

## IV. An Account of a B O O K

*An Account of Dr. Burnet's Book, Entituled, ARCHEOLOGIÆ Philosophicæ, five Doctrina Antiqua de Rerum Originibus. Libri duo. Londini, Typis R. N. Impensis Gualteri Kettilby ad Insigne Capitis Episcopi in Cœmeterio Paulino. 1692.*

**I**N this Treatise he endeavours to discover what were the Sentiments of the Ancients concerning the Origin or beginnings of this visible World, of which he conceives Men in all Ages have had a true, if not a Divine Knowledge, as well as of a Divine Power, and of the intermediate Order, Vicissitudes and Ends of all things. And that *Pythagoras* was not the Inventor of the Mundan System ascribed to him, but the Conveyer only of it from the Orientals, ἀρχαῖοι, to the *Grecian* Schools, where yet it received lesser Improvement as to particular Explications, then it has by the Modern Inquisitions, (as he conceives) though yet he grants that our Histories of their Opinions are very imperfect, yet as the Magnificence of a Structure may be judged of by its Ruines, so in general we may have some Idea of their Doctrines by the Fragments of them which are yet to be found in the *Grecian* Writers, as well Historical as Fabulous, or Muthical and Poetical. By all which he endeavours to prove, that most of the Ancients held very much

much the same Notion concerning the beginning of things with that delivered by *Moses* in the beginning of his Writings, with which, he conceives, also that his already publish'd Theory is consonant. It was his Design also, to have written a general Body of Philosophy, but the sense of his Age and approaching Death seems to have made him desist, and to satisfy himself with what he hath hitherto performed in the preceding Books; and in this which he seems to make the Seal and Consummation of the former.

He divides the whole Discourse into two Books. In the first he endeavours to discover what were the most antiënt Doctrines of all Nations concerning the beginnings of things, in general. But in the Second he endeavour'd to collect all such Passages amongst them as seem'd most consonant to, and confirming of the Doctrines delivered in the first part of his Theory where he had omitted taking notice of them, though in the Second Part he hath intermixed them with the Theory throughout, which therefore did not need any such a Supplement.

In the First Chapter he enquires whence this Knowledge is to be fetcht, which he conceives to be all from the Postdiluvian Records, which were all convey'd by *Noah* from the Antidiluvian, and dispers'd amongst his Posterity. Next he enquires where any Footsteps are to be found of it among these. And since he finds the Ancients divided the Nations of the World into Four Heads, comprehending the whole Race of Mankind, to wit, the *Scythians* towards the North, the *Celti* towards the West, the *Æthiopians* towards the South, and the *Indians* towards the East. He follows the same Order in his Enquiry. And amongst the first he finds no ancient Footsteps of their Philosophy, and doubts whether ever they had any: Tho' *Abaris* is said by *Suidas* to have written a *Theogonia*; and a Septentrional Mythology hath been of late published, favouring much of Antiquity.

Amongst the *Celti* he finds Philosophy to have been all along, viz. among the *Druids* and *Semnothei*; of whom yet we have but a dark Account, that they profess'd to understand the Order and Motions of the Heavens, and the Will of the Gods; and that *Strabo* says, they taught the Worlds Periods by Water and Fire, and held a transfmigration of Souls, as the *Pythagoreans*; tho' they are thought to have much preceded him, and to have been the most ancient for Mythologick Theology. Of this Class were what Philosophers were to be found anciently among the *Germans*, *Britains*, *Spaniards* and *Italians*; of some of which *Strabo* affirms, that they had Poems of their Laws, &c. of 6000 years standing. Those among the *Hetrusci*, *Diodorus Siculus* says, studied Philosophy: And *Plutarch* says, they had the Notion of the *Annus Magnus*, or Periods of Revolutions, and that the *Romans* had their Sacred Rites from them.

Among the *Æthiopians* the *Gymnosophists* were famous; but we can find very little information what their Philosophy was. They were Celebrated indeed for their Laws, Government and Converse with the Gods, and had a very ancient use of Letters; and had Colledges of Priests which taught Philosophy and Theology. These are said by *Lucian* to have been the first Astronomers, and to have taught the *Ægyptians*. But as to the Theory of the Earth, there is nothing of theirs to be found. And indeed, most of the Ancient Authors that writ purposely of them are now no more to be found.

Having pass'd over these three Heads without making much Discovery to his purpose, he in the Third Chapter comes to the *Oriental*s or *Indians*, comprehending all the *Asians*; and some of their Neighbours, as the *Ægyptians* and *Greeks*. He begins then with the most Eastera Nation, the *Seri* or *Chineses*. *Celsus* and *Dionysius* call them Atheists, because they had no Idol-Temples or Worship; and Barbarians, because they had no Commerce with other Nations. So that it seems little of their Learning was known to the Ancients; though of late years they have been much better known, to have very ancient Histories, and some that mention the Flood and the beginnings of things. But by what we can learn, their Physiology is much inferiour to what was known in the Western Parts, as was also their Mathematicks, being all of their own Production, and not borrowed from any besides. Contrary to that of the *Greeks*, *Romans*, and other *Europeans*, who derived all from others. Passing from these to the South, he meets with the *Brachmans*, Philosophers celebrated in all Ages for their Devoting themselves wholly to Contemplations, of unknown Original, but yet worthy to be more diligently enquired into, both for their Eminency in Physiology and Astronomy, though both were wrapped up and veiled under Mythology: Yet they had some Notions concordant with the *Greek*. *Strabo* also says, That they held the World to have been generated, and was corruptible; That it was form'd out of Water, but the rest of the Universe from other Principles. The chief of these were most honoured, and absolutely free, neither Governing, nor Governed by any. This is the Sum of what can be found amongst the Ancients concerning their Natural Philosophy.

