. fol. 179. 1. Pirke Eliezer, c. 4.

¹⁹ Vajikra Rabba, sect. 22. fol. 164. 2. Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 21. fol. 230 3.

²⁰ T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 74. 2.

suggesting that the Scriptures were entirely lost, ch. iv. 23. and xiv. 21. which seems calculated to support that notion, that that Ezra was divinely inspired, to write over again all the books of the Old Testament²¹ and from abundance of passages in this book, it appears that the author had read the New Testament, and particularly the book of the Revelation, whose style in some places he imitates, and manifestly refers to various parts of those writings; as when he speaks of the signs of the times, and of the third trumpet, and of many other things: so that he seems to have lived in the second century, and perhaps was a Jew become Christian, in name at least. Both these books are rejected by the Jews²².

Tobit

The book of Tobit stands next; whether it was originally wrote in Hebrew is a question; there are two Hebrew copies of it published, one by Munster and another by Fagius: the former had his from Oswald Schreckenfuchsius, as he himself says; and that of Fagius was what was published by the Jews at Constantinople, and which Mr. Gregory²³ takes to be the undoubted text of Tobit: and Castalio translated his out of a Hebrew copy; but there are so many Græcisms in it, as Fabricius²⁴ observes, as well as in those of Munster and Fagius, that they seem to

²¹ Vid Hottinger. Thesaur. Philolog. 1. 1. c. 2. quæst. 1. p. 112, & c.

²² Ganz, Tzemach David, par. 2. fol. 6. 1. R. Gedaliah, Shalshet Hakabala, fol. 55. 1.

²³ Preface to Notes and observations, & c. c. 3. p. 12.

²⁴ Bibliothec. Græc. 1. 3. c. 29. p. 744.

be translated out of the Greek language; wherefore the Greek copy is preferred by Junius, from which he made his translation. Jerome's translation of this book was out of a copy in the Chaldee language²⁵, in which perhaps it was first written by some Jew after the Babylonish captivity: for though Tobit is represented as carried captive by Salmaneser, who is called Enemessar; and mention is made of Sennacherib, and of Sarchedon, by whom Esarhaddon seems to be meant; and his son Tobias is made to live to the destruction of Nineveh by Nebuchadnezzar and Assuerus, which he is said to hear of before his death; yet this history seems to have been written many years after, as might be concluded by its original being Chaldee, no books being written in that language before the Babylonish captivity; and from the name of an angel in it, the names of which were brought from Babylon, as the Jews say²⁶, as Michael, Raphael, Gabriel; and especially it must be, if Jerome's version is right, according to which in ch. xiv. 7, it is said, the house of God, which in it (Israel) is burnt, shall be built again; though indeed, in other versions, it is delivered as a prophecy: to which may be added that R. Gedaliah says²⁷, there are some that say that this affair of Tobit was after the destruction of the first temple, in the days of the captivity of Babylon; and if so, it cannot be a true history, but a spurious work. In ch. xiv. 10, mention is made of Aman, who lived in the times of Esther, some ages after this story; nor is it likely that two men,

²⁵ Præfat. in Tobiaín, tom. 3. fol. 7.

²⁶ Bereshit Rabba, sect. 48. fol. 42. 4.

²⁷ Shalshet Hakabala, fol. 80. 2.

father and son, should live to such an age as these did, the one 158, and the other 127 years. And certain it is, it could never be written by divine inspiration, for no lie is of the truth; whereas a most notorious one is told by the angel, who affirmed himself to be Azarias, the son of Ananias the great, ch. v. 12. and which appears by the fabulous stories told in it, of Sarah's seven husbands being killed by an evil spirit, one after another, as soon as married to her, ch. ii. 8. and of the evil spirit being driven away by the smell and smoke of the heart and liver of a fish, being laid on the ashes or embers of perfumes: and of his being bound by the angel in the uttermost parts of Egypt, whither he fled, ch. viii. 2, 3. and of the cure of Tobit's blindness with the gall of the fish, ch. xi. 8-13. for whatever may be said of the latter, since the gall of the fish *callionymus*, which this is supposed to be, according to Pliny²⁸, is good against the whiteness of the eyes, and to remove superfluous flesh from them, though scarcely in such an instantaneous manner as here; yet it can never be thought that spirits, which are incorporeal, can be affected with the smell and smoke of any thing. It seems to savour of a Jewish fable; and there is a great deal of reason to think the whole was wrote by a Jewish Rabbi, mention being made of the Angel Raphael, one of the four angels, which, according to the Jews, surrounded the throne of God, as before observed of Uriel; and here said to be one of the seven angels which present the prayers of the saints to him, ch. xii.

²⁸ Nat. Hist. 1. 32. c. 7.

15. So Elxai, the heretic, who was originally a Jew, speaks of the angels of prayer²⁹; and with the Jews there is mention made of an angel, whose name was Sandalphon, who was appointed over the prayers of the righteous³⁰; and the name of the evil spirit Asmodeus, ch. iii. 8. 17. is known by the Jewish Rabbins and is so called from שׂמך, which signifies to destroy, the same with Apollyon, a destroying angel; the Jews say he was the king of devils; and that Naamah, the sister of Tubal-cain, was his mother, of whom many demons were born, as Elias Levita³¹ says; but he himself is of opinion that he is the same with Samael, the angel of death, the Jews often speak of: this Asmodeus is said to be the evil spirit that drove Solomon from his throne, when he grew proud and haughty³². The book seems to be written, to recommend mercy, charity, and alms-deeds, which are highly extolled in Rabbinical writings: alms and beneficence are answerable, they say, to the whole law³³; and so great is the efficacy of alms, that it causes the redemption to draw nigh³⁴; and delivers from the judgment of hell³⁵; and entitles to eternal life³⁶; yet this book is not reckoned authentic by them; they say this is one of the books the Christians add to their Scriptures, and is received by them, but not by us³⁷.

²⁹ Epiphan, contr. Hæres. 1. 1. hæres. 19.

³⁰ Zohar in Gen. fol. 97. 2. & in Exod. fol. 99. 1. Shemot Rabba, sect. 21. fol. 106. 2.

