

CONTEMPLATIONS
ON THE
BEAUTIES OF CREATION,
AND ON ALL THE
PRINCIPAL TRUTHS AND BLESSINGS
OF THE
GLORIOUS GOSPEL
WITH THE
SINS AND GRACES
OF
PROFESSING CHRISTIANS.

V O L. II.

By JOHN RYLAND, A. M.
OF NORTHAMPTON.

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A
CONTEMPLATION
ON
MIRACLES,
AS A
GLORIOUS EVIDENCE
OF THE
DIVINE INSPIRATION
OF THE
HOLY SCRIPTURES.

A
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 O F T H E
 S E C O N D V O L U M E
 O F
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H O L Y S C R I P T U R E S.

WE now enter on the second great evidence of the divine Inspiration of the sacred books: and this consists in the wonderful and extraordinary exertions of divine power, stiled **MIRACLES**. And in order to give my reader as clear and vivid an idea of this noble subject as I am able, I would define the nature of a miracle, and then give him a short view of the life and omnipotence of God, the laws of nature, with a prospect of the principal miracles recorded in the Old and New Testament; and, lastly, shew the visible connexion of our idea of a miracle with the truth and divinity of the holy Scriptures

A **MIRACLE** is an action of God, producing a sensible change in the order of nature: and this sensible change is made with a view to evince his immediate presence, to convince his rational creatures of some truth---to silence and confound

found his enemies---to confirm the mission of his inspired servants, and stamp eternal honour on his divine revelation and religion. Consequently every real miracle must have four grand properties, or essential characteristics: it must be sensible, or be an address to the senses of men---it must be done, for the most part, in a moment---it must be independent of second causes, or be above, beyond, or contrary to the common laws of nature. Lastly, it must have an end worthy of God, or be consistent with his natural perfections, and perfectly agreeable to his beautiful moral character; and done to confound error, delusion, and bad men; and to confirm revealed truth; and honour good men.

Life is a state of self-motion, or active existence: or life is a principle in a creature by which it moves itself. Self-motion is true life: and, indeed, self-motion is the only thing that shews a creature to be alive.

The LIFE of GOD is that glorious property of self-activity by which he exerts his nature, and displays all his perfections in a manner worthy of a God. This life, or self-activity of the divine nature, is infinite, or without bounds---eternal, without end---immutable, without change---and perfectly all-sufficient, without defect.

The omnipotence of God, or his almighty power, is the infinite life and strength of the
divine