In the Fourth Chapter he enquires concerning the *Affyrians* and *Babylonians*, who were the first Empire after the Flood: These are accounted the first who cultivated Literature, and had Publick Schools at *Babylon*, which continued so till the time of *Nebuchadonoxer* and *Daniel*. These Learned Men  
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were call'd *Chaldeans* and *Magi*; and the chief of them were *Physiologers* and *Astronomers*, and studied lawful Arts, as may well be concluded; for that *Daniel* accepted the Prefecture of them: These excluded the *Astrologians* and *Diviners* from their Habitations. To these *Pythagoras* resorted to learn the Motions of the Heavens, and the Original of the World, saith *Justinus*. Κοσμοσύστασις and κατασκευήθειαν. These were then under the *Persians*, but the remainders of the *Chaldeans* and *Babylonians*. However; nothing is left of their Opinions but what *Diodorus* has hinted, That they believed the Matter of the World Eternal, but its Form, Order and Ornament to be constituted by Divine Providence. And further, That they believed the Earth to be of the Form of a Schiff or Tray: Only he speaks of their Antiquity, and of making *Astronomical Observations* many Ages before *Alexander*. This is all that is intelligible: All the rest concerning their Oracles of *Zoroaster*, &c. is nothing but Canting, and a Jargon of Scraps of we know not who. 'Tis pity we have lost the Works of *Berosus*, who had written their Opinions.

In the Fifth Chapter he speaks of the *Persian Magi*, who cultivated *Physiology* as well as *Theology*. These had a *Theogonia* like the *Greeks*; and from these *Pythagoras* learnt the Origin of the World, and the Motions of the Heavens. These taught likewise the Periods and Renovation of the World. The Prince of these *Magi* was *Zoroaster*, of which he judges there were two. The *Persians* held the Elements, Stars and the Heavens to be Gods; and worshipped most the Sun among the Stars, and the Fire among the Elements: And under the Nature of *Jupiter* they comprehended the whole Circuit of Heaven. They, as well as the *Greeks*, *Romans* and *Hebrews*, continually nourish'd the Fire. And the *Egyptians* as well as other Nations much honoured it. The *Persians* supposed this Fire to have fallen from Heaven; and the *Stoicks* call'd it *Jupiter*, into which all things resolved. Thus their Theology was *Physiology*, and all their other Rites may be in the same manner resolved; of which *Herodotus* has given a plain Account: In which he particularly takes notice, that in their Sacrificing they sung their *Theogonia*, which our Author conceives to be of the Origination of things. Of *Zoroaster*, *Pliny* relates that he left Two Millions of Verses, expounded by *Hermippus*. The *Arabians* mention Twelve Volumes, each filling a whole Bulls Hide of the Writings of *Zoroaster* to be left to the *Magi*. *Suidas* mentions divers Books of the same, concerning Dreams and *Astronomical Productions*, and Four Books of *Natural Philosophy*; but all are lost; and what goes under his Name are all *Fictitious*, except one Fragment preserved by *Plutarch* out of *Theopompus*; another by *Porphyrus* in *Antro Nympharum*, out of *Eubulus*; and a third by *Eusebius*, out of a *Persian Book*, which he will have *Zoroasters*. As the beginning of these *Magi* was unknown, so was their end; yet some remained to the time of *Alexander*; and 'tis believed they fell with the *Persian Empire*; and all that had been written concerning them is also peris'd. Such were *Hermippus Smyrnaeus*, *Pallas*, *Othanes*, *Eubulus*, *Theodorus Mopsuestenus*, *Hermodorus Platonicus*, *Antesbheres* or *Rhodanis*, *Zanthus Lydus*, *Sotionis*, *Dixon*, *Theopompus*, *Eudemus Rhodius*, and *Clearchus Solensis*.

In the Sixth Chapter he enquires after what is to be met with among the *Arabians* and *Phœnicians*. The First is *Job*, whom he makes an *Arabian*, before the time of *Moses*, who had the knowledge of Letters, and of the Heavens, and many other parts of the Creation, besides that of the Worship of the true God. This Knowledge lasted to the time of *Solomon*, as appears by the Queen of *Sheba*: Nay, till the Birth of Christ, as appears by the *Magi* that came to Worship him. The *Zabii* he makes to be some of the ancient *Arabs*, among whom *Abraham* was bred. These boast of having the Religion of *Noah*. To these, *Porphyry* says, *Pythagoras* went: And *Pliny* affirms the same of *Democritus*: But these since that time have degenerated, and have taken up the *Grecian* Learning; though they had also translated into their Language the Ancient Learning of the *Egyptians*, *Persians* and *Chaldeans*; but these were burnt by the *Sarazens*. What Writings yet remain among them are thought not older than Eight or Nine Hundred Years. The *Debrites* among the ancient *Arabs* held the World Eternal, and the Soul mortal. Hence their Proverb, *Uteri pariunt, Sepulchra deglutiunt*, The Womb makes, the Tomb takes. Next for the *Phœnicians*, he finds them very ancient, and early knowing in Letters, Arithmetick, Astronomy, Physiology, Navigation, Foreign Trade and Planting. *Thales* and *Zeno* were *Phœnicians*, and to them went divers of the *Greek* Philosophers. *Stabo* says, that *Mosebus* found the Hypothesis of *Atomes* before the *Trojan* War. The Philosophy before the *Trojan* War was all by Tradition, but after that came in the Rational and Disputative. Nothing remains of *Sanhoniathon's* Philosophy, but that he had studied the *Kosmogonian* of *Taautes*, deducing the World from the ancient Chaos, and a precedent *ἰαδύ* or Matter. He wrote also divers other Philosophical things; but they, as well as all the other Authors that wrote of the *Phœnicians*, as *Theodotus Hypsicrates* and *Mochus, Hesicius*, and *Hieronimus Egyptianus* are wholly lost.

In the Seventh Chapter he enquires what Footsteps of ancient Physical Learning is to be met with among the *Hebrews*, and in their *Cabala*. First he notes, that *Lactantius* wonder'd why *Pythagoras* and *Plato* went to the *Egyptians* for Knowledge, but not to the *Hebrews*; which is an Argument they were not then considerable for that kind of Knowledge; that is, Physical and Mathematical. What they had was contained in their *Cabala*, which they pretend to have received from *Moses*. But whatever it were at first, it hath been much depraved with Rabbinical Figments and Chimera's: Such are the Mystical Numeration by the Letters of Words; such are the Magical Spells derived also thence; such the expressing common Notions by a sort of Mystical Words, or Characters, or Numbers, to make it more wonderful to such as do not understand it. Which was a trick made use of also by *Pythagoras* in his Symbols, by the *Egyptians* in their Hieroglyphicks, and by the *Hermeticks* in their Cant: All which, if the Veil were removed, would appear empty Nothings, being of no other use, but to amuse the Ignorant and conceal their own Defects and Emptiness. They divided their *Cabala* into Nominal and Real. The Nominal was Triple, *Gemmatrica*, *Notaricon*, and *Themura*, plainly Modern and Barbarous Names. All consisted in shuffling the Letters of Words mixed with Number. *Reuclin* yet says, that the *Jews* affirm, that thereby may be found out all the Knowledge of *Moses* and *Solomon*,

as well Divine as Humane, and that *Solomon* himself received all his Knowledge thereby.