³¹ In Tishbi, fol. 21

³² Targum in Ecclesiast. i. 12.

³³ T. Hieros. Peah, fol. 15. 2, 3.

³⁴ Vid Buxtorf. Lex Talmud. col. 1891.

³⁵ T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 7. 1.

³⁶ Roshhashanah, fol. 4. 1.

³⁷ Ganz, Tzemach David, par. 2. fol. 6. 1. R. Azarias, Meor Enayim, c. 57. fol. 175. 2.

Judith

The history of Judith follows upon the former. This book does not appear to have been written originally in Hebrew, nor is it received by the Jews³⁸. Origen expressly says³⁹ the Jews have it not in the Hebrew tongue; though Munster seems not to doubt of a Hebrew copy of it in his time at Constantinople; which yet might be no other than a translation. That which Jerome translated from was in Chaldee⁴⁰; and very probably it might be written in that language originally, and perhaps by some Jew, fond of superstitious rites and ceremonies; see ch. viii. 6. who feigned this story for the honour of his nation, though in a very foolish and romantic manner, and it seems after the Babylonish captivity; for it speaks of the Jews as having been led captive into a land not theirs, and of the temple of their God being cast to the ground, and their cities taken by the enemies; and of their being now returned, and come up from the places where they were scattered; and of their being newly returned from the captivity, and yet so long as that the temple was rebuilt, and its vessels and altar sanctified, which are frequently mentioned in it; see ch. iv. 3. and v. 18, 19. and ix. 1. and xvi. 20. all which is utterly inconsistent with this affair being transacted either in the twelfth or in the seventeenth or eighteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar, where another contradiction may be observed, which was before the destruction of Jerusalem, and captivity of the Jews; and the

³⁸ Ganz, ib. Azarias, ib

³⁹ Epist. ad African. Apud Fabric. Bibliothec. Græc. 1. 3. c. 29. p. 742.

⁴⁰ Præfat. in Judith, tom. 3. fol. 7. M.

Jewish chronologer⁴¹ places this history, according to some, in the reign of Cambyses, who is supposed to be called Nebuchadnezzar, that being said to be a common name to the kings of Babylon, as Pharaoh to the kings of Egypt: but that does not appear by any instance; and if it was common to the kings of Babylon, yet not surely to a king of Persia, for such Cambyses was; and besides, he did not reign so long as this king did; for, according to Ptolemy's canon, he reigned but eight years in all. It is very improbable that there ever was such an affair transacted as is here recorded, for, excepting the name of Nebuchadnezzar, there is no other to be met with elsewhere, in sacred or profane history, that can be thought to refer to those times. The name of the woman, Judith, nor her story, are to be met with in Josephus; nor such a place as Bethulia, in the land of Israel; nor any mention of Joacim, a high-priest, neither in the Scriptures, nor in Josephus's catalogue of them under the first temple; nor of Achior, the Amonite; nor of Arphaxad, king of the Medes, who is said to build Ecbatana, which, according to Herodotus⁴², was built by Dejoces; and therefore Dr. Prideaux⁴³ conjectures he is meant by Arphaxad, as Saosduchinus by Nebuchadnezzar; nor any such person as Holofernes, Nebuchadnezzar's general wherefore Grotius takes it to be a parabolical fiction, and that by Judith is meant Judea; by Bethulia, the temple; by the sword from thence, the prayers of the saints; by Nebuchadnezzar the devil; and by his kingdom

⁴¹ Ganz, Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 22. 1. & par. 2. fol. 8. 2.

⁴² Clio. sive 1. 1. c. 98.

⁴³ Connexion, & c. par. 1. B. 1. p. 35, 36.

of Assyria, the devil's kingdom, pride; by Holofernes, his instrument and agent in persecution, Antiochus Epiphanes, who made himself master of Judea; and Joacim or Eliakim, signify, that God would arise and help her, and cut him off: and Mr. Hugh Broughton,

Long before him, seems to take it in such a light, who says, the Jews ' commonwealth is properly Judith, and a close warning framed, that Judith, the Jews ' state, calling for vengeance by great Alexander, will cut off the head of Holofernes, the Persian state.⁴⁴

However, it is plain enough, that, be it a real history, it could not be penned by inspiration; for this woman Judith declares to Holofernes she would tell him no lie, which yet she did; and says they were things told and declared to her, the contrary to which she knew; nay, she prays that God would smite by the deceit of her lips the prince with the servant, ch. ix. 10. and xi. 5, 19. she uses very impure and indecent language in speaking of the rape of Dinah, and commends and praises the fact of Simeon, which was condemned by the Lord,, ch. ix. 2. see Gen. xxxiv. 30. and xlix. 5, 6. mention is made of the sons of the Titans, and of the high giants, referring to Heathenish romances, which is not agreeable to an inspired writer, ch. xvi. 7. nor is it probable that such a town as Bethulia is represented to be should stand out against such a numerous army, or that that should flee upon the death of a single person; and many more improbabilities might be observed in this account, particularly in the enterprise of Judith, and her success. The history is closed with

⁴⁴ Works, p. 658

observing, that Israel had no trouble from their enemies all her days henceforward, and a long time after her death; which peace must have lasted 80 years at least, which was what the Jews never enjoyed since they were a nation, as Dr. Prideaux observes; for, adds he, allowing her to have been 45 years old at her killing of Holofernes, there must be 60 years after to the time of her death (for she lived to be 105); and a long time after in the text cannot imply less than 20 years; and if she was but 25, which is an age much more reasonable to suppose to captivate with her beauty, as well as better agrees with her being called a fair damsel, or beautiful young woman, ch. xii. 13. this time of prosperity must have lasted 100 years, and will not agree with any time either before or after the captivity to which may be added one observation more, that in Jerome's version, which is thought to be the best, it is said, that “the festival of this victory was received by the Hebrews into the number of their holy days, and was observed by them from that time to the present day:” which last clause betrays the writer of the history to have lived a considerable time after the fact: now no such festival is to be found in the Jewish calendar, as the learned Selden⁴⁵ observes; not in the Palestine calendar of Ben Simeon; nor in the canons of computation of R Nahasson; not in the Hebrew calendar published by Munster; or in that of Scaliger, Petavius, and Genebrard. The appointment of this festival, to commemorate the deliverance wrought, is by R.

