enter into facial union, though they may have hoped to enjoy ſuperior ſecurity and happineſs by engaging to protect and ſupport each other, we muſt conclude that the Author of the univerſe has deſtined man to at­tain greater dignity and happineſs in a ſavage and ſolitary than in a facial ſtate ; and therefore that thoſe diſpofitions and views which lead us to ſociety are fal­lacious and inimical to our real intereſt.

Whatever be the ſuppoſed advantages of a ſolſtary ſtate, certain it is that mankind, at the earlieſt periods, were united in ſociety. Various theories have been formed concerning the circumſtances and principles which gave riſe to this union : but we have elſewhere ſhown, that the greater part of them are founded in er­ror; that they suppoſe the original ſtate of man to have been that of savages ; and that ſuch a ſuppoſition is con­tradicted by the moſt authentic records of antiquity. For though the records oſ the earlier ages are gene­rally obſcure, fabulous, and imperfect ; yet happily there is *one* free ſrom the imperfections of the reſt, and of undoubted authenticity, to which we may ſafely have recourſe @@\*. This record is the Pentateuch of Moſes, which preſents us with a genuine account of the origin of man and of ſociety, perfectly conſonant to what we have laid down in the article referred to (ſee Savage). According to Moſes, the firſt ſociety was that of a huſband and wife united in the bonds of marriage : the firſt government that of a father and husband, the maſter of his family. Men lived together under the patriar­chal form of government while they employed themſelves chiefly in tending flocks and herds. Children in ſuch circumſtances cannot ſoon riſe to an equality with their parents, where a man’s importance depends on his pro­perty, not on his abilities. When flocks and herds are the chief articles of property, the ſon can only obtain theſe from his father; in general therefore the ſon muſt be entirely dependent on the father for the means of ſubsiſtence If the parent during his life bestow on his children any part of his property, he may do it on ſuch conditions as ſhall make their dependence upon him continue till the period of his death. When the community are by this event deprived of their head, inſtead of continuing in a ſtate of union, and ſelecting ſome one from among themſelves whom they may inveſt with the authority of a parent, they ſeparate into ſo many diſtinct tribes, each ſubjected to the authority of a different lord, the maſter of the family, and the proprietor of all the flocks and herds belonging to it. Such was the ſtate of the firſt ſocieties which the narrative of Moſes exhibits to our attention.

Thoſe philoſophers who have made ſociety, in its va­rious ſtages between rudeneſs and refinement, the ſubject of their ſpeculations, have generally conſidered mankind, in whatever region of the globe, and under whatever climate, as proceeding uniformly through certain regu­lar gradations from one extreme to the other. They regard them, firſt, as gaining a precarious ſubſiſtence by gathering the ſpontaneous fruits of the earth, preying on the inhabitants of the waters, if placed on the ſea ſhore, or along the banks of large rivers ; or hunting wild beaſts, if in a situation where theſe are to be found in abundance, without foreſight or induſtry to provide for future wants when the preſent call of appetite is gra­tified. Next, they ſay, man riſes to the ſhepherd ſtate, and next to that of husbandmen, when thev tarn their

attention from the management of flocks to the culti­vation of the ground. Next, theſe husbandmen improve their powers, and better their condition, by becoming artizans and merchants ; and the beginning of this pe­riod is the boundary between barbarity and civiliza­tion.

Theſe are the ſtages through which they who have employed themſelves on the natural hiſtory of ſociety have generally conducted mankind in their progreſs from rudeneſs to refinement : but they ſeem to have overlooked the manner in which mankind were at firſt eſtabliſhed on this earth; for the circumſtances in which the parents of the human race were originally placed ; for the degree of knowledge communicated to them ; and for the inſtruction which they muſt have been ca­pable of communicating to their posterity. They ra­ther appear to conſider the inhabitants of every diffe­rent region of the globe as aborigines, ſpringing at firſt from the ground, or dropped on the ſpot which they inhabit ; no leſs ignorant than infants of the na­ture and relations of the objects around them, and of the purpoſes which they may accompliſh by the exerciſe of their organs and faculties.

The abſurdity of this theory has been fully demonſtrated in another place : and if we agree to receive the Moſaic account of the original eſtabliſhment of man­kind, we ſhall be led to view the phenomena of facial life in a light very different. We muſt firſt allow, that though many of the rudeſt tribes are found in the ſtate of *hunters* or fis*hers ;* yet the hunting or fiſhing ſtate cannot have been invariably the primary form of ſociety. Notwithſtanding the powers with which we are endow­ed, we are in a great meaſure the creatures of circum­ſtances. Physical cauſes exert, though indirectly, a mighty influence in forming the character and direct­ing the exertions of the human race. From the infor­mation of Moſes we gather, that the firſt ſocieties of men lived under the patriarchal form of government, and employed themſelves in the cultivation of the ground and the management of flocks. And as we know that mankind, being ſubjected to the influence both of physical and moral cauſes, are no leſs liable to degeneracy than capable of improvement ; we may ea­ſily conceive, that though deſcending all from the ſame original pair, and though enlightened with much tradi­tionary knowledge relative to the arts of life, the order of ſociety, moral distinctions, and religious obligations; yet as they were gradually, and by various accidents, diſperſed over the earth, being removed to situations in which the arts with which they were acquainted could but little avail them, where induſtry was over­powered, or indolence encouraged by the ſeverity or the profusion of nature, they might degenerate and fall into a condition almoſt as humble and precarious as that of the brutal tribes. Other moral cauſes might also concur to debaſe or elevate the human character in that early period. The particular character of the ori­ginal ſettlers in any region, the manner in which they were connected with one another, and the arts which they were beſt qualified to exerciſe, with various other cauſes of a ſimilar nature, would have conſiderable in­fluence in determining the character of the ſociety.

When laying aside the ſpirit of theory and ſyſtem, we ſet ourfelves, with due humility, to trace facts, and to liſten to evidence, though our diſcoveries may be@@@[m]\* See Scripture, n⁰7- 35.