The real *Cabala* they make Two-fold, *i. e.* The Doctrine of *Sephiroth*, and the Doctrine of the Four Worlds. They make 10. Cabalistical *Sephiroth*, *viz:* the Crown. 2. Wisdom. 3. Prudence. 4. Magnificence. 5. Severity. 6. Pulchritude. 7. Victory. 8. Glory. 9. Foundation. 10. Kingdom, by which what they mean the Author understands not. They pretend they are Emanations from God, and that they are Numbers emanating from the Infinite Verity. He spends some time in examining each, and their branchings out into divers other Subdivisions. But upon the whole he concludes, That the further he proceeds the more Obscurity and Confusion he meets with. Next he examines the Doctrine of the Four Worlds, to wit, *Azilath*, *Briah*, *Yetzirah*, *Asiath*, *i. e.* the Worlds of Emanation, Creation, Formation and of the Fabrick; before all which they put the *Ensofphick*, or Infinite World, from which all the other do spring. Upon a more diligent Enquiry into the Contents of these mystick Doctrines the Author seems to think them all Cheats, and concludes with the Words of Christ, *Men love Darkness rather than Light, because their Deeds are evil.* Every one that doth Evil hateth the Light, lest he should be discovered; but he that doth Truth, cometh to the Light, that his Deeds may be manifest; suspecting all those affected Obscurities to be devised by them to conceal nothing else but their own Ignorance and Deceit. The Author proceeds further with examining other parts of the *Cabala*: But upon the whole he finds nothing rational, or containing any real Knowledge. But he conjectures, that the most ancient *Cabala*, before it was confounded and defiled with Fables, might contain somewhat of the Origination of things, and their Gradations; but as it has been in time chang'd and augmented by imaginary Fables, and blinded with impertinent and nonsensical Explications, it is now become a confused Mass of Incongruities and Absurdities. But by examining these Dregs, he conceives that the Ancients might hold, That before the Creation all things had their being in God; and that from him they flowed or emanated when first made, and that they will all flow back into him when they are destroyed, which he conceives was also the Opinion of the most Ancient Philosophers; and that there would succeed other Emanations and Regenerations, and other succeeding Destructions and Absorptions to all Eternity, as it had been from all Eternity; that Nothing was produced out of Nothing; and that the things produced never return to Nothing, but always have their Subsistence in God. Which Sense, if it doth not contain, he conceives it may be look'd upon as Salt that hath lost its Savour, which is good for nought, but to be thrown out of Doors. But if it contains any solid Knowledge, it ought to be manifested or condemned otherwise to perpetual Darkness. But lest it might deceive the Ignorant, he cautions them to be led by no Authority that is not Divine, nor by any Reason that is not clear and manifest. Before he leaves this Head, he enquires concerning the *Isseni*, a Sect among the Jews, not unlike in their Manners to the *Indian Brachmans*. All that these had of Philosophy, says *Philo*, was of God, and of the Generation of things: But what that Knowledge was does not appear; but he conceives it is to be learnt from the *Brachmans*, with whom they agreed.

From these he passes on (in the Eighth Chapter) in his Search for the ancient Learning amongst the *Egyptians*, where he finds it very ancient, and much celebrated by the *Hebrews*, who extol both *Moses* and *Solomon*, the one for knowing, the other for excelling it; and by the *Greeks*, as from whence they had derived their Knowledge. Upon a stricter Enquiry into it, he finds it to be first Geometry, as old as the overflowing of the *Nile*, upon which account it was invented; but he thinks they were but Land Meters; and that the *Greeks*, as *Thales* and *Pythagoras* did make it Speculative. 2. Astronomy. But this the *Chaldeans* knew; nor doth it appear which were the first; but he conceives both were very ancient, but rude and imperfect, and much improved afterwards by the *Greeks*. However, he believes they had a true Knowledge of the System of the Heavens, and understood the Motions of the Planets, &c. Yet he thinks that they did not understand them so well, as to reduce their Motions to Calculation. They are said also to have cultivated Musick and Physick, but these also without Theories, and only by Tradition. And tho *Herodotus* says, they had for every Disease a particular Physician: Yet both these were much more improved by the *Greeks*. They are said by others to be the Inventors of Chymistry. Lastly, That they were knowing in Physicks or Natural Science; that is, the *Cosmogonia*, *Theogonia*, or *Theologia*, which they look'd upon as the same Science. They held the Earth to be formed out of the confused Mass of the Four Elements, or out of the Chaos; and a two-fold Destruction of it, one by Fire, another by Water; That the Earth was of an Egg form; and that we call the *Pythagorick* System was the oldest of all others, but kept among their *Arcana*. Their most Celebrated Philosopher was *Hermes Trismegistus*; though when he lived, or what he thought and writ is not known. Those that bear his Name are fictitious. But among the multitude of his Writings, his *Cosmologia*, mentioned by *Philo Biblius*, is lost. The *Egyptians* preserved their Learning by their Priests, who had Colledges in divers parts of *Egypt*. They had it inscribed on Obelisks, and written in Books. The *Babylonians* had Cælestial Observations for 720 Years inscribed on burnt Tyles. *Democritus* transcribed his Morals from a *Babylonian* Column. The Columns of *Hermes* in *Egypt* are famous, on which were inscribed his Doctrine. From these the *Greeks* and *Phonicians* had much of their Knowledge, and *Manetho* his Sacred History. *Amianus Marcellinus* says, these Columns were placed in subterraneous Vaults, and were there before the Flood. *Manetho* and *Josephus* assert the same of theirs, both possibly the same. In their Books were written their Laws, their History and their Philosophy. Some things were communicable, others were *Arcana*, not to be divulged. They had also a two-fold way of Writing, one Common, another Sacred. This was written with *Hieroglyphicks*. The *Brachmans* have not only a different Character, but a different Language to preserve their Philosophy. These Priests were strict Concealers of their Secrets, as many Authors complain of them. Nor was *Pythagoras* admitted without being first Circumcised, and otherwise qualified. The *Esseni*, and others of other Nations, as *Persians*, *Syrians*, and *Indians*, administered Oaths, &c. of Secrecy. They further obscured their Knowledge by Symbols, Enigmas and Fables, in which the *Greeks* also follow'd them, as did also most other Nations in the Histories of their Gods, of which kind he gives divers Instances. Among these are the