⁴⁵ De Synedriis, l. 3. c. 13. 1210, 1211.

Azarias⁴⁶ said to be by Jeshua, the father of Joacim, after the captivity, whom he makes to be the writer of this history; but what he says is took out of Pseudo-Philo⁴⁷, published by Annii, the lying monk of Viterbo, whom he has copied word for word. Some Jewish writers⁴⁸ speak indeed of this affair of Judith and Holofernes, as commemorated on the 25th of Cisleu, the day observed for the dedication of the temple and altar, in the times of the Maccabees, with which this can have no connexion: and, after all, it seems another Judith is meant, a daughter of one of the Maccabees, that cut off the head of Nicanor⁴⁹; a story equally fabulous as this. In short, it is surprising that this woman Judith should be called, by the writer of this history, a godly woman, and one that feared the Lord, when she was guilty of notorious lying; of acting the part of a baud: of profane swearing, swearing by the life of Nebuchadnezzar and his power; of murder, and of speaking in praise of it⁵⁰.

Expanded Esther

The additions to the book of Esther contain six or seven chapters not to be found in any Hebrew copies; the author of which Calmet⁵¹ takes to be Lysimachus,

⁴⁶ Meor Enayim, c. 32. fol. 106. 2.

⁴⁷ Philonis Breviarium, l. 2. fol. 235. Ed. Annii.

⁴⁸ Jotzer Chamuca in Seder Tephillot, fol. 133. 2 Ed. Basil. See Leo Modena's History of the Rites, & c. of the Jews, c. 9.

⁴⁹ Shalshet Hakabala, fol. 17. 1, 2.

⁵⁰ Vid. Rainold. Censur. Apocryph. prælect. 73. p. 854, & c.

⁵¹ Dictionary, in the word Esther.

mentioned in ch. xi. 1. who, because in the true Esther mention is made of some letters of Ahasuerus or Artaxerxes, this writer has given us copies of them, as well as of the prayers of Mordecai and Esther, and of the dream of the former; in all which there are plain marks of forgery and stupidity. There are many things in them directly contrary to the book of Esther. The writer of these additions makes the affair of the eunuchs intending to take away the king's life to be in the second year of his reign, ch. xi. 2. and xii. 1. whereas the true history begins with the third year of his reign, when Vashti was his queen; and it was after his marriage to Esther that that affair happened, even in the seventh year of his reign, ch. i. 3. and ii. 16, 21. he represents Mordecai as a servitor in the king's court before, and as being ordered upon his discovery of the eunuchs to serve there still, and that he was rewarded for what he did, ch. xi. 3. and xii. 5. whereas, in the true Esther, it is expressly said there was nothing done for him some time after, ch. vi. 3. he makes Haman to be incensed against Mordecai, because of those two eunuchs, ch. xii. 6. whereas the only reason given in the book of Esther is, because he would not bow to him, ch. iii. 5. he speaks of Haman as in great honour with the king, at the time that the eunuchs were discovered by Mordecai, ch. xii. 6. but, according to the true Esther, it was after these things that Haman was promoted, ch. iii. 1. he makes the king to call him a Macedonian, when he was an Agagite or an Amalekite; and foolishly to suggest, that he had a design to translate the kingdom of the Persians to

the Macedonians, a people scarce known to the Persians at that time, and from whom they had nothing to fear; and of which change there was not the least shew of probability, ch. xvi. 10, 11. and as foolishly to order the several Heathen nations subject to him to keep the feast of Purim, as the Jews did, ver. 22. to which the two lots, one for the people of God, and another for all the Gentiles, seem to relate, ch. x. 10. and as stupid is it to make the king speak a language he understood not, calling the Jews the children of the most high and most mighty living God, ch. x. 16. as well as to make Esther use unbecoming language, calling her husband lion, and his bed the bed of the uncircumcised, which she abhorred, ch. xiv. 13, 15. and either the author tells a lie himself, or makes the queen to tell one, that the king looked very fiercely upon her, which caused her to turn pale and faint, and yet that she saw him as an angel of the Lord, and his countenance full of grace, ch. xv. 7, 13, 14. The dream of Mordecai and his prayer, and that of Esther, are in Pseudo-Josephus, or in Josephus Ben Gorion⁵², with some variation; but whether this writer took them from him, or he from this writer, is not certain. Of these additions, as well as of the preceding history of Judith, the Jewish chronologer says⁵³, these are added by the Christians to their Scriptures, and received by them, but not by us.

⁵² Heb. Hist. l. 2. c. 2.

⁵³ Ganz, Tzemach David, par. 2. fol. 6. 1.

Wisdom of Solomon

The book of Wisdom is not only in our version called the Wisdom of Solomon, but in the Greek, Syriac, and Arabic versions; and the author of it would be thought to be Solomon, ch. ix. 7, 8. and yet it is plain he was not; and therefore, be he who he will, can never be an inspired writer, that is guilty of such a fraud, and takes to himself a false name; for as Calmet⁵⁴ observes, if this book really belongs to this prince, how comes it that the Jews never admitted it as canonical? how comes it not to be found in the Hebrew? that no one has ever seen it in that language? that the translator says nothing of it, and that the style shews no tokens of the pretended original? he observes, we find none of those Hebraisms in it, which are hardly to be avoided by those who translate a book from the Hebrew; that the author wrote Greek very well, had read Plato and the Greek poets, and even borrows expressions peculiar to them, as Ambrosia, the river of forgetfulness, or Lethe, the kingdom of Pluto, or Hades, & c. ch. i. 14. and vii. 13. and xix. 20. It appears very evident to have been written long after the times of Solomon; for the author speaks of the people of God being then held in subjection by their enemies, ch. xv. 14. which was not true of them in Solomon's time: there are many passages which seem to be taken from, or refer to, the prophets Isaiah, Ezekiel, and even Malachi, the last of them, as ch. ix. 13. and xi. 22. from Isa. xl. 13, 15. ch. v. 17, 18. from Isa. lix. 16.

⁵⁴ Dictionary, in the word Wisdom.

ch. i. 13. from Ezek. xviii. 32. ch. v. 6. from Mal. iv. 2. nay, what he says of the righteous, that calls himself the child of the Lord, and was made to reprove our thoughts, & c. ch. ii. 12-19. when compared with many passages in the New Testament, it seems pretty plain that he intended Jesus Christ, as Grotius thinks; so that the author appears to have been a Christian, and this to be the work of a fraudulent one, unbecoming his character; see also ch. vii. 26. compared with Heb. i. 3. Col. i. 15. and there are many things in it false and foolish, and contrary to sound doctrine and Christian charity; as when he condemns the marriage-bed as sinful, and represents bastards as having no hope of salvation left them, ch. iii. 13, 18. he speaks meanly of the divine Logos, or Wisdom of God, calling him a vapour and stream, ch. vii. 25. and countenances the notion of Plato and Origen, of souls passing into bodies according to their merits; for I, says he, being good, came into a body undefiled, ch. viii. 20. he makes the murder of Abel to be the cause of the flood, whereas the Scripture assigns another reason of it, ch. x. 3, 4. he says the Egyptians were tormented with their own abominations, or idols, ch. xii. 23, 24. whereas, though they worshipped dogs, cats, crocodiles, & c. yet not frogs, locusts, and lice, with which they were plagued and the original of idolatry he makes to be a mournful father making an image for his little child, and honouring it as a god, ch. xiv. 15. and he says many things concerning the Egyptians and their plagues, which savour of Jewish fables, in ch. xvii. and xviii. and xix. and particularly the

Rabbinical notion of the manna agreeing to every palate⁵⁵, as in ch. xvi. 20, 21. wherefore, upon the whole, it is pretty strange that so very learned a man as Mr. Gregory⁵⁶ should say, that “the Wisdom of Solomon is a book worthy enough of that name, and comparing with any that was ever written by the hand of man:” and he is also mistaken in saying, “that this book was written in Chaldee is certain, for R. Moses bar Nachman quoteth it so out of ch. vii. 5. & c. and ver. 17. in the preface to his comment on the Pentateuch;” whereas the sense of that Rabbi, as Hottinger⁵⁷ observes, was not that that Chaldee copy was an original and authentic one, but that the book was translated into the Chaldee or Syriac language: and so R. Azarias⁵⁸ represents it as a translation; and what is quoted from it by that Rabbi agrees with the Syriac version of it. The book is rejected by the Jews⁵⁹ as not canonical. It is thought to have been wrote by Philo the Jew, as it seems from the diction and matter of it⁶⁰.

Ecclesiasticus, or, The Wisdom of Ben Sira, or, Sirach

The book of Ecclesiasticus, which follows, is a much more valuable work than the former, and bears a greater resemblance to the words of Solomon, especially his Proverbs, than that does, yet not of divine inspiration. The translator and publisher

⁵⁵ Shemot Rabba, sect. 25. fol. 108. 4. Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 7. fol. 188. 1.

⁵⁶ Preface to Notes and Observations, & c.

⁵⁷ Thesaurus Philol. 1. 1. c. 3. p. 317.

⁵⁸ Meor Enayim, c. 57. fol. 175.

⁵⁹ Vid. Ganz, Tzemach David, par. 2. fol. 6. 1.

⁶⁰ Vid. Hieron. Præfat, in Prov. fol. 8. K. & Rainold, Censur. Apocryph. prælect. 22. p. 179.

of it was Jesus the son of Sirach, whose grandfather Jesus, by reading the scriptures and other good books, attained to a considerable share of knowledge; and he not only collected the grave and short sentences of wise men that went before him, but added some of his own; which work, being almost perfected, fell into the hands of his son Sirach, when he died; and which he left to his son Jesus: and being written in Hebrew, with great labour and diligence he translated it into another tongue (the Greek), and desires the reader's candour and pardon, wherein he might seem to come short of the sense of some words he laboured to interpret; all which shews it was not written by divine inspiration, nor was it pretended to be: and there are some things in it contrary to sound doctrine; for, following the Greek version of Prov. viii. 22, he speaks of the divine Logos or Wisdom as created by God, ch. xxiv. 9. and he makes honouring parents, and giving alms, to be an atonement for sins, ch. iii. 3, 30. and he says other things contrary to charity, as when he dissuades from helping sinners, and giving to the ungodly, ch. xii. 4, 5. he absurdly says that Samuel prophesied after his death, and shewed the king his end, ch. xlvi. 20. and he suggests that Elias the Tishbite is ordered to pacify the wrath of the Lord and to turn the father to the son; taking the words in Mal. iv. 5, 6, to belong to him, when they are spoken of John the Baptist, ch. xlvi. 10. This writer favours, as has been observed⁶¹, the Arian heresy, necromancy or consulting the dead, and

⁶¹ Vid. Rainold. Censur. Apocryph. Prælect. 75. p. 886

the error of the Jews, who fancy that Elias will come in person before the Messiah. It is a question with learned men, whether the son of Sirach, the publisher of this book, is the same with Ben Sira, often spoken of in Jewish writings their names agree very well, and many of the sayings of Ben Sira are in the Book of Ecclesiasticus⁶², which are to be found in the Talmud, and other Jewish writings, at least very near the same; but the accounts of their age, in which they lived, differ: Ben Sira, some say⁶³, was the son or a nephew of Jeremiah; whereas the grandfather of Sirach must live after Simeon the high-priest, the son of Onias, whom he commends, ch. 1. and his grandson lived in the times of Euergetes king of Egypt; not the first of that name, who succeeded Ptolemy Philadelphus, but the second, that followed Philometor; and here the author of Juchasin⁶⁴ places him; and it was in the thirty-eighth year, not of that king's reign, that he was in Egypt, for neither of the kings of that name reigned so long, according to Ptolemy's canon, but of his own age, when and where he translated and finished this book: wherefore, as this account carries Ben Sira too high for the son of Sirach, so he is brought down too low by Solomon Virga⁶⁵, who places him after the times of the Emperor Augustus; however, it is judged by many writers, both Jewish and Christian, that one and the same person is meant: from whence some would form

⁶² Ch. xi. 1. in T. Bab. Beracot, c. 6. Ch. iii. 21. in Chagiga, fol. 13. 1. Ch. vi. 6. and ix. 1. and xi. 29, 30, 34. and xxv. 26. and xxvi. 1, 3. in Jebamot, fol. 63. 2. Ch. iii. 21. in Bereshit Rabba, sect. 8. fol. 7. 3. Compare ch. xiv. 11, 12. with T. Bab. Erubin. fol. 54. 1.