the Mythologies of the Prophets in the Old Testament, and the Parables of Christ in the New. This Mythologick Genius *Salubius* calls Divine; and 'tis plain Mythologies were made use of by the Ancients to conceal their knowledge from the Vulgar, and yet preserve it safe for the Learned. Nay, Divine Providence doth so conceal both Divine and Natural Knowledge, that this or that part becomes known to this or that Man in one Age, which hath lain absconded to all preceding. This Mythologick was the most ancient Learning among the *Greeks*, as he proves by several Testimonies; yet was it first received from the *Egyptians*. This causes him to enquire whether the Works of *Hermes* were so writ, and he finds by a place quoted by *Eusebius*, that they were first written plain, then turned by the Son of *Thablin* into Allegories, and then transcribed into *Greek*. So that plain Writing was before Mythologick; and 'tis probable those that have it Mythologically, had it before pure; and that the Additions that have been added to the first Fables, have obscured, if not quite obliterated the concealed Sense. He propounds and answers two Objections, by which he shews the Inconsistency of Men's Actions with their Knowledge, and so Apologizes for the *Egyptian* Idolatry, and their Astrologick and Magick Practices. Last of all, he enquires how the *Egyptians* came to lose this Learned State they had kept for so many Ages, which he shews to have proceeded from their being conquered and overrun by divers Nations; as by the *Persians* under *Cambises*, and some succeeding Kings, by whom it began to decay. And by the *Romans*, who burnt the *Alexandrian* Library, with which their Learning was also much destroyed; and by the Conquest of the *Saracens* totally extinguished. Amongst the lost Historians of the *Egyptian* Learning, *Manatho* was the chiefest, as appears by Testimonies now extant, next *Sanchoniathon*, then *Alepiades*, *Petosisis*, *Hecatus*, *Palphatus*, and *Cheremon*, and many others. These are Lesses, but nothing to be named with the loss of the Library of *Ptolomus Philadelphus*, wherein many Myriads perished in a moment, containing the Sum of all *Egyptian*, nay, and all Oriental Learning too, in all probability.

In the Ninth Chapter he enquires concerning the *Græcian* Philosophy, of which, that he may the more fully give you the History, he produces sufficient Proof to shew it derived from the *Egyptian*; not that he denies the *Græcians* to have much improved several parts thereof: That they learn'd their Geometry, Astronomy and Arithmetick from the *Egyptians*, *Chaldeans*, and *Phœnicians*, *Herodotus*, *Plato*, *Aristotle*, *Diodorus*, *Strabo*, *Laertius*, *Achilles Tatinus*, and others their own Authors do testify. 'Tis said, *Semiramis*, who lived Eight Hundred Years before the *Trojan* War, built a high Tower in *Babylon*, on the top of which the Astronomers made their Observations, at which times the *Greeks* had not the use of Letters. Moreover, *Calisthenes* sent into *Greece* from *Babylon* Celestial Observations for 1900 Years before *Alexander's* time. And *Epigenes* found Observations at *Babylon* for 720 years, and others were brought of 480, as *Pliny* relates; these were inscribed on baked Bricks: Whereas the *Greek* Observations began with *Hipparchus* and *Ptolomy*. Yet though the Histories were furnish'd by the *Barbari*, the reasons of their Motions were invented by the *Greeks*. But though they improved the Mathematick Arts, yet they vitiated the *Physicks*, which they also received from them. That the *Greeks* had these from the *Barbari*, *Cleomens Alexandrinus* and *Eusebius* both testify; as doth also *Porphyrus* and *Isidorus*.



sephus, and Diodorus Siculus, who affirm the Greeks most eminent for this Learning. As Orpheus, Thales, Pherecydes, Pythagoras, Solon, Plato, Eudoxus, all fetcht it either from the Egyptians or Phœnicians. Nay, the very knowledge of Letters was first brought into Greece by Cadmus not long before the Trojan War. Whereas Learning flourish'd in Assyria, Egypt, Phœnicia, Arabia, Ethiopia, India, and among the Celti long before that time. There were two states of Grecian Philosophy. The first, which was the oldest, most of which was wrote in Verse, treated of the Cosmogonia, or Origination of things, by Thamyras, Linus, Orpheus, Musæus, Hesiod. Also Thales, Zenophanes, Empedocles, Parmenides, and some others, whose Fragments are collect'd by Steevins in his *Poesis Philosophica*: All which Poetick Writers did mythologize the Cosmogonia, Homer only excepted. This the Author proves by several Testimonies; and adds, That Orpheus was the first that brought Learning into Greece; that asserted the Oval Form of the Earth, the Form the Author assigns to his Antidiluvian Earth: That he lived not long after the time of Moses, and was the Founder of the Grecian Theology, as Moses of the Hebrew; and that both accommodated the Ceremonies to the Capacity of their respective People. That is, Orpheus instituted such a Religion as he could, not what he would, wanting the Divine Assistance of Miracles which Moses had. He was feign to make use of Musick and pleasing Mythologick Stories to allure his People from Barbarity to Government and Society. For which purpose it was of very great benefit, and generally made use of not only by Poets, but Legislators and Physiologers. Orpheus excelled in all these, and first taught the Grecians, Religion, and the Rewards and Punishments of another Life, which he proves by Heathen and Christian Testimonies. But among these must be distinguished what he taught the Vulgar from what was his Secret Doctrine, for that he had both the *ἠμωδὸν καὶ ἀποθεῖον*. Suidas says, he held the Heavens to be formed of the Æther, and the Earth out of the Chaos, before which he placed Time as the measure, but he makes them both coeval; whereas others of the Ancients separate them by a multitude of Ages. Empedocles makes all the Stars to be Fires, but Orpheus to be Worlds; the Author supposes the Planets were meant. As the Moon was therefore called *ἀντιχθον*, which Orpheus first asserted Habitable, proved by Proclus, as also that the Oval Earth was to be destroyed by Fire, and then to be renewed. Before he leaves this Head, he answers the Objections of Cicero, and more especially Gerard Vossius, who would persuade that there never was any such Men as Orpheus, Musæus or Linus, whose Arguments the Author thinks no ways cogent or to be regarded, since there are so many positive Proofs to the contrary both in Heathen and Christian Writers.

In the Tenth Chapter he enquires among the Greek Philosophers that succeeded Orpheus: And first amongst the Ionicks. These are the Second kind of Physiologers, who wrote expressly and in Prose, not in Verse and Mythology, as the former. These were Thales and his Ionicks, Pherecydes, Pythagoras, Zenophanes, Parmenides, Leucippus, Democritus, Empedocles, Plato, and others, to Epicurus and Aristotle, in whom ended Philosophick Antiquity; except some Fragments among the Stoicks. Thales was a Phœnician, but receiv'd his Knowledge from Egypt, and was famous for Geometry, Astronomy and Physick, and asserted the Immortality of the Soul; and first writ a Discourse of Physicks, without Mythology or Theology. Nothing of his Af-  
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fections remains but only that all things were generated out of Water. Which is agreeable to St. Peter and Moses. Possibly more particulars of his Doctrine may be found among his Followers, *Anaximander, Anaximenes, Anaxagoras, Archelaus.* *Anaxagoras* then makes a mind to Regulate Matter, and move it, and was therefore called *Nūs*. He ranges the four Elements by Gravity, and is said to have introduced Vortices. As for the Heavens, the *Ionians* much promoted the Knowledge of them; *i.e.* They held the Heavenly Spaces to be *Æther*; the Stars, Fire; the Planets opaque Bodies: That the Moon had Hills and Vales, and was Habitable, and that it was enlightened by the Sun, which was a most pure Fire. He held also the Rotation of the Earth, as also the Annual Motion about the middle of the World, as *Theon Smyrneus* affirms. To shew the Reason why it is so difficult to find what were their true thoughts, He quotes this Passage of *Plutarch*. This Doctrine (that is, concerning the Heavens) was not celebrated and famous, but hidden and kept secret, and it was discoursed of with great Caution among a few under an Oath of Secrecy; for Philosophings concerning the Heavens would not be endured, because those seemed to restrain and bind up the Divine *Numen* to Causes without Reason, and to blind Powers, and to involuntary Effects; upon which Account *Protagoras* was banished, and *Anaxagoras* put in Irons. *Socrates* also for the Name of a Philosopher was put to Death. Whence the Author observes, that in all Ages it has been very dangerous for Philosophers to speak plain Truth amongst the Vulgar.

In the Eleventh Chapter he enquires concerning the Doctrine of *Pythagoras* and the *Italic* Philosophy, where he finds that either *Pythagoras* wrote nothing, or if he did, even the History of them is lost: So that nothing of his Physiology is remaining save only his Theory of the Heavens, which is called the *Pythagorick System*; he placing the Sun in the Centre, and the Earth moving round it; the Moon as an Antithone or opposite Earth enlightened by the Sun, the Comets to be above the Air, or between that and the Planets; that the Heavens were fluid *Æther*, and the Stars so many Worlds. We know not his Sentiments about the *Cosmogonia*, or Terrestrial Productions, for he more busied himself about Cœlestial Speculations, and about Abstracts and Intellectuals, as did also his Followers, who treat of the *Anima Mundi*, consisting in Harmony indivisible and divisible the same, and an other (as they Phrase it) and such other Airy Notions as have no Foundations in Nature. But *Ocellus Lucanus*, another *Pythagorean*, makes the World Eternal, both for Matter and Form, as he does also the Race of Mankind. But indeed there is little in this Author that favours of *Pythagoras* his Doctrine; and *Plato* differs wholly from him, asserting the World to be made by God, and to be corruptible. Yet it must be granted that both the *Pythagoreans* and *Platonists* incline to make the Matter Eternal, but the Form Variable; and they had both their Vulgar Doctrines, and their Secret Doctrines. And though the Author cannot find any but common sense in his Mystical Numbers, yet he thinks there might be somewhat more, which is now lost to Mankind: The chief of these was his *Tetractis*, the Seventh was not ignoble, but the Tenth the Noblest and most perfect of all. But of the Reason and Signification of these neither any of the Ancients nor Moderns give any Satisfactive Solutions or Explications. Yet all the Ancients assert this to be the Doctrine of *Pythagoras*. And therefore after having run over many of their thoughts, the Author thinks that Numbers will

produce nothing but Numbers, nor Things; and that converting things all to Arithmetical Operations was in the *Pythagoreans* and *Platonists* a failure, not unlike that of the *Peripateticks*, of turning all into Logical terms. *Pherecides Pythagoras* his Master, writ a *Theogonia*. And *Empedocles*, one of his Scholars, asserted the Sun to be a Mass of Fire, and the Stars to be fiery, and the Earth made of the four Elements, united by Love, and separated by Strife. 'Tis uncertain whether *Pythagoras* wrote or no, but certain that *Philolaus*, *Archytas*, and *Eudoxus dia*. And 'tis said *Plato* bought three Books of *Philolaus*, whence he took his *Timæus*. *Archytas* is said to have written many things, but all are lost but a Fragment about Mathematicks. *Eudoxus* also, and *Empedocles*, but all are now lost. The Writings also of *Aristotle* concerning the four *Pythagorick* Elements are lost, and some others. So are the Writings of *Aristoxenus*, *Heraclides*, *Neanthes Hermippus*, *Syrianus Didymus*, and *Eudoxus*. Also *Moderatus Gaditanus*, *Alexander Polyhistor*, *Andronicus*, and others.