⁶³ Shalshet Hakabala, fol. 12. 2. & 13. 1. & 82. 2.

⁶⁴ Fol. 138. 2.

⁶⁵ Shebet Judab, p. 4. Ed. Gent.

an argument in favour of this book being canonical, because Ben Sira is by the Jews placed among the Hagiographa, as it seems from a passage in the Talmud⁶⁶; it is said in the Hagiographa, “every fowl resorts to its kind, and the sons of men to what is like to them:” upon which the Totephototh observe, there is no such Scripture; but perhaps it is in the book of Ben Sira: and there is something like it in Ecclesiast. xiii. 16. and xxvii. 9. every beast loveth his like, and every man loveth his neighbour; upon which Mr. Gregory asks⁶⁷, was Ben Sira reckoned for canonical too? no, he was not; nor is any such thing implied in the above observation, but the contrary, since it is expressly affirmed it was not Scripture and the word Cetubim, or Hagiographa, is a word of an ambiguous meaning, sometimes to be taken in a strict sense for writings inspired by the Holy Ghost; and at other times more largely, as to take in other writings of men of some note, and frequently read: and that his writings were not reckoned canonical is certain, or otherwise they would never have been forbidden to be read, as they expressly are, for it is said⁶⁸, it is forbidden to read the books of Ben Sira; and they are all of them called foreign or profane books, of which Ecclesiasticus is reckoned one⁶⁹; and is particularly said by Manasseh ben Israel⁷⁰ to be apocryphal and R. Zacutus⁷¹ relates, that Ben Sira composed two books, which are joined with the twenty-four

⁶⁶ T. Bab. Bava Kama, fol. 92. 2.

⁶⁷ Ut supra.

⁶⁸ T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 100. 2.

⁶⁹ R. Azarias, Meor Enayim, fol. 29.1, 2.

⁷⁰ De Creatione, probl. 10. p. 45.

⁷¹ Juchasin, fol. 138. 2.

by the Romans or Latins; that is, by them only, not by the Jews: and R. David Ganz⁷², reckoning the several apocryphal books in their order, and this among the rest, says, they are received by them (the Christians), but not by us.

Baruch and The Letter of Jeremiah

The book of Baruch is a mere romance; both Jerome⁷³ and Epiphanius⁷⁴ say it never was reckoned among the Hebrew books, or esteemed by the Jews; who observe⁷⁵, it is indeed received by the Christians, meaning the Papists, but not by us: they will not allow Baruch to be a prophet; and sometimes represent him as grieved and disturbed, that seeing he was so long a disciple and an amanuensis of the Prophet Jeremiah, the spirit of prophecy should never fall upon him⁷⁶. The writer of this book pretends that Baruch was in Babylon when he wrote it; but it does not appear, from any authentic records, that he ever was there. The Jews indeed, to keep up the chain of their successors, by whom the oral law was handed down, say that both he and Jeremiah were there, and died there; that he received from Jeremiah, and Ezra from him; but it is not evident that either of them were there. It is further suggested, as if it was written in the fifth year of Jeconiah's captivity; and various things are related, which are improbable, absurd, and

⁷² Tzemach David, par. 2. fol. 6. 1.

⁷³ Præfat. in Jeremiam, tom. 3. 4. fol. 9. C..

⁷⁴ De Mens, & Ponder

⁷⁵ Ganz, Tzemach David, par. 2. fol. 6, 1. R. Azarias, Meor Enayim, c. 55. fol. 169. 2.

⁷⁶ Jarchi, Kimchi, and Abarbinel, in Jer. xlv. 3. Abendana in Miclol Yophi in ib. Maimon. More Nevochim, par. c. 32. p. 286. e Juchasin, fol. 12. 1.

inconsistent; as that the words of this book were read to Jeconiah by the river Sud, near Babylon, of which river no mention is made by any other writer; and very unlikely it is that Jeconiah should be present at the reading of it, when he was a prisoner at Babylon, and continued so for the space of thirty-seven years, until he was released by Evil-merodach coming to the throne. Nor was there, at the time of the reading of this book, a high-priest at Jerusalem of the name of Joachim, to whom money collected was sent; the name of the then high-priest was Seraiah, who was afterwards carried captive with Zedekiah: nor does there appear to be any reason for making such a collection, and sending it to Jerusalem; or that the captives in Babylon were in a capacity of doing it, any more than they in Jerusalem stood in need of it: and very absurdly it is suggested, that at the same time the vessels of the temple, which had been carried away, and which Zedekiah had made, were returned; whereas we nowhere read of any vessels he did make, nor is there any reason to believe he ever made any; and if he did, they could not be carried away until he himself was, which was not till some years after this: and the whole seems as if it was purposely calculated to verify the prophecies of the false prophets, Jer. xxvii. 16. and xxviii. 3. The Jews are directed to pray for Nebuchadnezzar, and his son Balthasar; whereas Balthasar, or Belshazzar, was not his immediate son and successor, and it is very probable was not now born, for there were thirty-two years to come of Jeconiah's imprisonment, from whence he

was loosed when Evil-merodach came to the throne; and according to Ptolemy's canon he reigned two years, and after him Neriglissar four years, and then Belshazzar succeeded. And after all, why is not Evil-merodach, the immediate son and successor, rather recommended? some indeed take the fifth year, in which this book is pretended to be written, to be the fifth after the destruction of Jerusalem, the burning of the city, and the carrying Zedekiah and the people captives; and indeed there are various things that agree with this; and all that is said from ch. i. 14, to the end of the book, supposes it but then this will very little, if at all, lessen the number of the mistakes and blunders in it, but will rather increase them; for if the city was now destroyed and burnt, what folly was it to collect money, and send it thither to buy sacrifices with, to offer on the altar, when there were neither city, temple, nor altar standing; not to take notice of the phrase of making or preparing manna, which, if intended, must be monstrously absurd; but perhaps the minchah, or meat-offering is meant. After all, the writer manifestly betrays himself, and makes it clearly appear that he wrote after the 70-years captivity were ended, since in ch. i. 15. & c. he borrows many expressions from the Prophet Daniel, which he delivered at this time; unless any one can imagine that that holy prophet borrowed his language from such an absurd writer as this. The epistle of Jeremy⁷⁷, with which the book concludes, is neither written in his style, nor in the style of the

⁷⁷ Once again, the Letter of Jeremiah

Scriptures; and expresses generations by decads, or the term of ten years, nowhere used in the sacred writings, nor in any other writer.

The Song of the Three Holy Children (Expanded Daniel)

The Song of the three children in the furnace was neither in the Hebrew nor in the Syriac languages, according to Theodoret, in his time, who wrote upon it; though there are since translations of it into the Syriac and Arabic tongues: great part of it is taken out of the 148th Psalm, or done in imitation of it; and another part of it is entirely deprecatory, and quite disagreeable to such a deliverance wrought; and the account given of the flame streaming above the furnace forty and nine cubits seems fabulous and romantic; and of the angel's smiting the flame of fire out of the oven, and making a moist whistling wind in it, is not only of the same cast, but contrary to Dan. iii. 25. where the three men are said to walk in the midst of it.

Susanna and the Elders (Expanded Daniel)

The history of Susanna is a mere fable, and is rejected by the Jews; it is one of the books of which they say⁷⁸, they are received by the Nazarenes, but not by us: and that it was not written originally in Hebrew, but in Greek, is abundantly manifest from the allusion, in the punishment pronounced upon the elders, to the mastic and

⁷⁸ Ganz, Tzemach David, par. 2. fol. 6. 2.

holm-trees, in the Greek language, under which they said they found Susanna and the young man together. The whole is full of improbabilities and untruths; as that at the beginning of the captivity, as it must be, since Daniel was a youth; that Joacim, the husband of Susanna, should so soon become a rich man, have a large house and garden, and be resorted to by the captive Jews; or that there should be so soon, or even at all, judges allowed to the Jews in Babylon, to take cognizance of their affairs, and especially of life and death; and that Daniel, who as soon as he was carried captive to Babylon, and who was selected with others, and brought up in the king's court, should be at liberty, and have leisure to converse with the Jews, and should be admitted, being so young, to sit down with the elders of Israel, and be allowed to examine and judge of this affair: nor is the story itself likely, that Susanna should go into the garden to wash at noon-day, and yet be unprovided with materials; that she should send both her maids away to fetch her oil and wash-balls, and be left alone; and that since she intended to wash, that the garden was not thoroughly searched first, to see if any person was secretly lurking in it, and care taken that all the doors and avenues to it were shut, as it is plain they were not; nor is it probable that these elders would have made such an attempt, whilst her maidens were gone for the above things, when they might expect they would return before they could accomplish their design, and so be detected; with many other things, which might be observed in the account: add to which, that the writer

makes mention of a passage of Scripture, nowhere to be found in it, ver 5. and distinguishes between the daughters of Israel and of Judah, over the former of which these elders are said to have prevailed, and to have kept company with, ver. 57. whereas those had been carried captive by Salmaneser a hundred years before, or more; and the latter he calls Susanna, and yet makes Daniel to call her a daughter of Israel too, ver. 48. and, upon the whole, Africanus⁷⁹ might well suspect this history to be spurious and fictitious.

Bel and the Dragon (Expanded Daniel)

The story of Bel and the Dragon is as great a romance as ever was wrote, full of the most ridiculous, absurd, and monstrous things that could be thought of. It is not credible that Bel, which was an idol of the Babylonians, should be worshipped by Cyrus the Persian; and if he did worship it, it can never be thought he should be so grossly stupid as to imagine that an image made of brass and clay could really eat and drink, which was never supposed of any idol-statue by the grossest of Heathen idolaters: besides, Bel, and the rest of the Babylonian images, were destroyed and broken to pieces by Cyrus when Babylon was taken, as was foretold, Isa. xlvi. 1. Jer. 1. 2. and li. 44. nor is the manner, in which the fraud of Bel's eating such large provisions every day was detected, plausible; namely, by ordering the king's

⁷⁹ Epist. ad Origen. apud Euseb. Eccl. Hist. 1. 6. c. 31.

servants to strew ashes throughout the temple, whereby the print of the footsteps of the priests and their families were discovered, who came in by a privy door and ate the provisions; for, as this was done by the king's servants, it is much some of them had not discovered it to the priests; and besides, as the priests knew what Daniel was about, to make discovery of their intrigues, upon the first sight of the ashes they might have concluded at once for what purpose they were strowed, and after they had took away the provisions, might, and doubtless would, have spread new ashes over their footsteps, and so have disappointed Daniel in his views. And though Daniel may be supposed to take a more effectual way to destroy the dragon, yet not as to shew any thing extraordinary and supernatural; but it is beyond all belief that the Babylonians, who were just subdued by Cyrus, and they and all they had put into the hands of the Persians, should come and menace the king, and have such power over him as to oblige him to deliver Daniel into their hands. The story of the lion's den, and of his being cast into it, and the circumstances attending, are monstrously fabulous and incredible, as that two bodies of men, as Calmet⁸⁰ himself understands it, who credits the story in ver. 31. or two slaves, as it is not in the margin, should be cast every day into the den to be devoured by the lions two slaves, as there should be so many condemned to death every day for capital crimes they were guilty of; or that such cruelty should be exercised continually in