In the Twelfth Chapter he enquires concerning the Opinions of the *Eleatick* Sect, and of the *Stoicks*. This Sect was Founded by *Zenophanes* in the times of *Anaximander*, and consisted of a Mixture of various Nations and Opinions. The Doctrine he held was, that there were infinite Suns, and infinite Moons like ours, which he said was habitable, but that they were all Eternal. *Parmenides* held them to be formed out of Fire and Earth, and Men out of Clay. They agreed much with the *Ionick* Sect. *Leucippus* and *Democritus* were of this Sect, who introduced Atoms. *Leucippus* acknowledged the Motion of the Earth on its Axis, and that when the fluid Mass settled into a Globe, it was covered by a dry Skin, which growing thicker, formed the habitable Earth: He supposes the Axis also at first right, but altered afterward; both which are consonant to the Author's Theory. *Democritus* was an Auditor of *Leucippus*, and had travelled *Persia*, *Arabia*, *Ethiopia*, *Egypt*, and *India*, to improve his Knowledge among the Learned of those Countries, and has written many Books, though all lost. 'Tis said he affirmed the Moon to be a fired Body, but with Mountains, Hills, and Vales; but the Author supposes only fiery Mountains, such as are on the Earth. *Callimachus* wrote of his Opinions. The Opinion of the *Stoicks* is Famous for the Future Conflagration of the World. But little is to be found concerning the Production of it, yet they asserted God to be the Author of it; but to this they joyn Matter mixt and of it self without Motion. This was perishable by the Conflagration, but the Divine Principle Eternal, as they esteemed also the Matter it self, though the Form perished. So the unformed World they made Eternal, but the formed to have both beginning and end. They held moreover, of formed Bodies, the Fire to be first, and out of that to be made the other Elements, which again were resolvable into it. Concerning the Mundane Periods and the Fate of the *Stoicks*, little need be said in this Discourse, it being well known. Many Books have been written by and concerning them, but all lost; yet 'tis said there is one Ancient Book or Piece of *Apollonius Tyrius* yet extant in some Library, but not published, concerning the Opinion and Works of *Zeno*.

In the Thirteenth Chapter he enquires among the *Platonicks*, *Aristotelians*, and *Epicureans*. First, he finds the *Platonicks* like the *Pythagoreans*, to be most taken up in high Speculations of Abstract Notions, and in assigning Causes  
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of Things to Numbers and Geometrical Figures. Thus *Plato* in his *Timæus* makes nothing visible but Fire, nothing tangible but Earth, between these two for their own Union are placed Air and Water. The Solid Bodies he supposeth made up of Triangles; Fire he makes of Pyramids, consisting of four Triangles; the Earth of Cubes, consisting of six Squares, and each Square of four Triangles; the Air of Octedrons, each side divided into six Scalenes; then the Water of Icosaedrons, consisting of Twenty Triangles, each made up of Scalenes. To these he adds a Soul, consisting of Numbers and Proportions. The best Interpretations yet extant concerning it do not make Sense or Reason of it; and at best the Author thinks it but a *Lusus Ingenii*. Further, he makes God and Matter to be the two first Principles, to which he adds a third of Ideas. But *Plato's* Excellency was not for Physicks, but for Morals and Theology. Divers Writings of the *Platonists* are out, and some lost; but these he passes by, since we have the Works of *Plato* himself. And now comes to the Dregs of Philosophy amongst the Epicureans and Peripateticks. From *Plato's* time to the present Age he finds nothing of Philosophy, nothing of Discovery, nothing but a Chattering and fruitless Methods of Wrangling. Concerning the Origination of things, there is nothing found to be met with in *Aristotle* or his Schools. They would make the World Eternal, both for Matter and Form; Men also, and all things else to be so too. Besides, he does not agree with his own Principles, disposing the four Elements one above the other, but shews not how the Earth seems to be in some parts higher than the Water. Then for the Heavens he makes Adamantine Orbs, and the Stars like Golden-headed Nails fastned to them: These Orbs involved he makes to move round the Earth in 24 hours, that is every day. To this he introduces a contrary Motion for each Planetary Orb from West to East; the Matter of these he makes Incorruptible, but below the Orb of the Moon he puts Fire Elementary, without Light or Heat. In the middle Region of the Air he puts the Milky Way and Comets. For the explicating of all other things on the Earth, he introduces Substantial Forms, and Specifick Qualities, as insignificant as the *Pythagorick* Numbers and Harmonies. Which being so, he wonders why it has been so long approved of by the Christian World. Then the Author giving a short Catalogue of his Errors, and bids adieu to him, as to a bad Astronomer, a worse Theologe, and the worst of all Physiologers. His Catalogue is this: 1. That the World is Eternal and Incorruptible. 2. The Heavens solid, and moved by contrary Motions. 3. The Matter of the Heavens Divine and Immutable. 4. The Stars to be denser parts of their Orbs; and the Planets to shine by their own Light. 5. Light neither a Body nor a Motion. 6. Elementary Fire under the Moon. 7. The Galaxi and Comets, Meteors. 8. The Earth immovable, in the Centre of the World. 9. Up and down to be founded in Nature immutably. 10. The Forms of Animate things substantial. 11. Sensation to be made by Intentional Species. 12. Rarefaction and Contraction to be made by the increase and decrease of Extension in Matter. 13. Providence not to descend below the Moon. 14. The Soul to be *ἐντελέχεια*, and of doubtful Immortality. Next he visits *Epicurus*, illiterate, yet of no Vulgar Wit; he accommodated all things to his Senses, and so his Notions were for the most part absurd and vulgar. He corrupted only the Doctrines of *Democritus* and *Leucippus*. Upon the whole, the Author thinks his Doctrines not worth considering, but refers the Reader to *Gassendus*. He concludes this Enquiry with giving the Names of several that have written of the Opinions of these *Grecian* Philosophers, and of some that have written their *ἀπόρρητα*, or Secret Do-

Strines, as *Pythagoras Zacynthius*, *Porphyrius*, *Numerius*: He regrets the loss also of many Polyhistorians, as, *Theopompus*, *Phavorinus* and *Alexander Polyhistor*; also some of the Writings of *Deodorus Siculus* and *Vatro*. Now whereas some alledge some few others that have been famous for Philosophy in other parts of the World, yet not what they knew or maintained; and there being no Monuments remaining of such their Knowledge; the Author leaves them in the Obscurity he found them, and thinks he has performed his designed Undertaking to seek what there could be found worthy of preserving among the Ruines and Relicks of the most ancient Philosophers, more particularly relating to the Beginning of things, and has left no quarter unsearched, nor omitted any thing which he judged material to this purpose; though other Particulars not pertinent, whether bad or good, he has omitted, as being impertinent.

To end this Disquisition, in the Fourteenth Chapter he enquires concerning the Beginning of the Barbarick Philosophy; that is, whence the *Egyptians*, *Ethiopianians*, *Chaldeans*, *Phœnicians*, *Arabians*, *Indians*, and other Orientals obtained their first Knowledge. There are two Opinions concerning it: One, that they were invented by themselves; and the other, that they were taught by *Moses* or *Abraham*. The Author approves neither of these. Not the first, because he meets with no Mention of Experiments, or Observations, or Reasoning and Demonstrations, or Method, or particular Explications; but what was known was Traditional and Positive. Not the latter, because this Learning was eminent long before those times; for that *Moses* was bred up in the Schools of *Egypt*, and for that the *Ethiopianians* were much preceding to the *Egyptians*. Besides the Instance of *Job*, who is thought by the Author to have much preceded *Moses*; for that he takes no notice of the Jewish Laws, Ceremonies or Sabbath, yet was he one that worship'd the true God; and for that the Age of his Life was above 200 years, and he offered his own Sacrifices without a Priest. Upon the whole therefore the Author thinks it was conveyed to Mankind by the Sons of *Noah*, and by him from the Patriarchs of the Antidiluvian World. These are the principal Matters treated of in the First Book.

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**I**N the *Second Book* the Learned Author designs to make use of such Testimonies as he can find amongst the Fragments of the most ancient Philosophy, to confirm the Doctrines of his Theory of the Earth, delivered in the First Book thereof, for that he has not therein alledged such Testimonies to confirm it, intermingled with the Discourse it self, as he has done in the Second, but framed the whole from the Idea he had of the Nature of the things themselves. And whereas in the former Book of this present Treatise he has inquired after the Ancient Doctrines concerning the whole, or the Universe: In this he restrains his Search after such Doctrines as more particularly concern the Formation and Fabrick of the Earth only. In the first Chapter then he finds that the Production of this World out of a Chaos was the most general, and the most ancient Doctrine of all the Learned, both Theologers, Physiologers and Poets. He begins with *Moses*, and shews, that his *Tohu* and *Bohu* was the same that the Ancients called Chaos. And the Apostle, *Heb. xi. 3.* does so interpret it, and most of the Christian Interpreters understand it so also, as do the *Hebrews*. As to other Nations, they either deliver it expressly, as the Philosophers; or Mythologically, as the Poets. The Philosophers differ only, for that some ascribe the Formation to a Mind, others to Chance. He brings several Proofs of it from *Phoenicians, Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, Persians*, and from divers other Authors very famous among the Ancients; but others, as *Orpheus, Empedocles* and *Hesiod* made Strife and Love to Operate in the Separation and Union of the parts of the Chaos.

In the Second Chapter he enquires what Form they assigned to the Primogenial Earth, and what Estates it was to undergo. *First*, For the Form, that it was differing from the present. Here first he proves, by the Testimony of *St. Peter*, that there was a three-fold state of the Earth, *viz.* the Past, Present and Future. By the Past he shews was meant the Antidivian, and by the Future the New Heaven and New Earth, which he proves by two passages in *Isaiab*, and one in the *Revelation*. This he shews was also mentioned by *St. Paul* in the *8th* of the *Romans*, upon which Passage he insists much to prove, that the Apostle meant this three-fold state of the Earth; and alledges the Judgment of the Fathers, *Tertullian, Ireneus, Origen, Hierom, Chrysoptom*, and others to confirm it. And then endeavours to answer such as had assigned other Expositions of the Word Creation, of which there are three sorts. One would have the Fallen Angels to be understood, which he shews could not be the meaning, since they are not to be restored. Others would have by Creatures to be understood Men: But that cannot be the Sense, because the Creature and Men are distinguished in the very Text. *Thirdly*, Those that would have the *Gentiles* to be meant, are the farthest of all from the plain Sense which he makes to be (the formed World,) and that it is to pass thorough three States, a former, a present, and a future.

In the Third Chapter he brings Authority to prove the Primigeneal Form and Situation of the Earth, and wherein it differ'd from the present, of which the Ancients had manifest Knowledge. The first he alledges is that of *St. Peter*, 2, 3, 6. where he says the Words are oppos'd to those who asserted the state of the World to be the same as at first: And adds, that *St. Austin* in expounding these Words of *St. Peter*, doth so understand them; to wit, that not only the old Earth perished in the Flood, but the Heavens also. He next enquires wherein the difference is between the former and the present, and finds *St. Peter* there describing the first, to assert it to be out of the Water, and to stand by the Waters; that is, (says he) to be placed above the Waters, and be sustained by them. And by this he explains *Psal.* 136. 6. *Prov.* 8. 27. but brings no further Proof of his Doctrine.

In the Fourth Chapter he enquires concerning the Nature, Manner and Causes of Deluges, but chiefly of the Universal. Here he repeats what he has said concerning the quantity of the Water requisite in his Theory, and quotes also what *Isaiah* says in describing a general Deluge, who makes a kind of Earthquake to precede it, for the Eruption of the Waters out of their Womb, and several other places and Commentators upon them, who all seem to mean Earthquakes. Then he enquires what are the Causes of particular Inundations, which he makes Three. (*i. e.*) 1. The Irruption of the Sea upon the Low Countries. 2. Great Rains. 3. Eruptions of Waters out of the Body of the Earth by Earthquakes: Of each of these he brings Examples out of History. The first is *Strabo's* Description of the manner of making the Dead Sea where *Sodom* and *Gomorrah* formerly stood by an Earthquake. Secondly, A passage in *Amianus Marcellinus* about the sinking and drowning of places. Another out of *Diodorus Siculus* concerning the City of *Atalantes*, and of *Strabo* for *Eubœa*. Another out of *Ziphiline* in the Life of *Antonius Pius*, of the loss of the City of *Cyzicum*. Another out of *Diodorus Siculus* about the loss of *Bura* and *Helice*. Another out of *Pausonius* of the Loss of the City *Idea*. Then he mentions the *Ogygian* and *Deucalion* Floods. Of *Deucalians* he remarks a notable passage out of *Lucian*.