⁸⁰ Dictionary, in the word Dantel.

the reign of such a prince as Cyrus; nor is it true that Daniel was cast into the den of lions in his reign, but in the reign of Darius, Dan. vi. and upon another account; and a most fabulous and false story is told of an angel taking the Prophet Habacuc by the hair of the head, and carrying him from Judea to Babylon with a bowl of bread and pottage to feed Daniel in the den; whereas Habacuc lived before the captivity, and prophesied of the Chaldeans by name coming against Jerusalem to destroy it, Hab. i. 6. this the Arabs ascribe to Jeremiah⁸¹: nor is it likely that the king should be seven days before he went to the den to bewail Daniel, whose favourite he was. It is astonishing that such an idle romantic story should be added to the Scriptures, or bound up with them, or be admitted to be read in public congregations, by any that call themselves Christians, to the stumbling of Turks and Jews; the latter observe⁸² that these stories are written in a book called Bel, and it is received by them (the Christians), but not by us. Indeed Josephus Ben Gorion⁸³ tells the like story, and so do the Rabbins⁸⁴, who say that Nebuchadnezzar had a dragon, which Daniel by his leave destroyed, by putting nails into his straw he ate, which tore his entrails, to which they apply Jer. li. 44.

⁸¹ Vid. Bochart. Hierozoic. par. 1. 1. 1. c. 3. col. 749, 750.

⁸² Ganz, Tzemach David, par. 2. fol. 7. 2.

⁸³ Hist. Jud. 1. 1. c. 11, 13, 14. m Bereshit Rabba, sect. 68. fol. 61. 3

⁸⁴ Bereshit Rabba, sect. 68. fol. 61. 3

The Prayer of Manasseh

The prayer of Manasseh never appeared in the Hebrew language; and though there is some devotion in it, yet there is no reason to believe it is the composition of Manasseh king of Israel; but because, when he was in chains in Babylon, it is said he repented and humbled himself before God and prayed, 2 Chron. xxxiii. 12, 13. some officious person has composed a prayer for him; and it seems to have been framed by one of a pharisaical spirit, since he speaks of just persons, as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as without sin, and who stood in no need of repentance, and for whom that is not appointed, see Luke xv. 7.

1 Maccabees

Next follow the books of the Maccabees, first and second, so called from Maccabeus, the surname of Judas, the third son of Matthias, a priest of Modin, whose exploits, and those of his father and brethren, are recorded in them. Learned men differ much in the derivation of this name; Isidore Pelusiotasays⁸⁵, in the Persic language it signifies lord; Drusius⁸⁶ derives it from כבה, to extinguish, and interprets it an extinguisher; he being an instrument of extinguishing the enemies of the people of God, and of the civil wars among them. Hottinger⁸⁷ thinks it may

⁸⁵ Epist. 1. 3. ep.

⁸⁶ Explicat. tituli 1 Maccab.

⁸⁷ Thesaur. Philolog. 1. 2. c. 2. p. 529.

be formed from the Arabic word כבא, to prostrate or cast to the ground, as he did great numbers of his enemies; but, to omit many others which may be seen in Calmet⁸⁸, and other writers, the more common opinion is, that the four letters מכבי are the initial letters of the words in the Hebrew text of Exod. xv. 11. who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods? which were on his ensign, standard, or banner. The name is peculiar to Judas, though it is given to all his brethren, see 1 Maccab. ii. 4, 66. and iii. 1. and because of the valiant things done by them, recorded in these books, they have this general title. These writings, however useful in history, are not received by the Jews⁸⁹ into the canon of the Scriptures; and they are particularly excepted out of them by Origen⁹⁰ in the catalogue he has given, who speaks of them as extra books, and says they were inscribed Sarbeth Sarbaneel, which I should choose to render the prince of the house or family, the prince of the children of God; which seems to have a special respect to Judas Maccabeus, by which it should seem that these books were in the Hebrew language. Of the first of these Jerome⁹¹ says, that he found it in the Hebrew; but it must since be lost, for it is not now extant in that language, as we know of. This book is, for the most part, a good and useful history, and in many things agrees with Josephus; it contains a history of forty years from the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes, to the death of Simon

⁸⁸ Dictionary, in the word Maccabeus.

⁸⁹ Ganz, Tzemach David, par. 2. fol. 6. 1. R. Gedaliah, Shalshet Hakabala, fol. 55. 1.

⁹⁰ Apud Euseb. Eccles. Hist. 1. 6. c. 25.

⁹¹ In Prolog. Galeoto.

the high-priest, about a hundred and thirty years before Christ. It could not be wrote by inspiration, since the writer of it himself observes, in several places, that there was no prophet in those times, ch. iv. 46. and ix. 27. and xiv. 41. nor is it without its mistakes, to which all human histories are subject; as when he says that Alexander the great parted his kingdom among his honourable servants while he was yet alive, ch. i. 6. Indeed, some years after his death, when there had been many wars and conflicts among his captains, it was divided between four of them, according to the prophecy of Daniel, ch. viii. 8, 22. but not by his direction, and much less in his life-time. When he was on his dying bed, he was asked to whom he left the kingdom? his answer was, to him that should appear to be best⁹²; and Philip Aridæus, a bastard-brother of Alexander, reigned seven years; and after him another Alexander, the son of Alexander the great by Roxane, reigned twelve years, according to Ptolemy's canon; and, according to the same canon, Alexander himself reigned but eight years, whereas the writer of this book of the Maccabees says he reigned twelve years, and then died, ver. 7. nor is it true what he relates, ver. 8, 9. that every one of his servants bare rule in his place, and all of them put crowns upon their heads; which was only true of some of them, after a course of years. Equally false is what is related of Antiochus the great, that he was taken alive by the Romans, and that India, Media, Lydia, and the goodliest countries they

⁹² Curtii Hist. 1. 10. c. 5. Diodor. Sicul. Bibliothec. 1. 18. p. 586. Justin. e Trogo, 1. 12. c. 15.