In the Fifth Chapter he enquires whether there be any Record among the Ancients that may confirm his Conjecture about the right Situation of the Earth to the Sun. Whence proceeded a perpetual Equinox without differing Seasons: For this he looks for the Description of the Golden Ages, *viz.* in *Plato's Phædo*, where he says, under *Saturn* the Motions of the Heavens were uniform, but under *Jupiter* there was an *ἀνάρμοστος* of the Heavens to the posture they are now in, which was the Cause of all the Evil that followed. He speaks also of its Renovation, or being restored to its former state. Of these things we have an imperfect Account, by reason of the length of Time past; but these and greater, or more wonderful things have happened. Next for the Earth, *Plato* says it was equilibrate without Inclination, *ἰσορροπον καὶ ἀκλίνης*. Further, he makes the Seasons all temperate, which gave Men long Lives. He makes also an Abyss to receive the Water trajected through the Earth; but the Surface of it he makes smooth, and adorned with various Colours and Gems, as the Prophets and Sacred Authors do the *New Hierusalem*.

In the Sixth Chapter he enquires concerning the changed Position of the present Earth: For this he has a Cloud of Testimonies beside *Plato*, to wit, *Anaxagoras*, *Empedocles*, *Diogenes*, *Leuceppus*, *Democritus*, who all speak of the changed Situation of the Earth's Axis, whose Testimonies he has elsewhere mentioned. Among the Inventions of the Astronomers, the Obliquity of the Zodiac and the Seasons of the Year are ascribed to *Thales*; which is an Argument it had not been so from the beginning. But the Histories of the Progress of Astronomy, written by *Eudemus* and *Theon Smyrneus* have perished, which might have afforded more cogent Arguments. Here he mentions what *Ovid*, *Virgil* and *Homer* have said to this purpose, in describing the Golden Age and the Elizium of the Dead. From the Poets he passes to *Plutarch's* Description of the Fortunate Isles, which bear a more modern Name for the *Elizium*, and agrees much with the Paradisical Earth. And another out of *Diodorus Siculus*, of the Island *Tibrobara*; which he supposes to be for the same purpose. From these Heathens he comes to the Jewish and Christian Writers, describing Paradise and the Garden of the Lord; who do much agree with the Heathen Descriptions of the Golden Age. He quotes *J. Abarbanel* upon the 2d of *Genesis*, and *Aben Ezra*; also *Maimonides* upon the 10th Chapter of the *Sanhedrim*; *Manasse Ben Israel* on the Creation, and *Abraham Ecchellenfis* concerning the Testimonies of the *Jews* and *Arabians*. Then for the Christians he brings *Tatianus*: He quotes also *Suidas*; and sums up all with *Bellarmines* Conclusion, That there was a perpetual Spring, and another Course of the Sun then at present. He adds, that *Aristotle* thought the short and uncertain Life of Creatures proceeded from the Oblique Motion of the Sun in the Zodiac: And that *Mantuan* says, it was the Opinion of the ancient Astronomers. He adds also a Passage of *Orpheus* preserved by *Proclus* to the same effect.

In the Seventh Chapter he discourses of the Description which *Moses* gives of Paradise, and of the state of Nature in the New World; which is in general, That *Moses* accommodated his History to the Capacity of those for whom he writ, and that all he has said is not to be taken in a strict literal Sense. Then in the Eighth Chapter he speaks of the manner of the Interpretations of the Expressions of *Moses* concerning the *Hexameron*, which is consonant to his Thoughts in the Seventh. And in the Ninth Chapter he endeavours to answer those who would have it to be literally understood. And in the Last Chapter he propounds what things are worthy to be considered in order to the making a right Judgment of the whole; and more particularly, of what he hath more freely delivered in the preceding Chapters. He desires his Readers therefore to consider the Use and Style of the Eastern Sages. 2. The mean and dull Apprehensions of the *Israelites* at the time when *Moses* writ. 3. What Learned Commentators have said of this matter. 4. What we are to think of the Great God; and what Thoughts concerning him are worthy, and what becoming. As to the First, These Orientals did for the most part deliver their Doctrines in Mythology, *ad Captum Vulgi*: But they had also a more Secret Doctrine, which they deliver'd only to such of their Schools as were of a more clear Understanding. So that though many vulgar Opinions have been ascribed to them, yet they were such as were deliver'd for the Vulgar, but that they had others reserved for the more intelligent. So *Iamblicus* and *Laertius* relate some Notions of *Pythagoras*, which accorded with the  
Vulgar



Vulgar Opinion of the Heavens; yet 'tis plain he held the other Doctrine. The Jewish Doctors say, the Law speaks with the Tongues of Men; that is, with a Vulgar Style, yet they had their *Cabala* to conceal their Mysteries: Nor was this Foreign to the Christian Schools. Secondly, The People of *Israel* when *Moses* writ were of dull and uncultivated Understanding, not fit for Natural Speculations or Divine Contemplations. Thus much *Manasseh Ben Israel* says, and so does *Moses Maimonides*. This he conceives to be the reason why *Moses* so wrote the History of the Creation. Thirdly, Commentators both Jews and Christians have asserted, That many things in that History are not to be understood Literally but Allegorically: For this, besides *Philo Judeus*, who makes it all Allegorical; and the *Cabalists*, whom he passes by, he names *R. Moses Egyptianus* for a solid Author asserting it, and *Josiphus*; as also *Aristobulus*, quoted by *Eusebius*, who is of the same Sentiment, as were many of the Christian Fathers which he cites at large. Fourthly, As to such as do not adhere to the Literal Sense, he admonishes them that they do not admit any thing unworthy of God or of our Religion.

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Printed for *S. Smith* and *B. Walford*, Printers to the  
*Royal Society*, at the *Princes Arms* in *St. Paul's*  
*Church-yard*, 1693.