took from him, they gave to king Eumenes, ch. viii. 6, 7, 8. whereas Antiochus, after his defeat at the famous battle at Magnesia, first fled to Sardis, and then to Apamea; and not being able to pay the sums the Romans obliged him to pay, went and plundered the temple of Jupiter Beles at Elymais of its vast treasure, when the populace rose upon him, and murdered him the Romans indeed gave to Eumenes king of Pergamus, who behaved well at the above battle, all the countries on this side Mount Taurus which had belonged to Antiochus; but not India and Media, which were neither of them in the hands of the Romans to give, or were ever in the possession of Eumenes. Other mistakes are made concerning the number of the members of the Roman senate, as that they were three hundred and twenty, when they were but three hundred; and that they sat in the council daily, whereas their assembling was sometimes intermitted, especially on court-days; and of the government of the city of Rome by one person, whereas they had yearly two consuls, ver. 15, 16. and in calling Alexander the son of Antiochus Epiphanes, ch. x. 1. without giving the least hint of his being otherwise; when he was a pretender, whose name was Balas, a young man of low life, whom the kings of Egypt, Asia, and Cappadocia, set up against Demetrius, king of Syria, and called him Alexander, and gave out that he was the son of Antiochus⁹³; and yet Josephus⁹⁴ makes the same mistake and likewise when he speaks of a Darius as king of the

⁹³ Justin e Trogo, 1. 35. c. 1. Vid. Flori Breviar. Livii.

⁹⁴ Antiqu. 1. 13. c. 2. sect. 1.

Lacedemonians, in the times of Onias the high-priest, ch. xii. 7. whereas they never had, any king of that name, nor any of the name of Areus, or Oniars, as some would have it, in those times. If any are desirous of seeing these several things more largely and learnedly treated of, they may consult a learned countryman of our own, referred to in the margin⁹⁵. Albericus Gentilis⁹⁶ has attempted to explain and defend the above things, though with little success. But it is not so much to be wondered at, that a Jew, as the writer of this book may be supposed to be, should be unacquainted with Grecian and Roman affairs; it is to be hoped he has wrote more accurately on the Jewish affairs of those times, for which the history deserves some respect. ch. i. 54, he has made a wrong application of the abomination of desolation in Dan. xi. 31. as appears from Matt. xxiv. 15. but this being before the accomplishment, need not seem strange; it shews the book, however, could not be wrote by inspiration.

2 Maccabees

The second book of the Maccabees is much inferior to the first; it is prefaced with some letters of the Jews in Jerusalem, to their brethren in Egypt, in which are some things false and fabulous: mention is made of Judas Maccabeus being alive in the 188th year, i. e. of the era of the Seleucidæ, ch. i. 10. when he died in the 152d

⁹⁵ Rainoldi Censura Lib. Apocryph. prælect. 100. 101, 102, 103, 104.

⁹⁶ Inter Critic. Sacr. tom. 5. Ed. Amsterlædam, 1698.

year; see 1 Maccab. ix. 3, 18, a falsehood is told of Antiochus being killed in the temple of Nanea or Diana in Persia, and of the priests there destroying his captain, and those with him, ver. 13-16. which is contrary to the prophecy of him in Dan. viii. 25, that he should be broken without hands, or not be destroyed by the hand of any man; and to the account that is given of his death at Babylon, by the author of 1 Maccab. vi. 8-16. nay, contrary to the account that is given in this book itself, ch. ix. 16, 28. Another falsehood is told of Nehemiah building the temple and altar, ver. 18. whereas these were built long before his time, by whom only the walls of the city were rebuilt; and a fabulous story is related of the fire of the altar being hid in a pit, and found in the times of Nehemiah, ver. 19, 20, & c. whereas this fire is one of the things the Jews unanimously say was wanting in the second temple; see ch. x. 13. and another of Jeremiah's hiding the tabernacle, ark, and altar of incense, in a hollow cave, ch. ii. 5, 6. & c. and which he is falsely said to prophesy of: and the history following is said to be an abridgment of Jason, a Cyrenean; and such an account is given of it, and of the abridging this work, as is a clear proof it was far from being a work of inspiration, ver. 23, & c.: it contains a history of about fifteen years, from the time that Heliodorus was sent with a commission by Seleucus, to fetch him the treasures of the temple at Jerusalem, to the victory obtained by Judas Maccabeus over Nicanor, about 160 years before Christ. It abounds with accounts of apparitions, dreams, and things marvellous, as well as there are things false and

erroneous in it; as, for instance, mention is made of Persepolis as in being, ch. ix. 2. when it had been utterly destroyed by Alexander above a hundred years before the true place was Elymais, as in 1 Maccab. vi. 1. and the author is guilty of a mistake, in making Judas Maccabeus to build the altar, and offer sacrifice, after two years ' profanation of it, ch. x. 3. when it was after three years, as appears from 1 Maccab. i. 54. and iv. 52. compared together; and from Josephus⁹⁷: and most stupidly does he make Judas Maccabeus to collect a sum of money, and send it to Jerusalem to offer a sin-offering, and make reconciliation for the dead, and pray for them, that they might be delivered from sin, ch. xii. 43, 44, 45. and the history is closed in a manner very unworthy of and very unbecoming an inspired writer; and clearly shews that the writer himself did not believe he wrote it under divine inspiration.

3 Maccabees

There is a third book in some versions, though not in ours, which bears the name of the Maccabees; but has no relation to Judas Maccabeus, nor his brethren, nor to the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes; but to what was done in the reign of Philopator king of Egypt, fifty years before the history of the two former books begins; and is only so called, because it treats of things done and suffered in those times, with like zeal for the law of God; and Josephus's history of the martyrs that

⁹⁷ Antiqu. 1. 12. c. 7. sect. 6.

suffered under Antiochus is sometimes called the fourth⁹⁸; but neither of these are reckoned canonical.

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⁹⁸ Vid. Prideaux's *Connexion*, & c. par. 2. B. 2. p. 111, 112.